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# NEBRASKA CATTLEMAN

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to the Nebraska cattle industry.

*Whiskell*

December 2021 • Volume 77 • Issue 10

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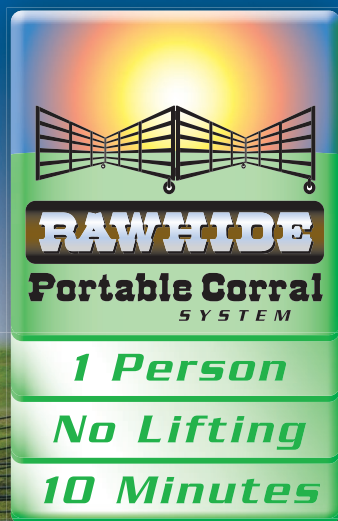
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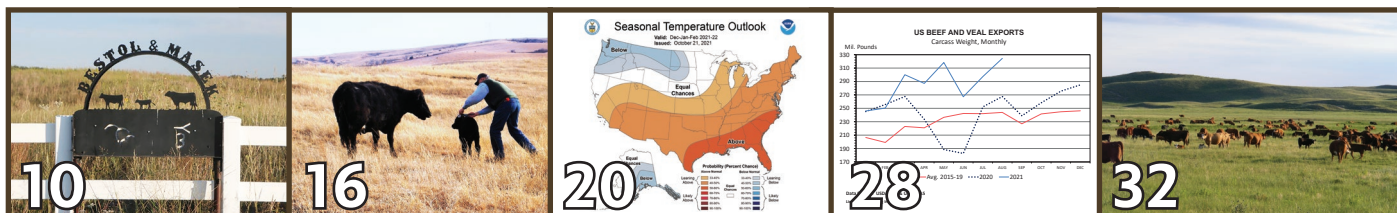
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# NEBRASKA CATTLEMAN

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### On The Cover

The sun rests on the horizon as cattle graze among cornstalks.  
*Photo courtesy of Angie Brandon, Ainsworth.*





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By Pete McClymont  
Nebraska Cattlemen Executive Vice President



## Investing in Membership

In early November, I announced the addition of two high-quality individuals as crucial Nebraska Cattlemen team members. Jessica Rudolph of Gothenburg and Steven Stettner of Palmer rose to the top of a deep pool of applicants and were offered positions devoted to membership recruitment and retention.

Entering the process, I hoped to find one talented individual to lead Nebraska Cattlemen's renewed membership efforts. In these current challenging times, finding one, let alone multiple, qualified candidates is a significant task. When two talented applicants with different strengths and backgrounds proved their value in the interview process, it truly was a moment where I recognized we couldn't let these two individuals slip away.

Nebraska Cattlemen membership is an integral component of the fabric that makes up Nebraska. We are cattle and beef producers but, ultimately, we are in the people business. Steven and Jessica come to us with firsthand experiences in and passion for membership and the cattle industry. Adding Jessica and Steven to an already existing talented, experienced staff creates even more value in your investment in Nebraska Cattlemen – now and into the future.

Read more about Jessica and Steven, and please join us in welcoming these two highly qualified individuals. Thank you for your membership.



Jessica Rudolph is Nebraska Cattlemen director of membership-retention. She recently graduated from the University of Nebraska where she focused on agricultural communications, ag economics and agricultural entrepreneurship. She is active in her family's cattle operation where she works alongside her parents in day-to-day management decisions.

Jessica began her duties Nov. 22 and can be reached at (402) 475-2333 or [jrudolph@necattlemen.org](mailto:jrudolph@necattlemen.org).

Steven Stettner is Nebraska



Cattlemen director of membership-recruitment. He previously served as the regional organization director of Pennsylvania Farm Bureau and is an integral part of his family's beef cattle operation. He is a graduate of Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture with a degree in applied science in agriculture production systems and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln where he earned a bachelor's degree in agricultural engineering.

*"Working for Nebraska Cattlemen has been a dream of mine for as long as I can remember. I am thrilled I have been granted the honor of working for Nebraska beef producers. My previous experiences in working for associations like Nebraska FFA as a state officer and Nebraska Farm Bureau gave me a passion for members. I cannot wait to serve the members of Nebraska Cattlemen."*

*– Jessica Rudolph*



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# Doing Good in the Good Life

## *Incoming Nebraska Cattlemen President Hails from Third-Generation Sandhills Ranch*

By Micky Burch, *Nebraska Cattlemen* Senior Writer



**N**orth of the Nebraska Highway 2 Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway sits the unincorporated community of Purdum. Unique in its own right because many unincorporated communities don't have zip codes, Purdum not only has digits, but also has a post office, a true mercantile, a well-drilling and maintenance company, a church and several ranches. The few community residents – of which there are said to be nine if one is being liberal – joke amongst each other that Purdum is an hour from anywhere. One of those lifelong residents is Brenda Masek.

While her mailing address and main activities are in Purdum, the Bestol and Masek Ranch is located in southeast Cherry County, famous for being the least populated county in the United States, with more acres than Rhode Island.

It was in 1957 that Brenda's paternal grandparents purchased the original portion of the ranch, located just seven miles northwest of Purdum. Later that same year, Brenda's parents, Earl Bestol Jr. and Claudia Knag of Alliance, were married. In 2007, they celebrated their golden wedding anniversary with friends and family at the ranch where they'd made their living and raised their children, Wayne, Kay Lynn and Brenda.

"In the days of my grandfather there were Herefords grazing the ranch, but that changed to black cattle for as long as I can remember," Brenda reminisces. "In my grandfather's day and into my father's ranching days, steer calves ran on these hills until they were 2 years old before they were sent on train cars to the Omaha Stockyards. They didn't breed heifers until they were 3 years old."

This was a common practice in the 1960s when Nebraska corn and feed production was a fraction of what it is today, serving as a reminder of just how far agriculture has come and the many advancements that have been made to continue to feed an expanding world.

Over the years, Earl and Brenda added Hereford influence back into the herd through the development of Angus-Hereford F1 crosses. While no red, white-faced bulls have roamed their pastures since, through artificial insemination (AI) used on the ranch since the late '80s, multiple black, white-faced mother cows have been developed. More recently, the addition of Balancer (Gelbvieh-Angus cross) bulls have added hybrid vigor. Currently, the commercial cow herd calves in the spring and Brenda utilizes AI for replacement heifer development.

It's no surprise Brenda has such a strong hand in the genetic manage-

ment of the cow herd – it's something she's been doing for more than 30 years.

"I can track some of my cattle today back to the two cows I started my FFA project with as an eighth grader," she explains. "Dad bought a pot load of bred cows around that time. Two of them were small white crosses of some kind and he gave them to me to start my FFA project."

In addition to FFA, the Junior Stock Growers organization was also a large part of Brenda's young life. She served as the first state president of the Junior Nebraska Cattlemen organization in 1988 – the year of the merger when Nebraska Cattlemen was formed.

While Brenda has spent her entire life, sans her college years, on the ranch, that wasn't necessarily her plan. After starting college at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and majoring in ag journalism with an emphasis in advertising, she switched her major at the end of her junior year to general ag with a minor in range management.

"Shortly after the start to my senior year, a long-time employee of our ranch passed away in a tragic accident," Brenda explains. She opted to take incompletes in all her courses for the academic year and went home to work

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Brenda and Dave Masek met while Brenda was attending the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Dave moved to Halsey to start his construction company when Brenda moved back to the ranch. *Photo courtesy of Brenda Masek.*



Brenda's mother, Claudia, was very active both in the community and Nebraska Cattlewomen, and Brenda credits the unflinching example her mother set as the primary reason for her involvement today. *Photo courtesy of Brenda Masek.*



Brenda and her father, Earl Bestol, Jr., are the current owners of Bestol and Masek Ranch. Earl Jr.'s parents purchased the original portion of the ranch, located seven miles northwest of Purdum, in 1957, making Brenda the third generation on the ranch. *Photo courtesy of Linda Tehon.*

on the ranch until the start of the next fall semester.

From there, the next year and a half was split between taking classes in Lincoln and working on the ranch, which meant driving some 250 miles one way. She spent her final semester taking correspondence courses from the ranch to work at home during calving season and complete her bachelor's degree.

inductee, leased the LLC to Brenda, sold her his cows and retired from the daily ranch responsibilities. He still lives on the ranch and enjoys driving the Sandhills.

While extending her college career came with its challenges, it also came with some surprises.

"I met my husband when I went back to college after the year at the ranch,"

"This program was very worthwhile, not only at the time, but it helped build the foundation for the working relationship with my parents over the next quarter century."

— Brenda Masek

"Dr. Ted 'Daddy' Doane and Dr. Jim Gosey in the animal science department, and Chuck Butterfield in the agronomy department moved heaven and earth to get me home for calving season," Brenda reminisces. "There was a bank in Purdum at that time and it was the only place that had a new thing called 'the internet' that we used to correspond so I could finish my degree."

With Brenda's mind now firmly made up to come back to the ranch full time, she and her parents seized the opportunity to take a workshop together on campus while she was still enrolled at the university called "Returning to the Farm." As a family, they learned more about each other's personal qualities, and short- and long-term operation goals and created a transition plan. As a result of this workshop, Earl and Claudia formed an LLC and started doing some estate planning.

"This program was very worthwhile, not only at the time, but it helped build the foundation for the working relationship with my parents over the next quarter century," Brenda says.

In 2013, the ranch lost an important partner when Claudia passed after a short bout with a very aggressive cancer. The following year, Earl, a 2010 Sandhills Cowboy Hall of Fame

Brenda says. "I was definitely not looking for a relationship when I met him – I was all about getting my degree and getting back to the ranch, and didn't have the time or the inclination for any distractions." But Dave Masek was persistent and even moved to Halsey to start his construction company when Brenda made her final move home. They married on New Year's Eve 1994.

Brenda and Dave don't work together day to day, but he's very supportive of her occupation and gifted her an ultrasound machine for their 25th wedding anniversary.

"I've been manually preg checking cows since the late '90s and have had both of my shoulders rebuilt," she explains. "By the end of pregging season, I was having a lot of tendonitis on my elbow." To help alleviate the physical stress of preg checking, Dave came up with this gem.

"He has always been a very good gift giver and he didn't falter with this," she says.

Masek Construction builds and remodels residential and commercial buildings, and takes on most construction jobs. Dave and his brother, Mark, built the new Nebraska Cattlemen office building in Lincoln. Along with a prop-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14



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erty inspection business and being a real estate agent with Agri Affiliates, he's taking his additional duties as Brenda's chauffeur during her Nebraska Cattlemen presidency seriously, introducing himself as Hoke. "I'm just here driving Miss Daisy," Dave says with a smile.



Brenda vaccinates calves at preconditioning last July at her ranch in Cherry County. While the daily routine changes with the seasons, the work is always done while keeping in mind the bigger goal of producing a better product in the beginning that delivers the most efficient end product. *Photo courtesy of Linda Teahon.*

Daily, Brenda works with two full-time employees and occasionally one or two seasonal employees or interns.

"We also have a wonderful neighboring relationship in our community where we pitch in and help each other during spring and fall cattle work or whenever it's needed," she boasts.

The daily routine changes with the seasons, but includes haying sub-irrigated meadow ground annually and upland hay when it's feasible. The work is always done keeping in mind the bigger goal of producing a better product in the beginning that delivers the most efficient end product.

"We want to make the best animal protein to feed the world in the most efficient way," she states.

Efficiency, she says, means being flexible because not every year is the same. For example, she says, "Traditionally, I sell the majority of my steers through a livestock auction market, but last year I sold the majority privately, and it was a very positive experience."

That philosophy has also led her to leadership positions within her community and state. Following her Junior Stock Growers involvement and college, Brenda remembers maintaining her Nebraska Cattlemen membership dues, but mostly being busy working on the ranch. Then, in the early 2010s, Loretta Hamilton asked her to work with Craig Miles and Marc Erickson to revitalize the Sandhills Affiliate.

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# THE VETERINARY TOOLBOX

## *Supplies, Rules and Plans to Prepare for Veterinary Emergencies and Urgencies*

By Micky Burch, *Nebraska Cattleman* Senior Writer

**M**y parents were married May 21, 1977, and as was customary, they received a set of travel luggage in a salad-bowl-era shade of green that can still be seen on reruns of *That '70s Show*. In approximately 1996, my dad took the smallest suitcase, probably intended for toiletries, from the luggage set and wrote "CATTLE HEALTH" on the top with a black marker. This served as his herd veterinary toolbox up until last year when, much to my mom's relief, the handle broke and she purchased him something she considered more appropriate for Christmas.

On any given day, one could open this DIY vet box and find syringes and needles in a variety of sizes; a castrating knife; an 8-inch curved needle with heavy suture thread; small, curved needles with dissolvable thread; a thermometer; scalpels; a needle holder/scissor combination tool; and LA-200.

Becky Funk, DVM, says that supplies considered "essential" to an operation depends entirely on the individual and their production setting and goals. Some producers may keep calving supplies in their vet box to process calves born on pasture.

Most commonly, my dad, a cowman of 45 years, treats respiratory, eye or foot issues in the field, but on occasion could deal with a vaginal prolapse while calving on pasture.

"The one thing that is absolutely essential to have in the toolbox is an appropriate way to restrain that animal for safe treatment – both for the safety of the animal and the people that are involved," says Becky Funk, DVM, Great Plains Veterinary Educational Center, Clay Center. "It doesn't have to be fancy or complicated, but it does need to be reliable and safe."

While these supplies may work in one man's personal vet box, Funk emphasizes that those particular products considered "essential" to an operation depends entirely on the individual and their production setting and goals.

"Regardless of which products those are, each producer should have a set of standard treatment protocols that are

followed for different scenarios, and exceptions to those protocols need to be discussed with their veterinarian," she stresses. "Using any product in a manner not directed on the label is illegal for a producer to do without veterinary direction, so that is something important to keep in mind when making treatment decisions in the field."

Rule No. 1 in Funk's book is for producers to establish a veterinary-client-patient relationship (VCPR) with their veterinarian. "For both routine day-to-day operation and emergency treatment, having a veterinarian involved will only become more critical going forward," Funk points out. Additionally, Funk says, there are legal restrictions to what veterinarians can do for patients without a valid VCPR.

### Assessing Ailments

Even with a good working relationship and VCPR, Funk expects an emergency call from clients at some point.

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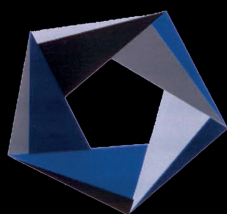


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“Emergencies happen to everyone,” she points out. “While we can’t eliminate them, we can have a plan.”

Part of that plan is being able to assess the emergency accurately. Funk’s Rule No. 2 is that not all emergencies are created equal. A true emergency, she says, will have characteristics like major trauma, severe bleeding/blood loss, exposed bones, dystocia, a systemic disease that demonstrates rapid progression or severe/intractable pain.

Basically, a true emergency demonstrates imminent danger of loss of life or permanent damage to the animal.

A veterinary urgency, on the other hand, certainly needs to be addressed, but, as Funk explains, needs attention in hours – not minutes. While there may be trauma, it doesn’t result in loss of function or change in mental activity. Urgencies may include minor lacerations, lameness not involving obvious fractures or limb displacement, or

systemic diseases that don’t appear to compromise respiratory function or to be progressing rapidly. However, Funk warns producers to keep a watchful eye on veterinary urgencies because they can transition to emergencies.

Next are what Funk calls “I just noticed it” emergencies – problems that simply go unnoticed until they are advanced. This may happen, for example, if the stock is out on pasture, making it difficult to lay an eye on every single animal. Noticeably aged wounds, lumps and bumps, and chronic injuries and wounds fall into this category.

“These problems are generally difficult to manage and are unfruitful to address as emergencies,” Funk explains.

Finally, there’s the emergency of convenience, which happens when an incident may rise to emergency status because it’s a convenient time for the owner to seek care. Emergencies of convenience may or may not have been an emergency initially, and now that care is being sought, still may or may not qualify as an emergency. Emergencies of convenience may be incidences like long-term weight loss, extended periods of lameness, symptoms of systemic disease or possible dystocia.

Regardless of the type of emergency, Funk warns producers that a call to her office will lead to Rule No. 3: the emergency will be triaged, which means you will be asked for information about your emergency to help determine the order, or rank, in which your emergency will be handled at her clinic. The information given by the producer will help determine if it’s a true emergency, an urgency, if it was just noticed or if it’s a convenient time for the producer to bring the animal in to the clinic. The more accurate the producer can be in the description of the ailment, the better prepared the veterinary staff will be when receiving the animal.

Funk recommends getting to know the veterinary doctors and staff not only as part of a VCPR, but also as part of preparing for an emergency. “Your

## CALVING KIT CHECKLIST

Keeping a list of vital supplies handy is important during calving season. Below is a supply and equipment checklist from BioZyme/VitaFerm, curated from *igrow.org*.

### Supplies for the Cow Delivering a Calf

- Bucket for warm water and disinfectant
- Disinfectant – cow friendly to put in warm water bucket (ask vet for suggestions)
- Surgical scrub to use for disinfectant (cow friendly like Nolvasan or Betadine, ask vet for help)
- OB sleeves
- OB chains (2)
- OB handles (2)
- Lubricant
- Calf puller (if necessary)
- Calf puller bag (for storage and to keep sanitary)
- Warm water source to fill bucket for cleaning pulling equipment
- Plastic cup to get water and disinfectant from the bucket to clean the cow

### Supplies for the Calf Following Birth

- Iodine for the navel
- Syringes for vaccination/medication
- Needles for vaccination/medication

“For most cow-calf producers, calving season is the time you’re virtually guaranteed to have an emergency of some sort, so put some thought into how those scenarios need to be handled and what your particular comfort level is with dealing with emergencies,” Becky Funk, DVM, advises. “Some producers are quite comfortable sorting out difficult dystocias, for instance, and keep a very complete calving kit on hand that can do everything short of a surgical intervention, while others prefer to allow their vet to handle these situations and maintain [only] basic calving supplies.”

- Vaccinations/medications that fit into vaccination protocol suggested by vet

- Portable de-horning paste (if applicable)
- Ear tag applicator
- Ear tags
- Ear tag marking pen
- Old towels to clean and warm the calf

### Supplies for the Calf That Won’t Nurse

- Stainless steel bucket to collect cow colostrum or mix colostrum replacer
- Colostrum replacer
- Milk replacer
- Electrolyte powder
- Esophageal feeding tube with tubing bag
- Calf bottle with screw-on nipple

### Supplies for Clean-Up

- Bristle brush for calving equipment
- Wire whisk for calf bottles

### Additional Helpful Items

- Calf claim product
- A long-acting tetracycline in the case of a retained placenta

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24





**Lot 1**  
BW 1.7 WW 66 YW 110 M 33 M&G 67 REA .58  
IMF .36 CHB 146



**Lot 37**  
BW 1.1 WW 64 YW 104 M 35 M&G 67 REA .27  
IMF .36 CHB 116



**Lot 48**  
BW 3.9 WW 61 YW 106 M 34 M&G 64 REA .41  
IMF .37 CHB 135



**Lot 25**  
BW 1.8 WW 64 YW 106 M 34 M&G 66 REA .64  
IMF .49 CHB 163CHB 163



**Lot 148**  
BW 3.3 WW 63 YW 107 M 34 M&G 65 REA .25  
IMF .13 CHB 112

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BW 2.5 WW 61 YW 108 M 35 M&G 66 REA .42  
IMF .21 CHB 142



**Lot 91**  
BW 3.7 WW 63 YW 101 M 36 M&G 68 REA .58  
IMF .28 CHB 138



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# Winter Weather Outlook

By Al Dutcher, Associate Nebraska State Climatologist, Nebraska State Climate Office

**L**a Niña conditions have reformed in the Equatorial Pacific for a second consecutive year, but the temperature anomalies in this region are forecast to peak at about 50 percent of last winter's maximum of 1.7° C below normal. Using temperature anomalies as a strength classification, this year's event will be considered weak if the anomaly remains between 0.50 and 0.99° C below normal. Last winter's moderate event (-1.00 to -1.99° C) pushed the upper end of the temperature range at 1.7 to 1.8° C below normal.

The biggest question going into this winter is whether the anomalous precipitation pattern that developed across the High Plains last winter will be replicated once again. Based on pure statistics, last winter should have trended toward below-normal temperatures and above-normal moisture across the northern High Plains (Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota). However, the primary storm track created a split-flow pattern that favored the southern stream, and subsequent storm activity passed through the southern half of the

High Plains region (Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas and southern Nebraska).

Looking back at historical La Niña events that were of equal or greater magnitude than last winter's event, it appears that one out of every four events develops this split-flow pattern. So even though the Northern Plains typically sees colder and stormier winters about 70 percent of the time, it is not guaranteed. Strong atmospheric ridging across the western third of the United States pushed surface systems either northeastward over the top of the ridge or southeastward into the southern Great Basin where they were directed eastward by the southern jet stream.

A persistence forecast would argue for similar conditions to develop this winter. However, this fall, a more active storm pattern has developed to our west than last winter. In addition, the east to northeast movement of these systems directed the subsequent surface lows toward the Central and Northern Plains. Across the eastern Dakotas and western Minnesota, cumulative 2021 fall precipitation totals exceeded

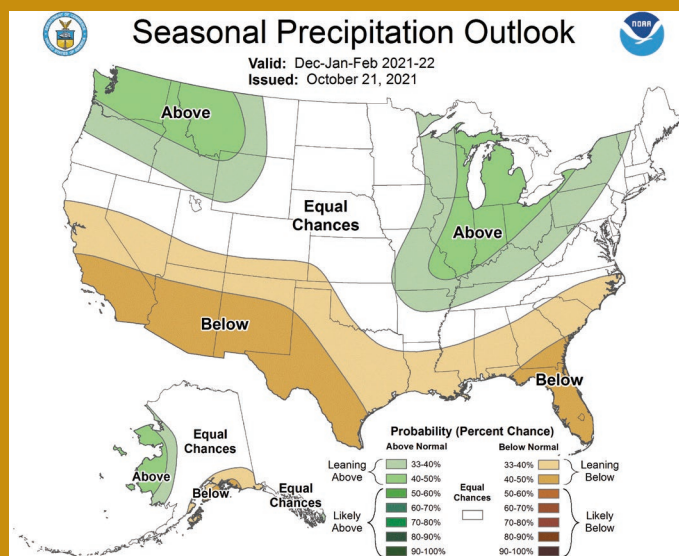
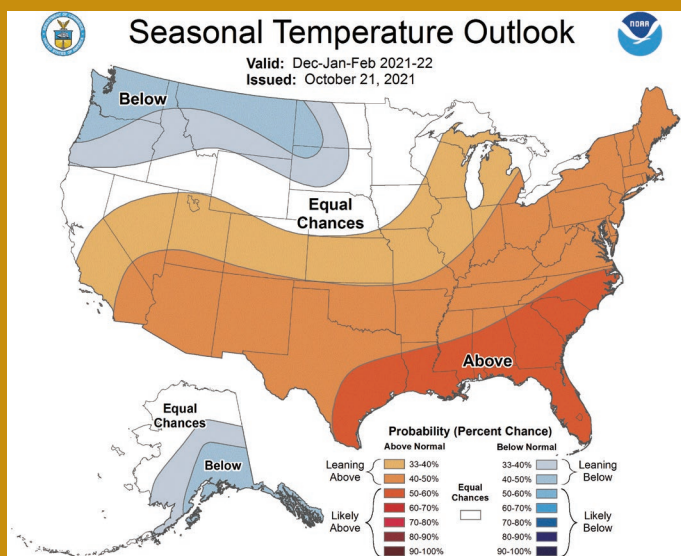
what was received from September 2020 through April 2021.

In addition to the increased storm activity for our northern neighbors, an atmospheric river event inundated the Pacific Northwest southward through central California during the second half of October. The term "atmospheric river" is just fancy terminology for a thin ribbon of water vapor that has tropical origins interacting with low pressure moving into the western United States and enhancing rainfall.

In fact, these atmospheric river events produce as much as 50 percent of the water supply for areas west of the Continental Divide, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). In addition, historically, 80 percent of the flood damage can be directly tied to atmospheric river events. When all atmospheric river events are analyzed together, January is the most common month for development.

What is unusual about this fall's atmospheric river event was how early it developed. You have to go back to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22



NOAA's Climate Prediction Center official national winter temperature and precipitation outlooks issued Oct. 21, 2021.



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2018 to see such a strong event develop during the late fall. So much snow fell in the California Sierras during the 2018-19 winter, that spring runoff led to the Oroville Dam failure. It also led to heavy snowfall accumulations across the northern two-thirds of Nebraska and subsequent flooding due to the development of a bomb cyclone in early March 2019.

NOAA's analysis of winter (December through February only) snowfall patterns from historical La Niña events indicate that above-normal snowfall anomalies are most likely across the central and northern High Plains during weak La Niña events. The eastward extent of these anomalies includes the upper Mississippi River valley and the western Great Lakes region. As the events get stronger, statistical analysis by NOAA suggests that the positive snow anomalies shift toward the northern High Plains, Red River Valley and headwater region of the Mississippi River.

Below-normal La Niña winter snowfall anomalies are most concentrated across the western half of the southern High Plains region (Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, eastern Colorado and eastern New Mexico). There is a slight northward extent to these negative anomalies into the southern half of the Nebraska Panhandle and the western tier of counties bordering Colorado in the southwest part of the state. The strongest La Niña events typically expand these snow-deficit areas into the northern Panhandle, along with areas west of a line from North Platte to McCook.

I expect to see a robust precipitation pattern across the eastern two-thirds of Nebraska this winter, with north-central and northeast Nebraska having the highest odds that these conditions will develop. However, winter is not just about precipitation. The harshness of our upcoming winter will depend on how often Arctic air will move from northern Canada southward into the

contiguous United States and how long each of these events last.

If our fall weather is an indication of what may come this winter, then variability will be the key player. In simple layman's terms, I would not be shocked if Nebraska experiences periods of very active weather whenever these atmospheric river events develop across the western United States. Normal to above-normal temperatures would be expected in advance of and during their passage across the central High Plains. Once they pass east of the state, the intensity and longevity of cold air moving south out of Canada will be a function of whether these systems can merge with the Hudson Bay upper air low to carve out deep upper air troughs over the eastern half of the United States.

The past few winters have seen deep upper air troughs develop over the eastern half of the United States during late January through early March. This is consistent with short-term

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24

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“Nobody says, ‘no’ to Loretta Hamilton,” Brenda laughs. “The three of us took it very seriously.”


At the end of 2012, Brenda had spinal surgery and was in recovery for three months, which gave her a bit of a break from ranch work and a prime opportunity to focus on rebuilding the Sandhills Affiliate and reconnecting with the state organization.

Part of the reason Brenda was keen on taking Hamilton up on her request was because her parents set such a good example of involvement, be it community or beyond.

“Being a fire department director is something I did from my father’s lead,” Brenda says, noting there is no fire station in Purdum – there are eight fire trucks housed by ranches throughout the district, including one at the Bestol and Masek Ranch. She is also involved in the community church.

Brenda’s mother, Claudia, was a Nebraska Cattlewomen leader whose passions and interests leaned toward promotion and education. While Brenda has always been attracted to policy and the political side, she credits her mother as the primary reason for her involvement in Nebraska Cattlemen. Going into her presidency, Brenda wants to focus on bringing the different sectors of the cattle industry together to work toward a common goal.

Since helping to reinstate the Sandhills Affiliate, Brenda has served as its president, Nebraska Cattlemen Region 2 Member Services vice chairman twice and sat on the Nebraska Cattlemen Executive and Finance Committee prior to becoming an officer. She has also been recognized as a Nebraska Cattlemen Top Hand for membership recruitment.

Brenda steps into her role as 2022 Nebraska Cattleman president during the Nebraska Cattleman Annual Convention in Kearney in December. By the grace of God and with a ribeye steak she goes. ■■


veterinarian needs to know what animals you have and what your routine management practices are. They should have access to the health history of your animals,” she says.

**“Emergencies happen to everyone. While we can’t eliminate them, we can have a plan.”**  
– Becky Funk, DVM

On the flip side, she points out, “You should be familiar with their emergency protocols so when you need care, time isn’t lost trying to figure out how to contact them. Open communication can be a tool to avoid an emergency all together.”

Additional preparations producers can make are to either be prepared to transport animals to the clinic or to restrain the animal at their location. This is especially true for what Funk calls “predictable emergency” – periods like calving, weaning, spring turnout or breeding.

“Conversations with your veterinarian about how to prepare for these periods are helpful,” Funk says. “Know your comfort level dealing with situations and when to call for help.”


It’s important to put some thought into your veterinary toolbox. It could contain supplies, treatments to use in the field that you’ve discussed with your veterinarian or a list of phone numbers to call in an emergency. It could be a fancy, custom-made cattle veterinary box, a tackle box intended for fishing or a pea-soup green suitcase swiped from an aging luggage set. In the nearly four-decade span of my memory, I don’t recall that little suitcase being used for its originally intended purpose very many times. No, it was destined for bigger things. It may not have traveled worldly – or even out of the tri-county area – but it’s certainly seen a thing or two in its day. ■■

trends across Nebraska that indicate a strong February cooling over the past 30 years. The second-most-significant winter trend across the state is a strong increase in liquid equivalent December precipitation, albeit with warming temperatures. This has led to more rain events vs. snow events, but has led to an increase in soil moisture recharge due to a movement toward soil surface freezing later in the winter.


**Expect to see a robust precipitation pattern across the eastern two-thirds of Nebraska this winter, with north-central and northeast Nebraska having the highest odds that these conditions will develop.**

If we are to see a reversal of this trend toward the first half of this coming winter, a large snowstorm and/or blizzard will need to develop across the northern High Plains so that it acts as a reinforcement of Arctic air moving southward. Otherwise, lack of snow cover will make it easier to moderate the air mass (warm it up) before it reaches Nebraska and tilt the odds that the cumulative impact of daily winter temperatures will create a winter that will have average to above-average temperatures.

## Bottom Line

It appears that this winter will be more active than last year across the Northern Plains. Precipitation events will depend on the frequency of storm activity moving into the northern half of the U.S. West Coast. As these systems move east, the intensity of cold air that filters in behind the systems as they pass east of us will depend on whether they can merge with the Hudson Bay low and carve out deep upper air troughs over the eastern half of the United States. ■■






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# Improving Cattle Market Outlook

By James Robb, Senior Economist Emeritus, Livestock Marketing Information Center,  
and Elliott Dennis, Ph.D., Livestock Extension Economist, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

It's easy to classify 2021 as disappointing. Still, below the surface, some important positive signposts emerged. Specifically, the foundation was set for a cyclical downturn in U.S. beef output, and the demand (domestic and foreign) for cattle products was robust. In 2022, tighter beef (meat) supplies and improved demand for cattle by packers should translate into year-over-year gains for fed cattle prices. Combining higher fed cattle prices with a normal 2022 Midwest growing season (consequently moderating feedstuff costs) should give an added boost to yearling and calf prices in 2022.

## The Bad and the Good of 2021

Nebraska cattle producers faced many challenges in 2021, from both the markets and Mother Nature. A partial list is:

1. Due to constrained animal harvest levels, in large part due to limited labor availability and COVID-19-related processing plant throughput constraints, by historical standards, wholesale beef prices were unprec-

- edentedly high compared to those of fed cattle, which remained in check.
2. Higher feedstuff costs skyrocketed feedlot cost of gains and capped calf prices, largely driven by low corn stocks-to-use ratio and drought conditions.
3. On a national level, drought accelerated beef cow herd liquidation and, at times, pressured cull cow prices.
4. Late winter and early spring storms hit many cow-calf operations, hurt animals' performance in feedlots and delayed fed cattle marketing schedules.

Was anything good? The economic answer is yes. Underlying demand dimensions for the industry were much more positive than expected throughout 2021. In order of importance, those were:

1. Domestic consumer demand for beef was outstanding; by some measures, the best in decades.
2. The value of non-meat items produced by an animal (hide, variety meats, etc.) surged, driven mainly by export markets.
3. Beef export tonnage consistently beat forecasts and was record large.

4. Beef benefited from high competing meat and poultry prices.

## Looking Ahead: Drivers in 2022

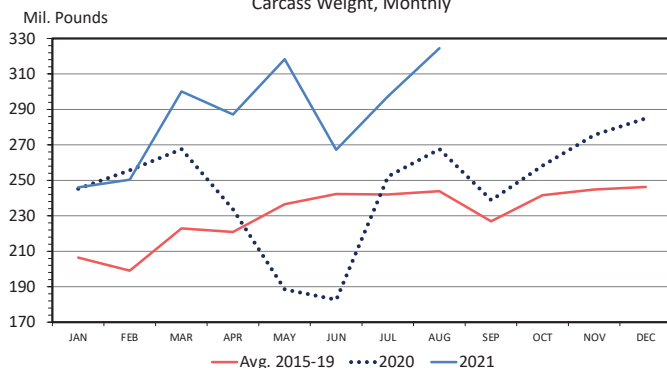
The new year is forecast to bring more and more consumers back to restaurants. Wage rates may continue to increase and should at least keep pace with inflation. In aggregate, U.S. economic growth should remain positive, though the rate of gain is expected to moderate from that achieved during 2021's first two quarters of pandemic rebound. From a beef perspective, we look for U.S. consumer demand to remain historically strong, even if it moderates some compared to 2021.

U.S. beef (meat) export tonnage in 2022 may slip slightly from the record-high of 2021. That would be the normal economic consequence of high beef prices. Still, beef exports are forecast to be the second highest ever. Further, the dollar value of beef and byproduct sales may set another all-time high.

Wholesale beef-to-fed-price relationships may remain outside historical bounds into 2022. That relationship

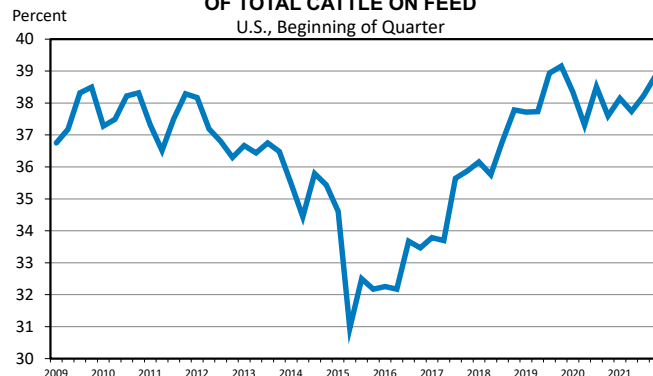
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**US BEEF AND VEAL EXPORTS**  
Carcass Weight, Monthly



Data Source: USDA-ERS & USDA-FAS  
Livestock Marketing Information Center

**HEIFERS ON FEED AS A PERCENT  
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U.S., Beginning of Quarter



Data Source: USDA-NASS, Compiled by LMIC  
Livestock Marketing Information Center



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can remain outside historical bounds into 2022 due to lingering supply chain issues. But as the year progresses, we expect the trend will be toward further normalization. A driver will be tightening fed cattle supplies.

The U.S. calf crop shrank during 2021. Nationally, the beef cow herd cyclically peaked with the Jan. 1, 2020, count by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service. Based on female slaughter year-to-date and the relatively large number of heifers on feed as of Oct. 1 of this year – as of Jan. 1, 2022, the inventory is projected to be the smallest since 2016.

Overall, U.S. beef production in 2022 is forecast to decline about 2 percent compared to 2021. If realized, that will be the first year-over-year drop since 2015.

U.S. crop and forage prospects, positive or negative, will be key to yearling and calf prices in 2022. "Normal" responses by farmers and trendline national yields would suggest corn prices that are well below the peak

levels of 2021. Volatile corn prices will quickly adjust feeder cattle futures and cash prices.

## The Bottom Line: Prices and Profits

So, what does this all mean for profits along the supply chain? First, packers should continue to have large profits by long-term standards but should moderate.

Feedlots will have fewer animals on feed. Improved demand for their slaughter-ready animals will ultimately lead to higher fed cattle prices. The largest year-over-year gains will likely be during the first half of 2022 because the comparisons are against depressed levels of 2021. For the calendar year, unless another black swan event hits the animal processing sector, the five-market average fed steer price is forecast to be in the low to mid \$130s per hundredweight. That would be a year-over-year

jump of about 10 percent. Peak prices may occur in April and May.

Uncertainty in feedstuff costs and spring pasture conditions may keep a lid on yearling and calf prices during the first few months of 2022. Our current forecast is that yearling and calf prices will exceed 2021 throughout the year. Yearling and calf prices could peak in the fourth quarter of 2022, assuming a typical Midwest corn crop. A 500- to 600-pound steer calf at weaning in the fall of 2022 could easily average \$20 per hundredweight above 2021.

Cow-calf operators will face higher production costs but stronger calf prices. Estimated typical rancher return over cash costs plus pasture rent is projected to be the best since 2017.

Given the uncertainties inherent in the market and tight margins producers have faced, watch for risk management opportunities. But remember, in periods of cyclically tightening cattle supplies, prices typically strengthen year over year. ■ Ng ■

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# Leased Agricultural Land Brings Challenges and Opportunities

By Amy Hays, Educator, Noble Research Institute, and Caitlin Hebbert, Livestock Consultant, Noble Research Institute



**T**he 2017 Census of Agriculture showed a significant rise in the number of leased grazing land acres. Approximately 30 percent of land used for ranching is leased. Of the rented acreage, most is owned by non-operator landowners. This is in contrast to the past, when land available for rent was often held by active operator landowners who were not using the land in their operations at the time.

This shift has brought opportunities and challenges. As land prices have skyrocketed during the last 25 years, the cost of acquiring land has been a barrier to new and beginning farmers as well as a significant problem for tenured operators who want to expand their grazing lands. As the amount of rental land has increased, it is important to look ahead and begin to understand how rental lands play a role in production agriculture at a rate previously not seen, particularly for new and beginning operators who may have to rely mostly on rental lands until they have enough capital to afford the high cost of land ownership.

This article will concentrate on some of the human dimension factors that are in play with leased lands.

## Challenges for New and Beginning Ranchers

The United States is facing a significant challenge in recruiting and retaining replacement farmers and ranchers. The number of new farmers and ranchers and the generational transfer of land to younger family owners is not keeping up with the number of operators who are retiring from farming and ranching.

For more information about this trend, visit [www.noble.org/replacing-farmers](http://www.noble.org/replacing-farmers).

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the number of replacement farmers has been shrinking since 1985 for various reasons, including loss of returning rural generations, lack of new beginning farmers and ranchers, and early financial failure of new operations.

An increasing number of rental acres has potential to help support those trying to enter farming and ranching. The lower capital cost of rentals makes new operations possible but does not necessarily set them up for success because of several underlying factors:

- Support from lending institutions
  - The uncertainty of the tenure of leases creates a new risk factor for agricultural lending institutions because many rentals are only done yearly.
- Short-lease tenure – Many non-operating landowners do not want to lease multiple years. Some of the hesitation comes from uncertainty in their continued ownership of the land and if there is a desire to lease it multiple years.
- Fear of conflict – Both the lessors and lessees do not have much guidance or structure around conflict resolution.
- Stewardship principles – The lessor and lessee may not share the same stewardship goals.

Leased lands might be one of the only alternatives for new and beginning ranchers or those who wish to grow their operations. As the number of non-operator landowners grows, the number of potential acres available for lease may grow. However, it is important to note that there is no certainty that those lands will become available for lease. This may pose another problem with

fallow and idle lands not being available or used for agriculture production.

## Building Strong Lessor-Lessee Relationships

Rental lands are appealing for starting or expanding operations, but there are challenges that go along with building lessor-lessee relationships. One prominent challenge that may arise is the presence of conflicting goals. If you want to lease land, and continue to do so for years to come, you'll have to learn to be flexible and to adapt.

Be willing to shape your operation on that property to, first and foremost, meet the goals of the landowner, then prioritize some of your goals. Producers who lease land can often get this backwards. Putting yourself in the shoes of the landowner will go a long way toward meeting both. This doesn't mean sacrificing your goals entirely but rather considering the landowner's goals first and being willing to shape your operation to benefit the lessee-landowner relationship in both the present and long term.

We have seen some cases where rental costs were lowered because of the lessee helping the lessor meet management goals. For example, a lessee who has a planter handy could set food plots for a lessor with wildlife goals. This would offset what it would have cost for the lessor to hire someone, so they could lower rental costs. It's also well-known that it's hard to find a good lessee. If you make yourself a good lessee, it can incentivize lower lease prices just to keep you around.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 34



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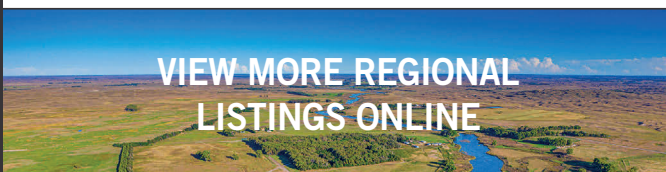
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## Leasing Land to Try New Ideas

Despite the difficulties, leased lands may provide a solution for a critical need in the very near future of affordable production lands that can be used to build new enterprises. Leased lands may be used as a bridge to reduce the financial risks of starting enterprises or to fill in gaps for enterprises that need to rely on them during times of drought or enterprise growth.

Leased lands can also provide some freedom to build operations with new mindsets or values that some operators feel are not available to them on lands that are currently owned or passed down. It is not uncommon for there to be a difference in views on family operations in pathways to land stewardship. For some operators, leased lands may be a way to test and try different management principles. Although it feels like an uncomfortable situation to be in, sometimes there is a difference in “old ideas” and “new ideas” that makes leased lands attractive to producers. It’s usually not a situation of right or wrong, but rather support or risk aversion between family operators. Sometimes both parties would like to test ideas off the family lands.

## Dealing with Different Perspectives

Different generations often have a different look at many things, including their views on stewardship, the definition of *sustainable* and their philosophies about ecological principles. We refer to some of those differences as their “agro-environmental ethos,” meaning they have come to the table with different feelings about their place in agriculture and the environment.

Different generations may feel very differently about their obligations as land stewards, such as the ways they want to use the lands, the ways they want to implement management and

their views on food. Thoughts may not be the same between parents and children or parents and grandchildren. This can also be the same with different generations in leased-land relationships. The same human conflict issues can present themselves on leased lands as well as family lands.

It’s important for everyone involved to understand that even on leased lands, these conversations still need to happen so that everyone understands each other’s views. A really good way to get all of that out on the table is to have management plans so you can talk about why you want to stock at a certain number or why you want to use prescribed fire. Having a plan tells the story about why you want to make the decisions. Both lessees and lessors should have management plans. Those plans help guide the stewardship principles you want to adhere to. Many conflicts happen because nobody has a plan that can be explained to the other party; instead “plans” are all stored away in minds and translated as feelings instead of strategy.

## Opportunities for Stewardship on Leased Lands

One of the misconceptions about leased lands is that non-owner operators do not care about the land they lease and that non-operator landowners are only interested in getting paid and not in the management and long-term care of the property. American Farmland Trust recently released a report on a survey “Understanding and Activating Non-Operator Landowners: Non-Operator Landowner Survey Multi-State Report” at [farmlandinfo.org/publications/understanding-and-activating-non-operator-landowners/](http://farmlandinfo.org/publications/understanding-and-activating-non-operator-landowners/) that helped put some of those misconceptions aside. The main outcome of the report was that both parties can and do have stewardship values that guide their rental and leasing of lands. The following takeaways from the report can provide insight to both

lessors and lessees who are interested in maintaining stewardship principles as a goal.

- Lessors: Actively seek lessees who share the same principles. Put stewardship principles and expectations into the contract as well as ways to monitor and create accountability for lessees to maintain long-term sustainability for rented lands. Stewardship and conservation tools as well as financial and technical support are still available on rented lands.
- Lessees: Ask for multiple-year leases to build sustainability in practices and economics. Develop forage, grazing and livestock management plans, even on rented lands.
- Both: Establish clear communication options and plans, especially for conflict management. Make clear who covers what expenses and costs.

## The Future of Leased Lands

The upward trend in leased lands was seen in both the 2012 and 2017 Census of Agriculture. If there is no significant change in trends in the buying of agriculture lands, we anticipate that the 2022 Census of Agriculture will see a continued upward number of lands owned by non-operating landlords as well as an increasing percentage of production lands that are leased for use.

In the future, we anticipate that more resources will be available to help solve these challenges. Potential solutions could include information on managing and leasing contracts, how to find available leased lands, ways to advertise for like-minded lessees and managing risk for leased lands. In any case, both lessors and lessees will have roles to play in defining the sustainability of those landscapes in the near future.

**Editor’s Note:** We extend our thanks to the Noble Research Institute for sharing this article with *Nebraska Cattleman*. For more information about the Noble Research Institute or to learn more, visit [www.noble.org](http://www.noble.org). ■



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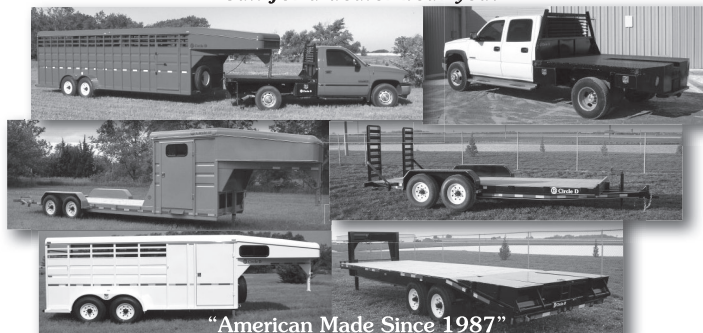
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# BACK IN THE RING

By Jessie Topp Becker, *Nebraska Cattleman* Managing Editor

In 2020, many of our favorite events were cancelled – concerts, fairs, weddings and the list goes on. For livestock producers, that list also included several livestock shows. Shows including the National Western Stock Show were cancelled all together, while other events like the American Royal, Black Hills Stock Show and Nebraska Cattlemen's Classic went on with some alterations, such as reduced capacity.

Amidst all the uncertainty caused by COVID-19, a new livestock show, Cattlemen's Congress, also made its debut, attracting livestock producers from across the country.

For the industry, livestock shows are about more than simply exhibiting cattle. These events are prime opportunities for producers to market their genetics and network with other producers and allied industry representatives.

With life mostly back to normal, many of these events were back in action this fall, and producers are ready to be back in the ring at more shows in the coming months. The following are just a handful of shows that are preparing to host producers and their livestock, just like they have for many years. ■



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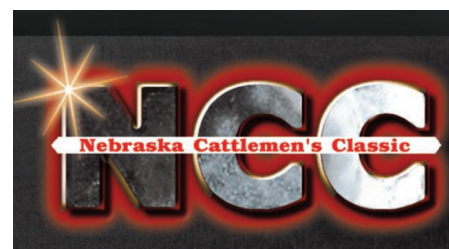
Fort Worth, Texas, Jan. 14-Feb. 5, 2022



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# Nebraska Cattlemen Events

## Staying up to Date

Have you seen all the social media posts Nebraska Cattlemen has been making? The communication team has been working hard to highlight the events that Nebraska Cattlemen has hosted. You will find social media posts on Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat and Instagram. Here are a few posts you will want to watch for: Market Monday, which highlights the previous week's market commentary; Herd It Hear, a post that shares recent podcasts that you might want to listen to; and Member Spotlight, which highlights Nebraska Cattlemen members and how they are involved in the beef industry.

## Call for Speakers

We are on the lookout for new speakers and topics that will stimulate, engage and motivate our members. We are looking for fresh ideas and inspiring new perspectives. Presentations should be current and relevant to Nebraska producers. Our goal is to create a broad range of opportunities for our members to hear helpful and practical topics. No sales pitches, please!

Over the next year, there are several opportunities for speakers at meetings across the state including affiliate meetings; Nebraska Cattlemen Midyear Meeting; and local, regional and state education meetings.

We look forward to your submission. Submit your proposal by completing the form on the Nebraska Cattlemen website. ■■■



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### GELBIEH THURS, FEB. 3

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Show 9am | Sale 1pm

### MAINE-ANJOU FRI, FEB. 4

Show 10am | Sale following Limousin sale

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Show 11am | Sale following Maine-Anjou sale

### SIMMENTAL SAT, FEB. 5

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**Mark Goes, Professor of  
Agriculture Business and  
Management Technology,  
Southeast Community College**

A portrait of a man with a grey beard and mustache, wearing a black cowboy hat, glasses, a white shirt, and a bolo tie. He is holding a small red and white object in his left hand. The background is blue with large white letters.

Thanks is due as well to SCC as I was allowed to leverage the Foundation Grant against SCC funds to help cover the students' registration, travel and lodging expenses.

The Nebraska Cattlemen Foundation (NCF) provides grants annually to professors and instructors through the Nebraska Beef Industry Endowment and the Nebraska Range and Conservation Endowment. These grants honor professors and instructors who are providing cutting-edge research and/or student instruction in beef industry-related or range management and conservation-related areas. In December 2020, the NCF awarded a Nebraska Beef Industry Endowment grant to Mark Goes at Southeast Community College and a Nebraska Range and Conservation Endowment grant to Dirac Twidwell, Ph.D. Below are reports on how they utilized the grants within their programs.

Key roles of a foundation are education, research and promotion. It is my intent that the gracious grant of those endowment funds served well to educate those students directly. Their observation of research findings and the instruction for application of those discoveries should help them to produce more beef more efficiently. Having experienced this event, they should be poised to confidently promote our cattle industry more effectively into the future and hopefully become permanent fixtures within the Nebraska Cattlemen and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association. For this I offer you my greatest "Thanks!"



CONTINUED ON PAGE 40

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Range and Conservation Endowment Award, I have released new scientific material that provides better guidance for addressing woody encroachment across America's grasslands. For the first time, we have scientific guidance that helps land managers assess and eliminate the underlying ecological risks that make grasslands vulnerable

to encroachment. For too long, our management philosophy has followed a "command and control" approach that reacts to the problem and simply hasn't kept pace with the rate of grassland loss to encroachment in the Great Plains. This guide offers a new approach that confronts risks to grasslands in a way that efficiently, effectively and


more economically manages grassland resources.

The new science guidance has been inspired by a new Great Plains Grasslands Initiative in Nebraska, Kansas, South Dakota and Oklahoma – led by new technical guidance and programmatic change within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Nationally, the USDA NRCS used the science as the basis to release improved national guidance on the management of woody encroachment, recognizing it as one of the two primary threats to rangelands in the Great Plains in the NRCS Working Lands for Wildlife's Great Plains Grasslands Biome Framework for Conservation Action. This science guide also comes on the heels of new technology in rangelands that provides the first-ever monitoring platform to track vegetation change across U.S. rangelands (Rangeland Analysis Platform).

I am using the funds from the Nebraska Range and Conservation Endowment Award to hold a series of trips in Nebraska's rangelands and write a publication on how new rangeland technology and scientific strategies are fostering large-scale, collaborative private lands grassland conservation initiatives.

You can use the following websites to learn more about how efforts in Nebraska are being adopted as part of state and national rangeland conservation efforts:

- New Science Guide: <https://wlfw.rangelands.app/great-plains/woodland-expansion/>
- Rangeland Analysis Platform (RAP): <http://rangelands.app>
- New NRCS Grassland Biome Framework: <https://wlfw.rangelands.app/great-plains/>
- New NE NRCS Great Plains Grasslands Initiative (GPGI): website in development ■ Ng ■



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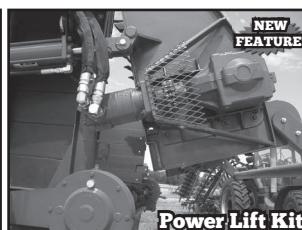
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By Jeff Willis  
NCIG Director



## Agriculture and Ransomware

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has shared reports of criminals increasingly using ransomware to affect the food supply chain and cause issues for the agriculture industry. Specifically, ransomware attackers have created disruptions for farms and ranches, producers, processors, markets and even restaurants. Ransomware attacks can lead to severe financial loss and productivity declines, in addition to theft of intellectual property and personally identifiable information. The attacks may even cause reputational harm.

Ransomware is a form of malicious software used by cyber criminals. After gaining access to a victim's network, they launch a ransomware attack that encrypts the victim's systems and data. The criminals then demand a ransom

in return for a decryption key. In some cases, even when a decryption key is provided, not all the data can be restored.

Many have heard of the JBS Foods cybersecurity event that occurred earlier this year. The company shut down five of its U.S. plants in response to an organized attack. Even with immediate action and the ability to resolve many of the issues because of their cybersecurity protocols, redundant systems and encrypted backup servers, JBS still paid the equivalent of \$11 million in ransom.

While JBS Foods is considered the world's largest meat supplier and may appear to be a more worthwhile target for a cybersecurity attack, that is not always the case. Criminals and hackers are attacking small to mid-sized companies because they think they are less

prepared to prevent and respond to an attack. Also, the size of your operation does not mean your data is not valuable. They are looking for personally identifiable information (PII), protected health information (PHI) and payment card industry (PCI) information, all of which can be bought and sold on the black market. Or they understand that the data is vital to your operation and may have a high probability of receiving the ransom payment.

NCIG's team can work with you to create a cyber liability program specific to your operation. We get to know you, your operation and your exposures as we find innovative solutions.

At FNIC, our clients are unfortunately not exempt from this criminal enterprise. In 2020, we had five times more cyber claims recorded than in 2018 and 2019. In 2019, the average remediation costs for a ransomware attack were more than \$761,000. In 2020, the costs more than doubled to \$1.85 million. There is no discrimination in the cyber world. If they can get through your door, they will let themselves in.

Fortunately, for our clients, many had cyber policies in place for these claims. Cyber liability insurance can cover costs associated with cyber attacks and they provide a range of coverages, including:

- Business income loss
- Ransom payments
- Costs to replace/restore electronic data
- Notification costs

Many policies include cyber risk management tools that can protect an organization before an event occurs. In addition, they can provide access to information technology and cyber legal experts who can provide advice and assistance before, during and after an attack.



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CONTINUED ON PAGE 44



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In addition to insurance, there are measures organizations can take to secure their data. One specific measure that can greatly reduce attacks is multifactor authentication (MFA). MFA is a security method that requires the use of two or more authentication factors to verify a user's identity. MFA adds a layer to the login process that helps confirm that users are who they claim to be. It also helps keep systems safe even if one set of credentials (such as a password) has been compromised.

NCIG's team can work with you to create a cyber liability program specific

to your operation. The program that works for JBS Foods is different than the program that will work for you. We get to know you, your operation and your exposures as we find innovative solutions. For more information about cyber security and how cyber insurance can help, contact Jeff Willis, NCIG director, at [NCIG@necattlemen.org](mailto:NCIG@necattlemen.org) or (402) 861-7045.

**About NCIG:** NCIG was established as a partnership between Nebraska Cattlemen and FNIC, formerly The Harry A. Koch Co., to provide you, Nebraska's beef producers, with risk management services specific to the work you do.

This joint venture is a valuable benefit for current and new Nebraska Cattlemen members. With NCIG, you have access to a variety of leading carriers to provide a vast selection of products at competitive rates. Our team of licensed professionals provides support with claims, loss control, safety and compliance. You also have access to personal and employee health insurance options, including access to a direct primary care program powered by Strada Healthcare. Learn more at [nebrascacattlemen.org/ncig](http://nebrascacattlemen.org/ncig) or by contacting Jeff Willis, NCIG director, at [NCIG@necattlemen.org](mailto:NCIG@necattlemen.org) or (402) 861-7045. ■ **NC** ■

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The first half of the Nebraska legislative session may have adjourned *sine die* (with no appointed date for resumption) almost six months ago, but there's been no shortage of areas to focus on in the interim. For those not following along with redistricting and other interim efforts, we'll take you through a quick overview of what's been happening since May.

(LB1) was passed with the support of 35 members. Here is the summary of the changes to each of Nebraska's three congressional districts.

- CD1: The 1st Congressional District, represented by Rep. Jeff Fortenberry (R-Neb.), will now include the Sarpy County cities of Papillion and La Vista (each previously part of the Second District).
- CD2: The 2nd Congressional District, represented by Rep. Don Bacon (R-Neb.), will now include all of Saunders County.
- CD3: The 3rd Congressional District, represented by Rep. Adrian Smith (R-

Neb.), now includes Thurston, Burt, Washington and Otoe counties.

A new legislative map (LB3) was also passed on final reading with the support of 37 members. The most significant changes pertain to Legislative District 36 (currently consisting of Custer, Dawson and northern Buffalo counties). LB3 relocates District 36 from its western location into Sarpy County, while Custer County shifts into District 43, Dawson County into District 44 and northern Buffalo County into District 41. District 36 is currently represented by Sen. Matt Williams of Gothenburg.

Bills containing new maps for the Nebraska Public Service Commission (LB5), Nebraska Supreme Court (LB6), Nebraska State Board of Education (LB7) and the University of Nebraska Board of Regents (LB8) were also passed prior to the legislature's adjournment. All bills referred to above have been signed by Gov. Ricketts and will go into effect after the 2022 election.

**State Level Tax Reform:** During the 107th Nebraska Legislature interim, Nebraska Cattlemen Past President Ken Herz testified on behalf the Nebraska Ag Leaders Coalition on LR261 (Revenue Committee) Interim Study to examine the structure and administration of and compliance with taxes. The hearing's intent was for the Revenue Committee to examine, through invited testimony, the structure and administration of and compliance with (1) individual and corporate income taxes; (2) financial institution and insurance premiums taxes; (3) state and local sales and use taxes; (4) real and personal property taxes; and (5) any other taxes. Highlighted during this testimony was the importance of ensuring that all tax reform must include equal reductions of tax levies for property tax.

There has also been considerable action pertaining to issues of importance for Nebraska Cattlemen members on the federal level.

**Cattle Markets:** With only hours to spare, Congress passed legislation in early October to avoid a government

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 48





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shutdown. The continuing resolution, which funds the government through Dec. 3, passed the Senate 65-35 and cleared the House on a 254-175 vote. The measure temporarily extends authority for the Livestock Mandatory Reporting program through Dec. 3. Also, during the month of October, Rep. Dusty Johnson (R-S.D.) and Rep. Henry Cuellar (D-Texas) introduced the Cattle Contract Library Act in the U.S.

House of Representatives. This legislation would establish a cattle contract library under the Market News Division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service. Rep. Adrian Smith (R-Neb.) is also an original cosponsor.

**Cow Tax:** In September, Rep. Markwayne Mullin (R-Okla.) published an op-ed criticizing the federal spending bill and asserting it includes a methane

emissions fee on agricultural emissions. To put it simply, his claims were not accurate. The House draft of the spending bill did not include any sort of fee or tax on methane emissions from agriculture. It did, however, require the imposition of a fee on methane from petroleum and natural gas systems.

**Federal Tax Provisions:** To date, no changes have been made to stepped-up basis, Section 1031 like-kind exchanges or the federal estate tax rates in the budget reconciliation process. However, negotiations in Washington, D.C., remain ongoing and there is still a chance that harmful amendments could be added back into the bill during further consideration. This means continued efforts are needed to fully protect cattle producers from massive tax hikes on an annual basis and at the time of generational transfer. Nebraska Cattlemen will remain laser focused on ensuring federal tax policy supports generational transfer of family-owned farms and ranches.

**WOTUS:** In June, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of the Army announced their intent to revise the definition of "waters of the United States" (WOTUS) under the Clean Water Act through two rulemakings: first, a foundational rule that will propose to restore longstanding protections and a second rulemaking process that builds on that regulatory foundation. Later in June, the agencies announced stakeholder engagement opportunities, including the agencies' intent to host 10 regionally focused roundtables. EPA and Army announced a process for stakeholders to submit nomination letters to the agencies to potentially be selected for one of these 10 geographically focused roundtables. Each roundtable must include diverse perspectives and highlight the experience of individual participants with the definition of "waters of the United States." Nebraska Cattlemen is working with industry stakeholders in Nebraska and regionally to submit multiple proposals. ■

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# Calendar

2022

## December

- 1-3 Nebraska Cattlemen Convention, Kearney
- 3 Schurrtop Ranch Angus & Charolais Bull Sale, McCook
- 4 Leachman High Altitude Sale, Loma, Colo.
- 4 Lonesome River Ranch Annual Production Sale, Anselmo
- 4 Pharo Cattle Company Bull Sale, Valentine
- 5 Morrill County Beef & Wine Christmas Celebration, Bridgeport
- 7-9 Nebraska Ag Expo, Lincoln
- 8 Gill Red Angus Fall Bull & Female Sale, Timber Lake, S.D.
- 9 Burwell Cattlemen Affiliate Meeting, Ericson
- 13 Cross Diamond Cattle Co. Annual Sale, Bertrand
- 17-19 Calvo Inaugural Online Female Sale, Dvauction.com
- 21 Tipton Ranch Retirement Dispersion, Ogallala

## January

- 1-16 Cattlemen's Congress, Oklahoma City, Okla.
- 8 Carl Dethlefs & Sons Annual Production Sale, Rockville
- 8-23 National Western Stock Show, Denver, Colo.
- 12-13 Leachman Early Bird Sale, SmartAuctions.co
- 14-Feb. 5 Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo, Fort Worth, Texas
- 17 Platte Valley Cattlemen Monthly Meeting, Columbus
- 17 Van Newkirk Herefords Sale, Oshkosh
- 27 Bear Mountain Angus Bull Sale, Palisade
- 28-Feb. 5 Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo, Rapid City, S.D.

## February

- 1 Frederick Angus Production Sale, TBD
- 1-3 Cattle Industry Convention & NCBA Trade Show, Houston, Texas
- 2 Seevers Angus Annual Production Sale, Burwell

- 5 Makovicka Angus Blue River Gang Production Sale, Rising City
- 7 Cuming County Feeders Membership Meeting, Beemer
- 7 Mike Sitz Angus Ranch Bull Sale, Burwell
- 9 Jindra Angus Annual Production Sale, Clarkson
- 12 Keyes Angus Annual Production Sale, Brewster
- 12 NC PAC Gala, Clarkson
- 12 Thayer County Livestock Feeders Banquet, Deshler
- 12-20 Iowa Beef Expo, Des Moines, Iowa
- 12-20 Nebraska Cattlemen's Classic, Kearney
- 14 Fawcett's Elm Creek Ranch Annual Production Sale, Ree Heights, S.D.
- 15 Cedar Top Ranch Maternal Empire Bull Sale, Burwell
- 22 Haynes Cattle Co. Angus Bull Sale, Ogallala

## March

- 18 TD Angus Next Generation Herd Sire Sale, North Platte
- 27-28 Leachman Spring Sale, Fort Collins, Colo.



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By Jesse Fulton, M.S.  
Extension Educator and Director of  
Nebraska Beef Quality Assurance



## The U.S. Cattle Industry Feedyard Audit Tool

The U.S. cattle industry has long upheld the highest standards in animal care and well-being, while providing a safe, high-quality product to consumers. The standards set by the Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) program have laid the foundation for a robust and prosperous industry that is committed to doing the right thing. However, sometimes holding an active BQA certification and “saying” you are following BQA guidelines just isn’t enough because of those who do so under false pretenses. Therefore, verification of actual certification and implementation is now here.

Auditing is one of the most talked-about topics throughout the beef

industry. Participation in an industry-wide, third-party audit allows feedyard operations to demonstrate and quantify their commitment to animal care,

*Feedyards engaging in an industry-wide, third-party audit show the responsibility they take to meet the expectations of beef customers.*

and a safe and abundant food supply. Beef consumers want to be able to verify that best-management, safety and welfare practices are being followed. While a third-party audit can demonstrate transparency, credibility

and compliance with BQA industry standards, it is just one component of a comprehensive commitment to maintain and enhance customer and consumer trust in beef.

With the increasing demand for third-party audits, there was a need expressed by National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA) feedyard and packer/processor members for the development of a singular audit tool that much of the feeding industry could align to, preventing the creation of multiple audits that producers would have to endure.

In 2017, the Cattle Health and Well-Being (CHWB) Committee at the Cattle Industry Summer Business Meeting assigned a task force to investigate the feasibility of developing such an audit. In 2018, the CHWB Committee assigned a task force of beef industry stakeholders to develop a workable and credible industry feedyard audit tool that would level the playing field and serve as a foundation for the industry’s feedyard operators. This group of diverse industry stakeholders included feedyard owners and managers, veterinarians, animal scientists, packers, Extension agents, BQA educators and trade association representatives.

The feedyard audit task force objective was to establish a common set of practices and criteria that any cattle feedyard audit must include to be considered both comprehensive and in agreement with BQA standards. The audit needed to be applicable to all feedyards, independent of operation size, facility/housing type, cattle type or geographic location.

In the fall of 2020, the U.S. Cattle Industry Feedyard Audit was released. This audit was certified through the Professional Animal Auditor Certification Organization (PAACO). With the audit being PAACO certified, only PAACO-certified auditors will be able to officially conduct an audit using the U.S. Cattle Industry Feedyard Audit tool. To learn more about PAACO, visit [www.animalauditor.org](http://www.animalauditor.org).

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Another important note is that, although NCBA owns the audit tool, feedyard auditing will only be conducted through business-to-business activity. NCBA will not be conducting any audits or have a part of any audits. The audit tool should be seen just as it is, a tool on the shelf that can be picked up and utilized by any organization.


The U.S. Cattle Industry Feedyard Audit was built based on BQA principles and includes key standards of animal care that are directly related to animal health and welfare that contribute to a safe beef supply. There are two major components of this complete audit tool: review of documents (protocols and records) and feedyard observations. Auditors will review documented protocols, records and potentially conduct employee interviews to verify protocols are being followed.

Auditors will also conduct observations of home pens, hospital pens, specialty pens, handling facilities and animal observations, both in pens and during processing. Results from the audit can provide information back to the feedyard to drive continuous improvement and measure the effectiveness by which the operation implements BQA.

The Cattle Industry Feedyard Audit was created as a basis for packers and beef customers to verify that a feedyard follows and adheres to industry best practices as outlined in the BQA program. Feedyards engaging in an industry-wide, third-party audit show the responsibility they take to meet the expectations of beef customers.

The Nebraska BQA program wants to ensure Nebraska feedyards are prepared for third-party audits such as the U.S. Cattle Industry Feedyard Audit. Because of this, Nebraska BQA is actively developing protocol and record-keeping templates for feedyard operations to utilize in preparation of an audit in the case that they are not currently keeping the necessary documentation.

To see the U.S. Cattle Industry Feedyard Audit, visit [ncba.org/producers/feedyard-audit](http://ncba.org/producers/feedyard-audit).

To learn more about Nebraska BQA, visit [bqa.unl.edu](http://bqa.unl.edu). ■  ■

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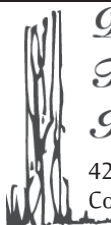
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# Merry Christmas

FROM OUR FAMILY TO YOURS!

*"For unto you is born this day in the city of  
David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."*

*Luke 2:11*

