

# Good times in cattle business rivals wheat in North Dakota

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — Hard red spring wheat has been king in North Dakota for decades, but good times in the cattle industry are making cattlemen smile.

Officials say cattle and calves are not likely to capture the crown of leading value producer in North Dakota agriculture, but ranchers are still pleased with how far the industry has come in the past decade.

“We’ve maintained all along that there’s more potential for livestock in North Dakota than is being utilized,” said rancher Melvin Leland, president of the North Dakota Stockmen’s Association. “We think there’s far more potential for advancing livestock production than there is, possibly, in cereal grain production.”

Buoyed by prices that reached record highs last year and earlier this year, the value of cattle and calf production in North Dakota has set a record for three straight years. Earl Stabenow, a U.S. Department of Agriculture statistician in Fargo, said record-keeping began in 1965.

In terms of value of production, the gap between spring wheat and cattle and calves also has narrowed dramatically over the past 10 years. Last year, the two were close to equal: \$808 million for spring wheat and \$760 million for cattle and calves, a difference of \$48 million. In 2003, the gap was \$314 million, and in 1996 it was slightly more than \$1 billion.

“... there’s more potential for livestock in North Dakota than is being utilized.”  
Melvin Leland, North Dakota Stockmen

Leland said he thinks cattle and calf production value has a chance of surpassing that of spring wheat in North Dakota in coming years — if the growth of ethanol plants with feed byproducts boosts the cattle-feeding industry in the state and prolonged drought keeps the nation’s cattle numbers low and prices high.

Tim Petry, a livestock economist with the North Dakota State University Extension Service, said drought in the nation’s cattle country has “completely wreaked havoc” on the typical 10-year cattle supply-and-demand cycle.

With good prices, ranchers should be building up herds now, which would increase supply and eventually lead to a drop in prices, and a drop in production value. Instead, many are not adding to their herds or are selling off animals because of a lack of forage caused by drought.

“We have probably no buildup in cow numbers this year over last year, when we would have expected at least a percent, a percent and a half,” Petry said.

That is likely to mean another good year for cattle prices, and an-

other year of high cattle and calf production value in North Dakota.

But spring wheat also has enjoyed good years recently. Between 1998 and 2002, when scab disease was a consistent problem, the crop’s annual value of production never exceeded \$652 million. The past three years, it has not fallen below \$800 million.

Petry said he doubts that cattle and calf value of production will surpass spring wheat in North Dakota. Neal Fisher, administrator of the North Dakota Wheat Commission, also is skeptical, but “I’d never say never,” he said.

“This year, farmers and ranchers who didn’t dry out entirely, their wheat enterprise and livestock enterprise, the opportunity was there for both of them to be profitable,” Fisher said. “It’s great to see better times in agriculture all the way around.”

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On the Net:  
North Dakota Wheat Commission: <http://www.ndwheat.com>  
North Dakota Stockmen’s Association: <http://www.ndstockmen.org>

# Aunt does not like nephew’s choice

Dear Harlan,  
I’m a male high-school junior, and I’ve been looking at a bunch of colleges.

Rowan University in New Jersey has been looking really cool to me, and I definitely want to visit it. However, my aunt (out of nowhere) told my parents that Rowan is a “party school,” which immediately set off alarms. I don’t even believe her, to tell you the truth.

So anyway, now my parents are all “let’s look at other schools,” but the amount of awesome classes Rowan has is, well, awesome. I still want to visit there.

So what I’m asking is, is there a way I can tell my parents that just because my aunt says it’s a party school doesn’t mean that I’ll be doing nothing but partying the entire time I’m there? (I’m not even that big a partier.)

And if it really is a HUGE party school, does that mean I’ll be doomed to a life of alcoholism and nothingness, even though I have the intention of trying hard? The Anti-Partier

**Dear Anti-Partier,**  
**Unless your aunt parties at a different college every weekend and found that she enjoys partying most at Rowan University, she has no idea what she’s talking about.**

# Tropical Storm Florence in Atlantic

MIAMI (AP) — Tropical Storm Florence formed Tuesday in the open Atlantic, becoming the sixth named storm of the 2006 hurricane season, and was likely to grow.

Florence had top sustained wind near 40 mph, 1 mph over the 39 mph

**HERE ARE THE FACTS: Rowan University has regularly ranked as one of the best colleges in the Northeast by U.S. News & World Report. In addition, Rowan is NOT on the list of top-20 party schools. As for that list of party schools, it should be used as toilet paper, because that’s about what it’s worth. I’ve attended two No. 1 party schools, and I never went into rehab, and I knew plenty of totally sober people at both.**

**While I haven’t visit Rowan, I’ve spoken at hundreds of colleges, and every college has opportunities to party. Tell your aunt that wherever you go, you’ll have the chance to be doomed to a life of alcoholism and nothingness.**

**That said, you might as well be doomed at one of the best schools in the Northeast.**

Dear Harlan,  
I just turned 18. My problems all started when my parents found out that I had sex with my boyfriend. My parents took extreme measures to keep me away from him.

I graduated from high school with honors and am going to attend college in the fall, but I have a big issue facing me. I love my boyfriend deeply, and I would like to continue being with him. But my

parents said that if I do that, I must move out of the house. Confused

**Dear Confused,**  
**Note to parents: Forcing your teenage daughter to move out of the house and in with her boyfriend will result in your daughter having more sex with her boyfriend, growing closer to him and growing further from you.**

**Advice to Confused: Figure out if this is about your boyfriend or about your having sex. If it’s your boyfriend, find out specifically what your parents have a problem with. Parents’ opinions are actually worth something.**

**Once you get clarification, thank them for caring so much (that will throw them) and figure out what YOU want.**

**If you move out, make sure you can move back in or with someone else if things go bad. The last thing you want is to depend on a boyfriend for everything. But as an honors student, you should know that.**

Write Harlan at [harlan\(at\)help-meharlan.com](mailto:harlan(at)help-meharlan.com) or visit online: [www.helpmeharlan.com](http://www.helpmeharlan.com). All letters submitted become property of the author.

Send paper to Help Me, Harlan! 2506 N. Clark St., Ste. 223, Chicago, IL 60614.  
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1,” said Mark Willis, a meteorologist at the hurricane center.

Hurricanes have sustained wind of at least 74 mph; Category 1 storms have top sustained wind of up to 95 mph.