

Cattle price pullback likely before controversy

Given recent historic highs in cattle prices, it shouldn't have been surprising to see values dip somewhat during March, but consumer response to news of lean, finely textured beef in the nation's meat supply hit cattle and beef values harder than many could have anticipated, a Kansas State University agricultural economist says.

"I think we were due in early March for a pause. The fact that we've had a pullback from historic highs is not really a surprise," said Glynn Tonsor, livestock marketing specialist.

He noted that Chicago Mercantile Exchange April fed cattle futures closed at \$118 per hundred-weight on April 6, down about \$12 from a month earlier. Similarly, April feeder cattle futures closed at \$148, down from \$161 in early March. Cash cattle prices softened similarly, with Kansas fed cattle prices off about \$3 at \$123 to \$124 on April 6.

"But the fed cattle basis is quite strong - stronger than normal," Tonsor noted, with cash cattle trading \$5 to \$6 over futures.

Part of the concern right now, he said, is overall demand for beef. Beef exports have been generally

flat compared to last year, as has the dollar index.

"I'm still fundamentally bullish on (beef) exports, but when we look at individual weeks, that's part of the pullback. I'm not going to say we've burst the bubble, but we've pulled back a bit on that bullishness," he said.

The economist noted that oil and gas prices and their forecasts have also played a role in consumer demand, but added: "I tend to think that's a little bit overhyped. Gas still makes up a portion of our individual decision making, but it's mainly an indirect effect in how it's embedded in the prices of many things we buy. Add all that up with the LFTB stuff then we have more concern about demand than we did a month ago."

Consumer reaction to news in recent weeks that lean, finely textured beef is sometimes added to ground beef shocked the trade, Tonsor said.

"Perception is reality. The consumer dollar drives the vast majority of what goes on and people make decisions based on perception. These decisions may or may not be consistent with scientific reality," he said. "To say 'it's beef, stupid' or 'it's always been beef'

may be accurate - and I personally believe that - but I'm not sure it's sufficient to change perception. You can't trump perception immediately with science."

"One of the things I've found in other studies such as the impact of media attention to animal welfare issues and meat recalls is that total (aggregate) beef demand is typically affected for one to two quarters. That's still multiple weeks or months, but it doesn't persist for five years," he said. "I tend to think consumer demand reaction to this story in this context will also be relatively short lived."

Tonsor said he is still analyzing beef demand data for the first quarter of 2012 (January-March), but expects it will show a negative year-over-year picture. He reminded that several analysts over the past few months, before the current discussion, were reminding that the tight supply situation was already known - kind of fixed - so the value of cattle is hinging on demand.

He expects the issue to continue to be sorted out and that it likely will still have an effect on beef and cattle prices for the short term.



The Dallas Brass

Dallas Brass to hold clinics, give concert at Colby High

The internationally acclaimed Dallas Brass will perform at 7:30 p.m. next Tuesday at the Colby High School Auditorium.

The concert is sponsored by the Western Plains Arts Association. Admission will be by season ticket or at the door, students \$10 and adults \$20.

Founded in 1983 by Michael Levine, the group has become one of America's foremost musical ensembles. The concert, "American Musical Journey," incorporates a full complement of brass and percussion for a musical travelogue through American history. From the time of George Washington to the present, music will be selected from the masters - Copland, Bernstein, Gershwin, Berlin, John Williams, Sousa - and styles from Dixieland, swing, folk, patriotic and pop.

The ensemble includes Michael Levine, director

and trombone; D.J. Barraclough, trumpet; Chad Willis, trumpet; Juan Berrios, French horn, alto horn; Paul Carlson, tuba; and Sergio Carreno, drums and percussion.

With a strong dedication to working with young musicians, they will work with students throughout the day and perform that evening.

The performance is made possible, in part, by the Director's Fund, Jennings Family Fund, Kansas Health Foundation Children's Fund, Endowed Youth Fund and the Ziegler Family Fund at the Thomas County Community Foundation.

The association will close the season with a performance by the Bethany Handbell Choir at 3 p.m. on Sunday, April 29, at the Hoxie High School Auditorium. They will perform a variety of selections, both sacred and secular.

On the Beat

COLBY POLICE

Sunday

2:36 a.m. - Security check at Walmart.

3:08 a.m. - Caller reported loud music coming from two vehicles. Unable to locate.

4:21 a.m. - Caller reported subjects being loud along with music.

9:16 a.m. - Caller reported window graffiti on his vehicle at Sunflower Apts. Spoke with subject.

12:03 p.m. - Unattended death report filed.

12:03 p.m. - Assisted ambulance crew on unattended death.

7:56 p.m. - Caller reported girlfriend's vehicle hit and run earlier in parking lot at 115 W. Willow.

Monday

7:20 a.m. - Caller wanted officer for possible theft and roommate dispute. All OK; spoke to subjects, no report.

11:37 a.m. - Clerk called about car sitting in lot they own for about a week. Spoke to owner; will get it moved.

12:53 p.m. - Caller reported semi caused her to run off roadway westbound in the 2200 block of E. Fourth. Not found.

7:41 p.m. - Assisted stuck vehicle one mile south on Country Club.

7:52 p.m. - Caller reported graffiti on semi trailer at shop.

9:03 p.m. - Assisted stuck vehicle one mile south on Country Club.

10:30 p.m. - Caller reported numerous phone calls from subject. No report, prank calls. Will do extra patrol.

Tuesday

2:31 a.m. - Security check at Walmart.

8:01 a.m. - Accident at Fifth and Riddle.

9:01 a.m. - Caller reported two dogs running loose at Fike Park. Turned over to owner.

THOMAS COUNTY SHERIFF

Sunday

11:41 a.m. - Arrest made on warrant.

12:31 p.m. - Report filed for narcotics violation and obstruction at Sunflower Apartments.

1:27 p.m. - Booked William Olin Mashburn.

2:52 p.m. - Booked Jeremy Joseph Palmer.

3:22 p.m. - Caller advised a male subject was there who was needing a ride back to Virginia. Provided information to reporting party.

6:25 p.m. - Caller reported man in stalled pickup on field access road in the 3200 block of U.S. 24. Unable to locate.

10:43 p.m. - Caller wanted welfare check on friend in Rexford. Everything OK.

Monday

8:59 a.m. - Released Skyler Charles Daniel Kraft.

11:04 a.m. - Brought inmate from Sherman County Sheriff's Office to Law Enforcement Center.

3:47 p.m. - Released Paul Martin Tech.

4:12 p.m. - Jeremy Palmer arrested on warrant.

8:40 p.m. - Provided civil standby in Mingo.

Cattle feeders to meet May 3

K-State Research and Extension will hold a Cattle Feeders College on Thursday, May 3, at the Logan County Fairgrounds in Oakley. Registration will begin at 4:30 p.m. be followed by dinner.

This program has been designed to help producers and those involved in every facet of the feeder cattle industry. It includes break-out sessions on managers and human resources, cattle crew and mill and maintenance crew.

The program also includes the presentation of "Top

Hand" cattle feeding industry employee awards, for individuals who symbolize the values of hard work, honesty, reliability, integrity and animal stewardship that the Kansas cattle feeding industry was built on. Submit nominations for the award by Friday, April 27, to Dr. Justin Waggoner, Kansas State Extension beef systems specialist, at jwaggon@ksu.edu.

There is no cost to attend, but pre-registration is required by Friday, April 27. If you plan to attend, call the Oakley office at (785) 671-3245.

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