

NEWS & NOTES

Industry tidbits from around the country

Compiled by Shauna Hermel, editor

►►► 2021 protein production

“Despite the extraordinary volatility and dynamics of meat industries and food markets in 2020, total meat production for the year is projected just 1.2% lower than pre-COVID forecasts,” reports Derrell Peel, Oklahoma State University Extension livestock marketing specialist in the Dec. 7 *Cow-Calf Corner* newsletter. “As this year winds down, the pandemic is still raging going into 2021, but expectations are that vaccines will help bring COVID-19 under control during the coming year.”

Peel outlined forecasts for beef, pork and poultry. Table 1 presents projections for beef based on current forecasts from the Livestock Marketing Information Center (LMIC; *lmic.info*).

Beef production is forecast to decrease in 2021 with cyclically smaller cattle numbers and carcass weights retreating from record 2020 levels, Peel says. Beef trade is expected to improve, with smaller beef imports and increased beef exports in the coming year. These will combine with decreased

production to reduce per capita beef consumption in 2021.

At this time, total red meat and poultry production is projected to increase to another new record level of 107.2 billion pounds (lb.) in 2021, as increased pork and poultry production offsets decreased beef production, he notes. However, with strong meat exports offsetting increased production, domestic total meat consumption is projected to decrease to 222.1 lb. per capita, down from 225.3 lb. in 2020.

Factors that may cause revisions to these forecasts include the speed and effectiveness of controlling the ongoing pandemic; macroeconomic uncertainties in the United States and global economies; changing feed market conditions; currency exchange rates; and evolving trade policy, among others, Peel warns. “Conditions remain very dynamic and uncertain at the end of 2020, but there is potential for more stability in the second half of 2021.”

Table 1: Beef production, imports, exports and consumption

Year	Production, million lb.	% change, YOY*	Imports, million lb.	% change, YOY	Exports, million lb.	% change, YOY	Consumption, lb./capita [^]	% change, YOY
2019	27,155	+1.1	3,058	+2.0	3,026	-4.2	58.1	+1.4
2020 ^a	27,230	+0.3	3,469	+13.4	2,915	-3.7	59.1	+1.3
2021 ^b	26,960	-1.0	2,935	-15.4	3,005	+3.1	57.2	-3.2

*Year over year. ^aRetail. ^bProjected. [^]Forecast.

SOURCE: Livestock Marketing Information Center; *lmic.org*.

►►► CRP signup periods announced

The USDA Nov. 12 announced the signup periods for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the CRP Grasslands in 2021. Signup for general CRP will be open Jan. 4-Feb. 12, and signup for CRP Grasslands will be March 15-April 23. Both programs are competitive and provide annual rental payments for land devoted to conservation purposes.

The competitive general signup, held annually, includes increased opportunities for enrollment of wildlife habitat through the State Acres For Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) initiative.

CRP Grasslands helps landowners and operators protect grassland, including rangeland, pastureland and certain other lands, while maintaining the areas as grazing lands. A separate CRP Grasslands signup is offered each year following general signup.

Signed into law in 1985, CRP is one of the largest private-lands conservation programs in the United States. It was originally intended to primarily control soil erosion and potentially stabilize commodity prices by taking marginal lands out of production. The program has evolved over the years, providing many conservation and economic benefits.

For more information, visit fsa.usda.gov or contact your local FSA county office.

►►► Affordable ID

Cattlemen looking for affordable ways to identify their herd can visit www.customcattletags.com, a service provided by the American Angus Association.

Custom Cattle Tags provides high-quality, low-cost, customized ear tags, tissue sampling units (TSUs) and 840 radio-frequency identification (RFID) tags for cattle producers all across the United States.

►►► Priority treatment

Industry organizations are joining forces to seek support for prioritizing COVID-19 vaccination for frontline meat and poultry workers.

The North American Meat Institute (NAMI) joined the National Cattlemen's Beef

Association (NCBA) and the National Pork Producers' Council (NPPC) in requesting the nation's governors to include meat workers in priority vaccine plans.

According to Governor Laura Kelly of Kansas, meatpacking plants will be near the top of the priority list to receive the COVID-19 vaccination, following health care workers and those in long-term care facilities.

►►► National Angus Bull Sale Moves to OKC

The 2021 National Angus Bull Sale will be Friday, Jan. 8, at 1 p.m. in the Super Barn Sale Arena during the Cattlemen's Congress in Oklahoma City, Okla. All consignments will be genomic-tested; will possess a complete set of expected progeny differences (EPDs) and dollar value

▶▶▶ **Foundation Heifer**

The Angus Foundation Heifer Package will kick off the National Angus Bull Sale, Jan. 8, at the Cattlemen's Congress in Oklahoma City. This year's heifer offering presents a special opportunity to purchase a choice of the 2020 crop of heifers from Benoit Angus, Esbon, Kan.

The offering includes 30 days of insurance from American Live Stock Insurance Co., Batavia, Ill.; transportation to the buyer's ranch provided by Lathrop Livestock Transportation, Dundee, Ill.; and an advanced reproductive technology package from Trans Ova Genetics, Sioux Center, Iowa.

indexes (\$Values); and must be free of any genetic conditions recognized by the American Angus Association.

All bulls born before Jan. 1, 2020, will have passed a complete breeding soundness examination (sometimes referred to as a BSE), physical and semen, within 30 days of the sale.

For more information about the sale, contact Jeff Mafi, sale manager, at 816-344-4266.

▶▶▶ **Legislation seeks to expand CRP acreage**

In a press conference Dec. 3, House Ag Committee Chairman Collin Peterson of Minnesota announced the introduction of H.R. 8843, which would make an additional 25 million acres available over the next five years for general sign-up under the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Instead of a cap, the bill would establish a minimum floor of 50 million CRP acres nationwide.

"CRP incentivizes farmers to remove sensitive land from agricultural production and plant cover to enhance wildlife habitat and provide other natural resource benefits," Peterson told reporters. "CRP has a decades-long track record of engaging farmers in the effort to improve water quality, prevent soil erosion and create wildlife habitat."

"In addition to the increase in acreage, the bill will help CRP prioritize those applications that promote soil health and carbon sequestration," Peterson added. "Applications for the enrollment of land on which deep-rooted

perennials will be planted will also be prioritized."

Peterson concluded: "This is a good bill that uses a successful, existing program to pay farmers to store carbon. We don't need a whole new regime. We have CRP."

▶▶▶ **Ranch group files brief to prevent false advertising**

Ranchers-Cattlemen Action Legal Fund, United Stockgrowers of America (R-CALF USA) Dec. 7 submitted a motion to file a friend-of-the-court brief and a brief to the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals in an effort to prevent the *Federal Meat Inspection Act* (FMIA) from being interpreted to govern both beef labeling and beef advertising, which the group says would severely limit states' rights.

According R-CALF, the FMIA governs beef labeling, not beef advertising.

"Our goal is to prevent the court from inadvertently expanding the scope of the FMIA to include advertising, which would render any future claims against the false advertisement of domestic or imported beef all but impossible," says R-CALF USA CEO Bill Bullard.

Bullard says the risk of expanding the scope of the FMIA to include advertising claims arose in lawsuits filed earlier this year by New Mexico rancher Michael Lucero and New Mexico consumer Robin Thornton, who each alleged the Big 4 beef packers had violated New Mexico's *Unfair Practices Act* by mislabeling beef as a product of the USA when the beef was

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actually derived from imported cattle.

A federal district court in New Mexico recently dismissed the two lawsuits on grounds that the FMIA administered by the USDA preempts any state law that attempts to require labels or advertisements that are different than the labels approved by the USDA.

The court noted that the USDA regulations allow the use of a “Product of USA” label on beef even if the beef is derived from imported cattle. The court determined that because the packers were labeling and advertising beef according to the USDA’s labeling standard, and because federal law preempts states from both labeling or advertising beef in a different manner, the New Mexico *Unfair Practices Act* did not apply.

On Dec. 1, Lucero and Thornton appealed the dismissal of their cases to the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals.

When R-CALF USA reviewed the dismissal order, it realized something was amiss in the legal interpretation of the FMIA. Although the court ruled that state laws for both the labeling and advertising of beef were preempted by the FMIA, the FMIA does not speak to advertising.

R-CALF USA’s brief focuses on this specific issue and urges the appellate court to reverse the lower court’s inclusion of false or misleading advertisements as falling within the scope of the FMIA.

▶▶▶ **Missouri to Brazil**

The first shipment of livestock from the Livestock Export and Inspection Facility (LEIF) at St. Louis Lambert (STL) departed for São Paulo, Brazil, Nov. 11.

The LEIF-STL facility has been approved as a Port of Embarkation (POE) and Export Inspection Facility (EIF) since 2017, but recent focus by a number of entities, including the State of Missouri, has brought success. The National Center for Beef Excellence (NCBE) secured a Missouri Agriculture Small Business Development Authority grant to lend

assistance to STL and the Midwest Cargo Hub Commission in promoting the facility.

“This is exciting progress for the state and shows that Missouri’s strong agricultural industry continues to power our economy,” said Governor Mike Parson. “Missouri has long worked to push agricultural technology forward. What we are seeing today is how Missouri innovations and infrastructure are allowing us to market the industry to the world in a new way.”

The LEIF-STL is an 18,000-square-foot (sq. ft.), dedicated and customizable facility designed for shipping livestock and horses. It has an adjacent 12,000-sq.-ft. open bay, which will be used for the partial plane load of breeding pigs to Brazil. The shipment is hoped to be the first of many overseas exports.

Three more potential loads are being organized for shipment out of Saint Louis in the near future. LEIF-STL is the only on-site 24/7 livestock palletizing facility in the United States.

It is uniquely situated to provide service to livestock exporters. Within six hours exists a six-state livestock-rich supply area, including Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Oklahoma and Arkansas. Missouri and the Midwest are poised to provide advanced genetics to countries around the world.

Due to African Swine Fever (ASF), much of the world’s swine herd has been depleted, including up to 70% of China’s swine population. The Midwest can play a role in helping to avoid or mitigate a worldwide protein shortage.

“We are crossing a threshold that has been a long time in coming,” says Chad Sayre, NCBE chairman. “This could open up active trade around the world and new markets for Missouri and Midwest livestock. Our producers, family farmers, agribusinesses and research institutions can all benefit from creating this portal to the world market.” ■