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Dairy/Livestock

Ranch heritage, sound management go together

By **DOUG WARNOCK**
For the Capital Press

Two factors are characteristic of several of ranches I visited on a professional improvement tour in South Dakota this summer. The factors: The ranches are still operated by the family who started the ranch over a century ago, and they are well managed.

Blair Brothers Angus Ranch, at Vale, S.D., was founded by Ed Blair's grandfather in 1906. Ed and his brother, Rich, and nephews Chad and Brenton currently operate the ranch. The Blairs run a herd of 1,200 cows and 300 heifers and sell commercial bulls to established customers from North Dakota to Texas. Their target is to raise premium cattle that will perform well for their customers. They pay attention to calving ease, desirable carcass traits and good gain on feed, when selecting breeding animals.

Artificial insemination, Temple Grandin-style working facilities, low stress animal handling and short duration grazing are important aspects of their management.

Jack Orwick is the fourth generation of his family to operate the Orwick Ranch near Newell, South Dakota. The Orwick family came from Ireland and established their ranch in 1910. They run 350 head of Hereford cattle and 1,500 Rambouillet ewes. Cattle and sheep are run together, taking advantage of the fact that cows and ewes prefer different plant species and thus complement one another in harvesting forage.

Recognizing the importance of stock water placement in getting uniform distribution of grazing animals across the rangeland, a series of earthen dams was built to collect rain and provide drinking water for the livestock. Guard dogs are helpful in combating predation of the sheep.

The family has endured the ravages of nature over the years. The most recent example being an early, unexpected blizzard that came in October of 2013 killing 200 ewes and 200 lambs. This freak storm, named Atlas, was reported as killing around 100,000 cattle and thousands of sheep. Being resilient people, the Orwicks have overcome these losses and look to the future.

Two generations of the Stomprud family operate their Angus ranch. Larry and Eileen Stomprud and their son, Jay, and his wife, Jennifer, are the managers. Larry's grandfather homesteaded the ranch in 1909, so Jay is the fourth generation on the ranch. The ranch includes 6,600 acres and 300 Angus cows.

Larry came back to the ranch after a career in the Army and convinced Jay and Jennifer to come and help manage it. Jay was not raised on the ranch, because of his dad's Army career, and had to learn about the operation from the beginning. Beef South Dakota, a program for people new to beef production and management helped Jay and Jennifer adapt to ranch life and successfully take on the responsibility of running the operation.

The Stompruds lost 50 cows, a herd bull and 3 calves in the same freak storm that killed the Orwick sheep in October of 2013. Again, their resilience saw them through this harsh setback and they have fully recovered.

The heritage of the multi-generational ranch, sound business management and a spirit of resilience are characteristics of these modern beef cattle operations on the prairies of western South Dakota.

Doug Warnock, retired from Washington State University Extension, lives on a ranch in the Touchet River Valley where he writes about and teaches grazing management. He can be contacted at dwarnockgreener-pastures@gmail.com.



Greener Pastures
Doug Warnock

Workshops address changes in livestock drug use

By **CAROL RYAN DUMAS**
Capital Press

New restriction on the use of antibiotics in food animals will mean significant changes in the way farmers, ranchers and veterinarians operate.

New Food and Drug Administration guidelines and expansion of the Veterinary Feed Directive will prohibit over-the-counter use of feed-grade antibiotics without a prescription and for anything other than to prevent, control or treat a specifically identified disease.

The changes have been thoroughly vetted on the feed and pharmaceutical side but not in producer and veterinarian communities, said Sheldon Jones, vice president of programs for Farm Foundation.

To bridge the information

gap, Farm Foundation will be holding 12 workshops across the country over the next three months specifically aimed at meeting the needs of producers and their veterinarians, he said.

Among the workshops are one in Davis, Calif., on Oct. 13 and one in Twin Falls, Idaho, on Oct. 22.

The new restrictions fully take effect in December 2016. The issue is probably on producers' backburners considering other high-profile issues, such as EPA's new waters of the U.S. rule, but implementation is not that far away, Jones said.

A long list of medically important antimicrobial drugs will no longer be allowed for growth promotion and will require a prescription, veterinary oversight and record-

keeping as opposed to over-the-counter mass distribution through feed and water systems, he said.

"It changes the landscape," he said.

Prescription use of those drugs through feed or water systems will be allowed for therapeutic reasons, such as preventing shipping fever or avian influenza under specific conditions. But the restrictions will change many current production practices, he said.

Animal pharmaceutical companies have already agreed to change labeled uses, which will render those practices off-label and illegal, he said.

Some livestock producers, mainly pork and poultry producers who operate under company guidelines, already

have these kinds of restrictions. But independent beef and dairy producers might not be getting enough information or the correct information, he said.

The workshops are being conducted to give them the information they need to get a business model in place, he said.

The information gap is partially regional, partially structural and partially in veterinarian-deficit areas, he said.

FDA and USDA officials will be present at each workshop, giving producers, veterinarians and feed suppliers an opportunity to discuss implementation and management challenges, said Mary Thompson, Farm Foundation vice president of communica-

The organization is also conducting an online survey for producers, veterinarians and feed suppliers to gauge awareness of the changes and to learn more about potential implications.

Farm Foundation will be compiling comments from the workshops into a report assessing the economic and physical challenges facing producers in implementation. It will evaluate informational and educational needs, as well as veterinarians' role in monitoring and managing antimicrobial drug use, she said.

Farm Foundation will also convene a summit in late fall to address the issues identified in the workshops and advance the conversation on industry adaptation, she said.

For the workshop schedule and to learn more: www.farmfoundation.org.

Rabobank: Cow-calf production to shift to Corn Belt

By **CAROL RYAN DUMAS**
Capital Press

The rebuilding of the U.S. beef herd is underway, with an additional 3 million to 4 million cows expected over the next four to six years. But the distribution of that population will be considerably different than in the past, according to one analysis.

Expanding on research released in February on the advantages of confined cow-calf production, Rabobank this week released a new report on the geography of herd rebuilding this go-round.

"Beef Cow Rebuilding — The Case of Diversification" makes the case for concentrating cow-calf production to the center of the U.S., from the Southwest region up through the Plains states and into the Corn Belt.

The first phase of the rebuilding will be repopulation of existing capacity in traditional production areas, much of it in the Southwest and High Plains. Repopulating is likely to be fast paced and start leveling out in 2017, Rabobank senior analysts Don Close and Sterling Liddell said in the report.

The second phase — newly developed capacity in nontraditional areas that will require more investment, construction and economic incentive — will come next and dominate herd rebuilding from 2018 through 2020, they reported.

That additional capacity will take place in the row-crop



Carol Ryan Dumas/Capital Press

Rabobank says cattlemen are rebuilding the U.S. herd, but that the production center is moving to the Corn Belt.

regions of the central U.S. with confined and semi-confined cow-calf units, leading to a unified central-states cow herd, according to the report.

Advantages to new growth in the Corn Belt include access to high-moisture distillers grain products, proximity to feedlots and the opportunity for row crop farmers to diversify income sources, the analysts reported.

Some of those advantages have already been important factors in moving the fed cattle supply toward the Midwest states of Iowa and Nebraska. But tightening crop profit margins and a trend toward cover crops in key regions of the Corn Belt will contribute to giving Midwest

states further advantage, the analysts said.

The migration has also been supported by multiple years of largely favorable winter weather. In addition, cow-calf operations in the Corn Belt have an advantage for securing adequate feed at lower prices, and the expansion of small confinement units will magnify that advantage, they said.

Confinement units also address some of the challenges of high land opportunity costs in the Corn Belt, they said.

"As a result of the returns and natural hedge to grain prices, small-unit cow-calf confinement operations are expected to play a major role

in new growth development in the Corn Belt region," the report states.

But there are also challenges. Increased concentration in the Central Plains and Corn Belt increases the potential for supply issues from regional droughts. The relatively low cost of entry, short payback periods and ease of converting to other uses is also expected to make the size of the beef cow herd more sensitive to prices, the analysts reported.

The first phase of herd rebuilding appears fairly certain. After the first three years, however, a longer period of exposure to risks — such as drought — and changes in consumption patterns increases the potential range of eventual herd size, they said.

Dairy Markets

Lee Mielke



Cash dairy prices a mixed bag

By **LEE MIELKE**
For the Capital Press

Cash dairy traders had to digest last week's Global Dairy Trade auction and June Dairy Products report and took the cash block Cheddar down to \$1.7125 per pound by Wednesday. It rallied Thursday, then slipped Friday, and closed at \$1.75, up the third week in a row and a quarter-cent above the previous week, but 35 cents below a year ago when it jumped 10 cents.

The blocks lost a penny Monday but inched up a half-cent Tuesday, to \$1.7450.

The Cheddar barrels closed Friday at \$1.7175, up 2 cents on the week and 41 cents below a year ago when they jumped 12 1/4 cents. They were unchanged Monday but lost a penny and a half Tuesday, slipping to \$1.7025. Eight cars of block traded hands last week at the CME and 20 of barrel.

Many industry contacts suggest the prices are defying the odds by holding at current levels, according to Dairy Market News. Trading is holding within a range and is bouncing back and forth. Milk production in the Midwest is declining somewhat, but without hot days and nights, manufacturers report the decline has been slow and steady.

Zoetis supports Idaho range initiative

By **CAROL RYAN DUMAS**
Capital Press

Zoetis, an animal health company, says it will support the Idaho Save the Range Initiative, an effort to protect the state's grazing range by bolster-

ing the Idaho Cattle Association Legal Fund.

From Aug. 1 through Nov. 10, 2016, Zoetis will contribute to CALF for each documented dose of the company's products used by Idaho cattle producers. Each donation will be made to

CALF in the name of the producer.

Contributions to CALF will be qualified after a copy of receipts of product are submitted to the ICA office at P.O. Box 15397, Boise, ID 83715 or electronically to dawn@idahocattle.org.

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