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Livestock

Stevens County Cattlemen auction sets record

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**
Capital Press

The Stevens County Cattlemen’s Association auction at the Northeast Washington Fair raised nearly \$200,000 to benefit area youths.

The cattlemen’s fat stock auction raised a record \$196,495, which was distributed among 127 youths. Animals sold at the event included 63 hogs, 37 beef cows, 18 sheep, six goats, two rabbits and one chicken.

The sale, sponsored by the association, gives young people in the Eastern Washington community the chance to raise an animal for the fair and make money by selling it to members of the public.

“Fat stock” are market animals that are butcher-ready, said Scott Nielsen, president of the association and Cattle Producers of Washington.

Buyers have the option of keeping the animal and taking it home or to slaughter or simply supporting the sale.

“We’ve been doing it for a long time,” Nielsen said. “They were doing it when I was a kid, so at least 40 years.”

Individual buyers and businesses often participate in the sale, creating a positive, competitive market environment at the auction.

“What we’re doing is trying to make it profitable for them,” he said. “For a lot of them, it will be their college money. My daughter is going to Whitworth right now and much of her college money came from fat animals at the Northeast Washington Fair.”



Associated Press File

African swine fever is still spreading across much of Asia.

African swine fever continues to deadly spread across Asia

By **CAROL RYAN DUMAS**
Capital Press

While African swine fever continues to devastate pig herds and pork production in China, its spread to other Asian countries is raising concerns.

“Recent outbreaks in South Korea, the Philippines and Timor-Leste and the looming threat to Thailand greatly broaden the concern generated by ASF,” Rabobank analysts said in an update released this week.

The disease also continues to spread in Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar and North Korea and has become a challenge in all of Asia, they said.

“The impacts across Asia are likely to be just as challenging as they have been in China, and we expect to see herd and production losses growing as we move into 2020,” they said.

Rabobank is expecting herd losses in China to reach 55% in 2019 and the pig supply in 2020 to be lower than 2019.

The pork production decline in 2019 will be slower than the herd loss due to a large liquidation early in the year. The analysts expect pork production to be down 25% in 2019 with a further drop of 10-15% in 2020.

Prices of live hogs, piglets and pork have all set records. Pork consumption is expected to drop sharply in response to soaring prices and lack of supply, and prices are expected to increase further in the next few

months as the peak consumption season approaches.

Retail prices for beef, chicken and sheep meat have also risen and could continue to increase in the coming months.

China’s pork imports also continue to rise both in volume and pricing. Import volumes were up 30% year over year in the first eight months of 2019, and increases are expected to continue as peak season creates additional demand.

Pork exports to other Asian countries are also expected to increase the rest of the year and into 2020, increasing competition in pork trade and maintaining upward pressure on prices.

“Prices have already reached inflationary levels, and demand erosion will become more apparent in the coming months — putting a ceiling on pork prices and lifting prices for trade in other species,” the analysts said.

Despite increases in pork exports to China and other Asian countries, the region will be structurally short of pork in 2019 and 2020. In addition, risks remain for ASF spreading to more countries in Asia and elsewhere, they said.

There are also global implications for exporters, the analysts said.

“Growing pork exports and rising prices will challenge exporters to find an appropriate balance between increasing production, chasing high prices for exports and supporting local customers,” they said.

Animal ag that works

By **DOUG WARNOCK**
Greener Pastures

Having a passion for their operation and a willingness to think outside the box are characteristics of the successful livestock enterprises we visited on tour in Indiana in early September.

This was all a part of the 104th annual meeting and professional improvement conference of the National Association of County Agricultural Agents in Fort Wayne, Ind., in September.

Direct marketing to consumers is something several of the farms visited are doing. Joseph Decuis Wagyu beef farm at Columbia City, Ind., sells directly to top restaurants in the larger Midwest cities and offers their product through their own restaurant, which is just minutes from where the animals are raised. They have a side venture that offers a venue for parties and wedding receptions to urban customers.

Gunthorp Farms has its own USDA inspected processing plant on the farm and markets hogs, chickens, ducks and turkeys through this facility. They raise pigs on pasture and sell their pork and poultry to upscale restaurants in Fort Wayne, Chicago and other larger cities in the upper Midwest.

Several of the operations process manure produced on their farm to be used as fertilizer. Their success led neighbors to ask them to handle manure from the neighboring farms and a co-op enterprise resulted.

Agri-tourism, telling about how livestock are raised and crops are produced, is a way of improving consumers’ understanding of food production, but also building confidence in the quality and wholesomeness of the resulting products.

Over 98% of the people in the U. S. are not connected to any kind of farm or ranch and know very little about how food is produced, or understand all the factors involved in managing an agricultural operation. Allowing interested people to visit a farm or ranch is not only a fun outdoor experience, but also gives

GREENER PASTURES

Doug Warnock



urban residents a better appreciation for what farmers and ranchers do.

Cook’s Bison Ranch, Fair Oaks Farm and the Joseph Decuis Wagyu Farm welcome people to visit, see the animals and ultimately to taste some of their fine products. Fair Oaks, a multi-farm co-op, expanded to become an actual theme park for dairy farming with 30,000 cows that are milked three times per day. Visitors are taken by bus from the loafing shed to the milking facility and around to view all aspects of the dairy operation.

Rose Acre Farms (RAF) is the largest family-owned egg producer in the U.S. It grew from a small family operation in the 1930s to its current position, having farms at 17 different locations in the central states with its headquarters in Seymour, Ind. It has 25 million chickens in egg production.

RAF is always striving to improve housing and feed for their chickens. They mix the poultry feed in their own feed mills using grain purchased directly from grain producers. RAF markets eggs to many of the large retail stores and food service companies across the U.S.

While visiting 12 different and very interesting livestock based operations, it was easy to see things are not stale in the U.S. livestock industry. It was a testimony to the intelligence and creativity of the many people in agriculture who find a way to direct their agricultural business so that it is productive, profitable and enjoyable.

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 dwarnockgreenerpastures@gmail.com.

ONLINE

www.stevenscountycattlemen.com

BLM honors Idaho Rangeland Resources Commission

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management has honored the Idaho Rangeland Resources Commission with its national Sagebrush Steppe Stewardship Award.

BLM said the award recognizes the commission for its participation in rangeland education, public-policy formation and commitment to stewardship of public land the BLM manages in the state.

BLM Idaho State Director John Ruhs presented the award Sept. 26 during the Public Lands Council meeting in Great Falls, Mont.

“BLM is pleased to collaborate with the Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission to sustain healthy rangeland,” he said in a release. “Since nearly half of Idaho is classified as rangeland, it’s important that Idaho citizens have a good understanding of the ecology and management of these public lands.”

IRRC outreach includes Care and Share, focused on educating outdoor recreation participants about livestock grazing; the Idaho Rangeland Outdoor Adventure Mobile traveling exhibit on rangeland ecology; and the “Life on the Range” video series. It covers more than 50 topics from range monitoring and fire suppression to sage grouse habitat, multiple-use land management, post-fire restoration and the interface between grazing and recreation.

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