



Warm Springs Extension Office
(541) 553-3238

Local cattle prices impacted by drought in U.S.

Fara Ann Brummer

The drought that is gripping much of the Midwest and South is affecting cattle prices, even here in the Northwest.

In the world of agriculture, corn sets the price for many of our other crops, including animal production. And corn is unfortunately drying up in our U.S. corn belt, with many losses.

We are very fortunate here in the Northwest to be having such good weather this year. Our reservoirs are full, our temperatures are relatively cool, and except for some major fires in Eastern Oregon, our range is in good production.

However, our cattle prices will ultimately be influenced by the national picture, because corn sets the stage for finishing our cattle. Lightweight cattle may not bring as much as they have been; heavier cattle may maintain themselves at the auction.

Butcher cows and bulls are still bringing an excellent price – it may be worth culling those unproductive dams even at this time of year, and taking them in rather than carrying them through another winter with hay prices as high as

they are.

Below, is a national report that forecasts cattle prices, using the Midwest corn belt as the standard:

(From the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, July 2012. Derrell S. Peel, Oklahoma State University Extension Livestock Marketing Specialist.)



It is often the case in the cattle business that “when production is easy; marketing is hard” and “when production is hard; marketing is easy.”

This makes sense because when production is easy and everyone can do it, prices often drop and marketing profitably is a challenge, and when production is a challenge, there are often good market opportunities.

Certainly the widespread drought is making production a challenge at this time for a great many producers. Many cattle

producers are on the defensive trying to figure how to best use rapidly dwindling feed resources; what to sell and when to sell it; and ultimately how to survive the drought with minimal negative impacts.

However, current cattle prices reflect underlying market signals as well as the direct impacts of the drought. Most attention has been focused on how much cattle prices have decreased in the past two months.

For feeder cattle, it is always important to consider changes in the price relationships across weights as well as the overall price levels. Recently, prices for lightweight feeder cattle, i.e., calves and stockers, have decreased more than prices for heavy feeder cattle.

The decrease in heavy feeder prices reflects primarily the impact of high corn prices on feedlot demand for cattle combined with the general demand weakness reflected in boxed beef prices.

Calf and stocker prices reflect all of those factors plus the lack of forage and limited opportunities for stocker based cattle production. As a result, the cur-

rent price pattern is one in which feeder prices drop rapidly up to about 600 pounds (for steers) and then are relatively flat up to about 850 pounds. In fact, for the past two weeks in Oklahoma, the cheapest steer under 800 pounds is a 575 pound animal with higher prices for weights from 600 to 800 pounds.

This type of “inverted” feeder price structure occurs rarely and reflects the combined impacts of high corn prices and a relative excess of animals at the current time due to the drought. While producers are forced to produce and market defensively through the drought, it is important to keep in mind that market opportunities will exist during and after the drought. The reality of high grain prices for at least the next crop year will continue to be reflected in feeder cattle markets as market signals to add weight to cattle prior to feedlot placement.



Agriculture and Natural Resources
Fara Brummer

August 22 is National Eat A Peach Day

Peaches are in season, which means that they can usually be found on sale during this time of year. They are a great choice for a snack or dessert. Peaches are low in fat, cholesterol and sodium. They are a good source of fiber (good for digestion) and a good source of vitamin A (good for eye health).

How to shop for peaches:

• Smell them. They should smell like a peach. If you can't smell anything they will be flavorless.

• Feel them. Peaches should not be hard. They should be slightly soft when you gently squeeze them.

• Look at them. Pick peaches that are not bruised or moldy.

If the peaches you buy aren't quite ripe, you can ripen them by putting them into a paper bag, loosely closing it and leaving them at room temperature. They should ripen in 2 to 3 days. If you have more ripe peaches than you can use, it is a great idea to freeze them for later use in baking and smoothies.

How to freeze peaches:

• Wash and peel peaches. To make them easier to peel, blanch them. Put them into boiling water for 40 seconds (up to one minute if they are not quite ripe). Carefully remove from the water and put them into cold water. The skins will slip off easily.

• Remove the pit and cut into halves, quarters or slices.

• For a sugarless dry pack, dissolve 1/2 teaspoon ascorbic acid (or 3 crushed 500-milligram vitamin C tablets) in 3 tablespoons of water and sprinkle over 4 cups of fruit. Gently toss the fruit to coat it evenly. This helps keep the fruit from turning brown.

• Place fruit into a plastic freezer bag and remove as much air as possible.

• Freeze immediately and store at 0 degrees Fahrenheit or below. For best quality use within 12 months.

For more methods of freezing fruit contact the Extension office

Family Community Health




Danita Macy
Arlene Boileau
Sara Smith
Rosanna Sanders

Warm Springs youth enter exhibits into the JC Fair

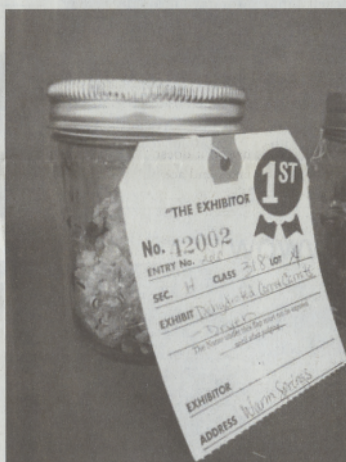
If you happened to make it to the Jefferson County Fair this year, you may have seen several exhibit entries from Warm Springs Youth. Twenty-seven youth who attended several OSU Extension Day Camps had the opportunity to create, enter and display their talents. The categories in which they entered included straw art painting, sand painting, wing dresses, ribbon shirts, necklaces, bracelets, decorated cookies, dried corn & carrots, and fruit leather.

Many of the youth were awarded, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or First Premium ribbons in each of these categories. What did else did they get? Cash! Yes, the 1st place ribbon paid out \$3.00, the 2nd place ribbon was \$2.00, and 3rd place was \$1.00. It may not sound like a lot of money but youth have the choice to enter into more than one category. For example, if a youth entered into 5 categories and placed 1st in each, he/she would receive a \$15.00 check in the mail. This sounds pretty sweet to me.

We are hoping next year we will double the entrants into the Jefferson County Fair. If your youth would like to enter in the 2013 Jefferson County Fair, please call Morning Rae Ferris at OSU Extension Warm Springs for more information and details.



4-H Program
Morning Rae Ferris



**“Artbration”
(Art Day Camp)
August 21, 2012
10am-2pm
Comm. Center**



The OSU Extension Warm Springs 4-H Lego Robotics Camp, August 13-17 has been POSTPONED until further notice.

Master Food Preserves Available
Please feel free to call our office with any canning or food related issues and we will be happy to answer.