



Andy Holloway

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## Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Agriculture Newsletter

By Andy Holloway, CEA ANR Hemphill Co, Texas

Winter here in Hemphill County has been cold and fairly dry, although we have had some moisture, as of late. Winter wheat and cool season grazing crops are ready to come out of dormancy, as well as our warm season grasses and weeds. They will really start growing and our cows will be chasing that green stuff! Hopefully the El Nino that the climatologists keep discussing will kick in this spring and summer and we can have a follow up to last year's great summer moisture. I have seen, and many have told me, they have grown more grass in the last growing season than in many years combined, previous to last year. I write that to caution all producers, this drought may not be over, I pray that it is, but in all reality we need about 30 inches of actual moisture over and above our average normal rainfall to be officially out of the drought. Though we have some grass due to last year's great summer; the water table, subsoil moisture, our tanks and lakes and normal flow of creeks and springs is still way below normal. Therefore be cautious and rebuild your cattle numbers conservatively. We have been given an amazing cattle market and thanks to the current value of cattle we can literally run half as many cattle and gross the same dollars as before the cattle market became so good. This situation can really assist in the gradual rebuilding of our herds, without financial stress. This also gives our pastures continued rest as they work out of this drought. I was looking recently at a producers place here in Hemphill Co that was terribly over grazed. On that place we found big soil erosion, tremendous grass death loss, thin cows and rough conditions to manage his cows through the cold winter conditions we have experienced. On the other hand I also visited a herd that was half stocked, his place had lots of grass, there was excellent top soil and subsoil moisture (we dug up a Yucca Plant and I couldn't believe how much moisture there was) and most of all his cows were in excellent condition and required little to no winter protein supplement.

We will be emphasizing pasture management, utilization of weeds to graze, and drought management. We will also look at genetics in beef cattle and adding value to your calf crop through selection for carcass genetics. Over the coming months these issues will be the priority of our Hemphill County Extension Ag education which has been developed as priorities by our Hemphill County Ag Extension Committee. There are thirteen members on this committee, mostly ranchers with a few farmers and agribusiness owners that will meet several times throughout the year to give our office direction to the Ag educational needs we should focus on. If you have ideas or suggestions, please contact one of our committee members or our office, also please be watching for the announcement of our Hemphill County Ag Tour that will be coming sometime soon.

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## WORLD WANTS TO KNOW ORIGIN OF BEEF

The United States has not yet restricted Canadian beef imports  
Published on February 25th, 2015

"If U.S. consumers wish to avoid Canadian-origin beef pending Canada's official answer to this ongoing mystery, they can do so today by looking for the country of origin label on their meat purchases," explained R-CALF USA CEO Bill Bullard. (AgWeb)

BILLINGS, Mont. — At least five importing nations have imposed import restrictions on beef and beef-related products in response to Canada's detection earlier this month of a 71-month-old beef cow infected with bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE or mad cow disease). The major beef importing nations of South Korea and Taiwan along with Peru, Belarus and Indonesia all have imposed import restrictions on Canadian-origin beef and beef related products.

"The actions by these five countries demonstrate that consumers the world over not only have an interest in knowing the country of origin of the beef they purchase; but also, they make purchasing decisions based on country of origin information," said R-CALF USA CEO Bill Bullard whose organization successfully defended the U.S. country of origin labeling (COOL) law at the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

However, Bullard says opponents are undeterred by real-world facts in their quest to ultimately overturn the U.S. COOL law in Congress. For example, a recent news article by NET News/Harvest Public Media (PBS/NPR) states that research by Kansas State University agricultural economist Glynn Tonsor indicated that "country of origin isn't really influencing what people buy."

The same article quoted Mark Dopp of the North American Meat Institute as saying that country of origin labels do not have anything to do with food safety.

In a recent Tri-State Livestock News article, COOL opponent Colin Woodall of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) was quoted as saying that COOL has 'nothing the producer is looking for' and that there is 'no benefit to consumers.'

"This anti-COOL rhetoric is nonsensical and debunked by the many countries that have now expressed their concerns over the safety of Canada's beef supply and have acted on those concerns by imposing bans on Canadian-origin beef," Bullard said.

The United States has not yet restricted Canadian beef imports even though Canada cannot explain how a relatively young beef cow born 12 years after Canada implemented what it claimed was an effective

feed ban and nearly two years after Canada upgraded that feed ban — which is the country's primary defense against the spread of BSE — was nevertheless infected with classical BSE.

"If U.S. consumers wish to avoid Canadian-origin beef pending Canada's official answer to this ongoing mystery, they can do so today by looking for the country of origin label on their meat purchases," explained Bullard.

"It is a travesty that the government of Canada and the meatpacking lobby here in the U.S. are teaming in Congress to deprive U.S. consumers of their right to know the origins of their beef," he added.

—R-CALF USA



## ARE CATTLE NUMBERS FINALLY INCREASING ?

January 1, 2015 numbers released by the National Agriculture Statistics Service of USDA say yes, if one year represents a trend. Numbers (and % comparison to Jan. 1, 2014) are as follows:

- all cattle and calves 89.4 million (+ 1%)
- beef cows 29.7 million (+ 2%)
- milk cows 9.3 million (+ 1%)
- all heifers ≥500lb 19.4 million (+1%)
- beef replacement heifers 5.8 million (+4%)
- milk replacement heifers 4.6 million (+ 1%)
- other heifers 8.8 million, (down slightly)
- steers ≥500 lb 15.8 million (+ 1%)
- bulls ≥500 lb 2.1 million (+ 3%)
- calves ≤500 lb 13.7 million (+1 %)
- cattle and calves on feed for slaughter 13.1 million (+ 1 %)

(More detailed information for 2015 and preceding years is available at <http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/MannUsda/viewDocumentInfo.do?documentID=1017>)



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## MINERAL SUPPLEMENT FOR STOCKERS

My colleague, Dr. Ted McCollum, Professor and Extension Beef Cattle Specialist at the Texas A&M AgriLife Center in Amarillo, recently reminded us of the importance of supplementing stocker cattle on small-grain pasture. He noted that mineral concentration of such pasture utilized by stockers can be characterized as follows:

- calcium ranges from adequate to marginal to very deficient
- phosphorous ranges from adequate to slightly deficient
- magnesium is adequate to marginal
- copper and zinc range from adequate to very deficient.

Stockers should be provided a complete mineral supplement, "complete" meaning salt, macro-minerals, and trace minerals in appropriate concentrations. As can be seen from forage mineral ranges above, what is appropriate in one case may not be in another.

What can be expected from a complete mineral supplement? Cited research showed increases in ADG of 1/4 to 1/2 lb/day compared to no supplement. Mineral consumption in these studies ranged from 1/4 to 1/2 lb/day. Based on the amount and current value of added gain, the breakeven cost of mineral supplement is about \$1050/ton. Ionophore can also be added to the supplement. In one of the studies described above, ionophore increased ADG by an additional 1/4 lb/day over salt-mineral alone. This would elevate the breakeven cost of supplement even higher. Properly-formulated supplements can increase performance and profit of stockers grazing small grain pasture.

(Dr. Ted McCollum: <http://amarillo.tamu.edu/> )

## GENETIC RELATIONSHIPS OF REPRODUCTIVE TRAITS IN YOUNG BULLS

Researchers analyzed 51,161 scrotal measurements and 17,648 sperm quality and breeding soundness evaluations from Nelore bulls. Scrotal circumference was measured at 18 months of age and sperm and breeding soundness at 22 1/2 months. Heritabilities were: scrotal circumference = 0.40, minor sperm defects = 0.16; major sperm defects = 0.04, total sperm defects = 0.15, breeding soundness = 0.10. The genetic correlation between SC and breeding soundness was 0.54. Correlations between SC and the three semen quality factors were small and negative (favorable in this case), ranging from -0.16 to -0.24. (Note: The direction of these correlations is inherent, since larger SC and lower semen defects results in a higher BSE score.)

The low heritability of the three semen quality factors indicates little progress would be realized in progeny by selecting sires for these factors. However, these quality factors, as well as SC, should be tested in prospective sires to evaluate their own breeding potential, as opposed to estimating that of their progeny.

(J. Animal Sci. 91:4611; Estadual Paulista Univ., Sao Paulo Univ., Vicosa Univ

## EFFECTS OF EARLY WEANING ON PERFORMANCE AND TOTAL NUTRIENT REQUIREMENTS

Calves from a group of 84 cows were weaned at 90 days of age (EW) or 205 days of age (NW). All cattle were maintained in drylot using the same ration of 60% distillers grain and 40% crop residue. EW cows received 15 lb/dry matter/cow/day and EW calves had free-choice access. NW pairs were limit fed the total amount consumed by EW cows + calves.

Over the period from early to normal weaning, EW cows gained 46 lb more and were heavier at normal weaning time. However, Body Condition Score did not differ. During the early to normal weaning period, NW calves gained 22 lb more. Together, EW cows and calves consumed 23.5 lb DM/unit/day and NW pairs 22.3 lb DM/unit/day. The authors concluded this "implied similar feed utilization" and "the data suggest weaned cows and calves require the same amount of feed as pairs together and early weaning does not reduce the feed energy needed to support the pair". (2014 Am. Soc. of Anim. Sci. Midwestern Section Abst. 101: Univ. of Nebraska)

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## EPD AVERAGES, ADJUSTMENTS, AND BREED COMPARISONS

The U. S. Meat Animal Research Center, Clay Center, NB, annually updates research that allows producers to: 1) see how individuals rank within a breed, 2) compare different breed average EPDs and, 3) adjust EPDs for direct comparison of individuals from different breeds. Tables showing this information can be accessed at <http://animalscience.tamu.edu/livestock-species/beef/publications/#genetics>.

## NEW TRICH RULES

The Texas Animal Health Commission has adopted some changes to the Trichomoniasis control program as follows:

- if a bull is sold and later found to be infected, other bulls from the herd of origin may be required to be tested if the bull was not exposed to females after its sale and prior to testing by the new owner;
- if a bull has strayed on to property not owned or managed by the bull's caretaker and is found to be infected then other bulls from the unit of origin and bulls on the premises where the bull was last located must all be officially tested;
- the TAHC can evaluate the effectiveness of a herd control plan to monitor progress;
- all premises under a Trich Herd Certification Program must have perimeter fences adequate to control movement in and out of the premises.

(TAHC Newsletter, 11/6/14)

## USAHA RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRICH REGULATIONS

At their annual meeting last fall, the United States Animal Health Association noted the variation across states of trichomoniasis regulations for interstate movement of bulls, which creates confusion and additional expense. Accordingly, the association adopted the following resolution:

The United States Animal Health Association urges state animal health officials that bulls not known to originate from trichomoniasis positive herds be accepted by importing states under the following conditions:

1. Virgin bulls up to 18 months of age be exempted from trichomoniasis testing requirements.
2. A negative trichomoniasis test is valid for 60 days after collection if the bull is held separate from females.
3. A single, negative DNA amplification-based test of samples collected by a United States Department of Agriculture Category II Accredited Veterinarian certified by the state of origin to collect trichomoniasis samples for interstate movement.

This is a recommendation only and would have to be implemented in state regulations.

(USAHA; <http://www.usaha.org/Reference/USAHAResolutions.aspx>)



UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

## FACTS ABOUT CANADIAN, TEXAS (HEMPHILL COUNTY)

- The trails along the river are older than recorded history.
- By the first decade of the 1900s Canadian was a railroad and marketing center
- Canadian had a Baptist academy. Robert Moody (1838–1915), a banker, rancher, and academy trustee, built the Moody Hotel downtown to reflect on the future of the community. The three-story, brick-veneer structure replaced the former McIntosh Hotel. The Moody opened late in 1910 with forty guest rooms and an oak stairway. The hotel flourished until changing travel plans caused it to close.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canadian,\\_Texas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canadian,_Texas)



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