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– SEE NEW CONTEST ON PAGE 35 –
Dan Henderson

It was a clear, Christmas Eve night in Tennessee. It was not so long ago as you might think, even though Clarabell was just a little calf when it happened. Clarabell was special, even for a Jersey calf. If she weren’t special, how then could all this have happened?

Jack Frost had come to paint the wide fields in silver and diamonds. Wind whistled through the cracks in the barn wall. The cold made white clouds out of Clarabell’s breath.

All the cows on Wilburn Farm but Clarabell were asleep. Even Hermann the Bull was quiet tonight.

It was the coldest night Clarabell had ever seen. The heat lamp in her stall had gone out. Her sawdust was damp. The water in her bucket was hard, and made her nose sting when she touched it.

Clarabell could smell the smoke from the chimney where the Wilburns lived. She knew if little Billy was awake, he would come and make her warm. But he did not come.

Clarabell turned her brown, big eyes longingly toward his house. They were very good eyes. How else could she have seen what she saw?

She poked up her big, chocolate-colored ears. They were very good ears. How else could she have heard what she heard?

She stood up on her long, skinny legs. The Wilburns’ house was all dark. She snuffled with her wet, shiny nose. It was a very good nose. How else could she have smelled what she smelled?

What she smelled was peppermint. And what she heard was bells. And what she saw -- well, you wouldn’t believe.

The sound of the bells grew louder. They made a sound she had not heard before. It was music, sweet music, music like the sound the herd makes as it lies down for the night. It was coming from the Wilburn house, where little 6-year-old Billy was asleep.

Clarabell liked Billy. He was gentler than the other humans. He was nicer. He never talked. Clarabell did not know that this was strange for a human. She thought it was nice.

She opened her brown eyes wide. Something was on the top of the Wilburn house! But she could not tell what. It frightened her to think someone might be after Billy.

Clarabell waited. She waited a long time.

No cars came down the road. Nothing moved on the farm. Stars shone like candles in the sky. Even the wind died down to a whisper.

And then, in a twinkling, like a leaf sucked up by a dust devil, it was flying. Whatever-it-was -- for Clarabell still did not know -- was flying. Bells jingled happily as it climbed into the sky. Stars went dark as it passed.

Clarabell caught her breath at what she saw. There were eight of them that flew across the yellow moon. They were calves! Calves like her! But they had funny things like tree branches on their heads.

The eight calves-with-branches pulled a box behind them. In it sat a man. He was a fat man. He had a beard. He laughed, for Clarabell could hear his laughter echoing in the night. It was good laughter, joyful laughter, ho-ho-laughter.

And then the calves and the man and the laughter were gone. Clarabell waited, but they did not come back. She waited until her eyelids were very, very heavy. Finally she could keep her eyes open no longer. She slept.

She dreamed of peppermint and a man-who-laughed and of calves-with-branches who flew. Since it was Clarabell’s first Christmas, she could not have known she saw Santa Claus. Nor could she know that animals get a special present, too.

As he passes over, Santa sprinkles dust that lets animals talk on Christmas morning, just like humans do. He has dust for every kind of animal. He has dust for Jerseys.

Clarabell woke up. The voice continued on Page 7
2014 Culpeper Senior Bull Sale

Scott P. Greiner
Extension Animal Scientist, Beef, Virginia Tech

The 57th annual sale of the Virginia BCIA Culpeper Senior Bull Sale will feature 62 fall-born yearling bulls on Saturday, December 13, 2014, at 12:00 noon at the Culpeper Agricultural Enterprises located on Route 29 just south of Culpeper, Virginia. These 62 fall-born bulls represent the top end of the 97 Angus, SimAngus, and Braunvieh Beef Builder bulls currently being developed.

The majority of the bulls selling are sired by trait-leading, highly proven AI bulls of each breed. All bulls selling meet minimum genetic requirements (EPDs) to sire calves for the VQA Purple Tag Feeder Calf Program. Bulls have been screened for reproductive and structural soundness, and sell with the BCIA enhanced guarantee for soundness and fertility. Complete performance information will be available on all bulls, including growth, maternal, and carcass EPDs, detailed test performance information, and ultrasound data. Many of the bulls will sell with genotypically-enhanced EPDs, and all SimAngus bulls will be genotyped for homozygous black status.

Again this year, we will feature video clips of each of the bulls available for sale. These video clips provide buyers a good opportunity to preview the bulls prior to sale day, and can be found on the BCIA website www.bcia.apsc.vt.edu. Virginia BCIA would like to thank Southern States and Mike Shanahan of Shanahan Cattle Promotions for their support of this video feature.

As a new sale feature for 2014, the sale will be available via the internet through DV Auction at www.dvauction.com. Producers will be able to view and purchase bulls over the internet with live streaming video in conjunction with the sale.

For video clips as well as catalogs and detailed information on the bulls visit the website www.bcia.apsc.vt.edu or phone Virginia BCIA at 540-231-9159 or Glenmary Farm at 540-672-7396.

Food Labels Study

Consumers are willing to pay more for meat products that are labeled and linked to a single, environmentally friendly production standard — like water conservation in beef production — according to a new study. The study led by researchers at the Washington State University found that consumers who paid 10 percent more for environmentally labeled meat products could have an impact on water conservation in livestock production. Based on the 26 billion pounds of American beef produced in 2013, researcher Robin White estimated that between 76 billion and 126 billion gallons of water could be saved each year as a result of such labels.

“It’s important to know that small changes on the consumer side can help, and in fact may be necessary, to achieve big results in a production system,” said White, who conducted the research as part of her doctoral studies in the Department of Animal Sciences at WSU. She added that the areas where water conservation could be reduced in livestock production include improved pasture management and greater sustainability efforts. More effective labeling would also wind up covering the cost of such measures, which can increase costs for producers, said White.
A well designed crop rotation with an emphasis on forages selected for digestibility is one key to successful livestock management. It’s critical for production and animal health, nutrient management and improving profitability. A well designed forage program goes beyond corn silage and alfalfa. High yields and the ability to feed forage increases by adding improved cool season grasses and BMR sudangrasses to a forage program. This, in turn, reduces the need for purchased grains. High yielding crop rotations produce higher profits!

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USDA Eases Into Enforcement Of Animal Disease Traceability Rule

Burt Ratliffдерживающий BEEF Magazine

While the long and often controversial effort to develop a national animal identification (I.D.) system may not be completely finalized yet, complying with the rule is in place. USDA and state animal health officials concentrated on education, explaining the requirements and nuances of the rule to cattle producers. In March 2014, USDA announced it would begin phase 2 of implementing the rule, which includes an individual ID and movement regulations is now the law of the land. And it has been for a while. U.S. cattle producers and their veterinarians have been working under USDA’s Animal Disease Traceability (ADT) rule for the past 18 months. However, USDA and state animal health officials have been emphasizing education and cooperation rather than enforcement in an effort to achieve compliance with the ADT rule. According to Chelsea Good, Livestock Marketing Association (LMA) vice president of government and industry affairs, speaking during a webinar sponsored by GlobalVetLink. Good says the ADT rule became effective on March 1, 2013. For the first year the rule was in place, USDA and state animal health officials concentrated on education, explaining the requirements and nuances of the rule to cattle producers. In March 2014, USDA announced it would begin phase 2 of implementing the rule, which includes enforcement. However, Good says USDA doesn’t intend to take a heavy-handed approach to enforcing the rule. “But they are going to pursue penalties in situations where an individual is repeatedly failing to comply with ADT requirements, despite receiving education and opportunities to come into compliance.” Good says quite a few letters of information have been sent to producers regarding compliance with the ADT rule and LMA is beginning to hear about some situations where an individual is repeatedly failing to comply with the ADT rule requirements.

Continued on Page 16
Selection For Marbling In A Cowherd

One of the major factors that has led to a shift in the U.S. beef industry from its roots as a commodity-based market to its current state as a quality-based, value-added market has been the ability of cattlemen to identify and select for animals of superior carcass merit. This shift has provided the industry with the ability to ensure a remarkable degree of reliability in product quality and the consumer satisfaction that ensues. Following the turn of the century, the push for improvements in USDA carcass quality grade and overall consumer acceptance led to a strong desire amongst cattlemen to place at least some degree of emphasis on selection for marbling.

As a result, a large number of producers have selected for cowherds that possess an abundance of marbling potential. Until recently, little was known about the existence of relationships between marbling and maternal traits, leading many producers to question if intensive selection for marbling and quality grade will affect cowherd productivity. In order to address these concerns, a comprehensive literature review was conducted to summarize and interpret the results of research that has evaluated genetic and phenotypic relationships between marbling and factors affecting maternal productivity. In addition, the 2013 Angus Sire Evaluation Report was analyzed to evaluate the presence of existing relationships between marbling and maternally relevant EPDs and dollar value (Wish) indices for Angus sires, due to their popularity and widespread use in commercial operations.

Based on the results of this review, our interpretation of existing reports suggests that selection for marbling will not negatively impact many traits that are considered important for maternal productivity, including scrotal circumference, age at puberty, heifer pregnancy, calving interval, or mature weight. Interestingly, these current findings appear to be favorable relationships between marbling and the birth weight and calving ease EPDs, as well as the BW index within Angus sires. Additionally, these findings identified the existence of relationships between marbling and the Angus score. This direct correlation appears to be much higher among the most heavily used Angus sires (based upon number of registered daughters with progeny weaning weight records).

It is important to note that a relationship does not affirm causation, as simultaneous selection pressure for more than one trait can create potentially unfavorable relationships. Such a scenario could help to explain some of the negative perceptions associated with selection for elevations in marbling, even within balanced-trait selection. Additionally, these results suggest that many of these perceptions could be the result of elevations in milk that have been simultaneously bred into certain high-marbling Angus sires, rather than a direct result of selection for marbling, as level of milk production can impact maternal nutrient requirements, body condition and reproductive success.

Research conducted in Hungarian and German Angus cattle has identified the existence of a genetic link between marbling and milk yield of Angus cattle, through the existence of a single nucleotide polymorphism of the gene that controls the final step in fat synthesis. The existence of this polymorphism, however, has yet to be evaluated within U.S. cattle populations, making the origin of this relationship difficult to determine. Additional genomic analysis and applied research of U.S. beef cattle populations is necessary in order to more effectively characterize these relationships, as well as to identify their origin.

Nonetheless, the impact of these relationships will remain largely dependent upon individual production scenarios, both in terms of selection pressure for marbling, and feed resources availability to support its related traits. As such, cattlemen are encouraged to remain cognizant of these relationships when making selection decisions, and as always, practice multiple trait selection that allows progeny to be matched to a producer’s respective management strategy.

To view the full version of the review article, visit http://www.cabpartners.com/news/research.php.
Continued from Page 2

she heard him get the wood and soft, and not like a human's at all. She opened her eyes. At the other end of the barn, by the wooden gate, she could see her mother. Her name was Heads Belmont Star. She was very pretty. She had a white star in the middle of her forehead.

And it was her mother who was talking!

Since Clarabell was a very smart calf, it took her no time at all to get loose from the rope that tied her in her stall. She trotted down to the barn to meet her mother.

Heads Belmont Star first had to explain why Clarabell could talk. "It takes very strong magic," she said. "It is very, very hard for an animal to talk. And that is why we can only talk one day at a time.

The mother and daughter had a splendid time. They talked about all the ordinary cow things. About how much better the hay had been lately. About how fine Mrs. Star's new winter coat looked. About the new cows that had joined the herd.

And then they talked about Billy. "It's very sad," Mrs. Star said. "All the humans can talk except him. There's something wrong with him."

But Clarabell said, "There's nothing wrong with him! He's the nicest human of them all."

"That's the way it works sometimes," Clarabell's mother said. "It's very hard to understand."

And then they talked some more about Christmas. Mrs. Star laughed at Clarabell's story of calves-with-branches. "You can reinderc: They're not calves at all. They help bama spread the talking dust."

"That would be a fine thing," Clarabell said. "That's what I'm going to do when I'm grown!"

"Sweethart, you must be happy with what you are. A Jersey cow is a fine thing to be. Why, you could have been a goat or a pig or even a weasel."

Clarabell listened, but she didn't believe. All she could think of was how grand it would be to fly. And there was something else. She might be able to get Billy some of the talking dust. Lots of children are like Clarabell. They listen to their mothers, but they still must try things for themselves.

She decided to be a reindeer when she grew up.

Mrs. Star kept talking. She talked about Herrmann the Bull and the time he chased the hired man across the pasture. "His mam's mean," she said. "But he's kind of handsome in an ugly sort of way."

Suddenly, Mrs. Star's ears perked up. She sniffed the air. "There's a human near. Be good. Humans are not supposed to hear us talk."

Her mother walked away. Clarabell turned around. She saw no one.

She walked back to her stall, her hooves going clippity-clap. Billy came out of her stall. He had a new red cap on. She could tell by the way he looked at her that he had heard the two cows talking. That was not good. Billy's eyes were wet and shining.

At first, Clarabell did not understand. But then she remembered that Billy could not talk. It would be like being a cow and having no tail. It would be worse. It would be like having no tail and then meeting a human who had one. That would make you feel very bad, indeed.

No wonder Billy had tears in his eyes. Clarabell walked over and rubbed her head against his corduroy pants. She didn't say anything. That might only make things worse.

Billy began to scratch Clarabell at the little nubs where her horns were beginning to grow. It felt good.

She saw that Billy had put fresh water in her bucket. He had put dry sawdust in. She could tell by the way he looked at her that he had heard the two cows talking. That was not good. Billy's eyes were wet and shining.

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December Herd Management Advisor

Scott P. Greiner &
Mark A. McCann
Extension Beef Specialists,
Virginia Tech

Short days, cooler temperatures, and the end of the year characterize December. With the start of the year just around the corner, December is an opportune time to reflect on the year experiences with your cattle enterprise. As you review receipts and expenses it is important to keep the big picture in mind as you assess the details. The key to making significant changes is identifying weaknesses in important areas which have a major impact on your bottom line, along with addressing those which will have the largest impact.

Production and economic records are the necessary tools to begin the identification of the variables where the smallest changes will have the greatest impact on your profitability. Likewise, it is important to understand which key investments will have the potential for the biggest return on investment (items such as facilities, fencing, genetics, etc.). As you take advantage of the short days and work on your enterprise records, what pieces are you missing? The 2015 record year is less than a month away.

Spring Calving Herds
(January-March)

General
Begin preparation for calving season by checking inventory and securing necessary supplies (equipment, tube feeder, colostrum supplement, ear tags, animal health products, calving book, etc.)
Evaluate marketing options for calves not yet sold.
Evaluate cull cow marketing strategy, take advantage of seasonality in cull cow price.
Conduct forage tests to determine nutritional content of hays.

Nutrition and Forages
Evaluate body score cows that you identified as thin and gauge if your management is making adequate progress.
Continue strip grazing accumulated forage growth as needed.
Continue to manage first-calf heifers separately; give them the best forage. Thin mature cows could be added to this group.
Feed lower-quality hay to dry cows, saving the best hay for calving season.
Continue to feed high Se trace mineral salt. A forage/hay analysis can reveal what other minerals should be supplemented.

Harvest impacts on feed costs have taken affect. Work to contract or lock-in winter feed needs at the most economical price.

Herd Health
In consultation with your veterinarian, finalize vaccination and preconditioning protocol for calf crop.
Replicates for the largest impact. As available forage becomes scarcer and of lower quality, be prepared to supplement as needed.

Nutrition and Forages
Offer high magnesium mineral. Generally, fall calving cows are not as predisposed to grass tetany. As cows transition from grazing to hay or silage, hi-mag minerals can be discontinued.

Use strip grazing as a tool to increase the efficiency of utilization of cool season pastures by cows post-calving.

Herd Health
Consult with your veterinarian concerning pre-breeding vaccination schedule for cow herd, yearling heifers, and subsequently, the breeding season begins. Remember that maintaining or gaining weight have a major impact on pregnancy rate.

Continued on Page 11
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Kent Nutrition Group, Inc.
Advisor
Continued from Page 9
bulls. Plan early to allow 30-
day’s vaccination window prior
to breeding season.
Begin planning vaccination
and preconditioning protocol
to be used for calf crop at
weaning.
Castrate commercial calves
if not done at birth, consider
castrating bottom end of male
calves in seedstock herds.
Monitor calf crop for health,
have treatment options on
hand.
Reproduction
Reproductive tract score
and measure pelvic area on
yearling replacement heifers.
Implement plans and pro-
tocols for breeding season fol-
lowing pre-planned calendar
and synchronization program.
Confirm schedule with AI
technician, have supplies and
semen on hand. Take time to be
precise with protocols for syn-
chronization, estrus detection,
and semen handling.
Breed heifers 2-4 weeks
ahead of mature cows to al-
low longer post-partum inter-
val prior to second breeding
season
Use 48 hour calf removal for
thin cows and first-calf heif-
ers at beginning of breeding
season
Schedule and conduct breed-
ing soundness exams on herd
sires, including annual vacci-
nations prior to turn-out.
Manage bulls properly dur-
ing the breeding season. Ob-
serve frequently to confirm
breeding activity and sound-
ness, and monitor cows for
repeat estrus. Avoid com-
mingle mature and young
bulls, as older bulls will be
dominant. As rule of thumb,
young bulls should be ex-
posed to number of cows equal
to their age in months (ie. 18-
month old bull with ~18 cows).
Genetics
Finish collecting yearling
performance data (weight, height, scrotal, ultrasound) in
seedstock herds.
In the development of new beef cuts that add value to cattle and stimulate consumer demand, discovery is just the first step.

This week in Denver, representatives of the Beef Checkoff and the Beef Innovations Group at NCBA outlined progress and challenges in product development to a group of trade media.

Bridget Wasser, executive director of meat science and technology with NCBA, explained the product-development process and demonstrated meat-cutting methods for established and emerging beef cuts.

Take for example the Flat Iron steak. This cut, which is the second-most tender muscle on the beef carcass, comes from the “shoulder clod” portion of the Chuck. Traditionally, the muscle was included in Chuck roasts or ground beef. But muscle-profiling research, sponsored by the Beef Checkoff and conducted at the Universities of Florida and Nebraska in the late 1990’s, identified the Flat Iron as an excellent steak-quality cut that could offer consumers a delicious eating experience while adding value to the Chuck portion of the carcass.

However, the Flat Iron is not easily removed from the Shoulder Clod. Extra labor is required to separate the muscle and remove a large strip of connective tissue that runs between the two Flat Irons on each side of beef, and some yield is lost in the process. Beginning around 2002, the Beef Checkoff engaged in a “push-pull” marketing strategy, educating chefs and retailers about the quality of the cut while also convincing packers and processors they could add value by making the effort to cut and package Flat Iron steaks. It took time – a “10-year overnight success story” Wasser calls it. But the Flat Iron caught on, and in 2013 the industry sold about 71 million pounds of Flat Iron steaks, topping the total for Porterhouse and T-Bone steaks of 65 million pounds. Flat Iron steaks today retail around $8 per pound, well above most cuts from the Chuck.

That same muscle-profiling research also identified the “Petite Tender,” which also comes from the shoulder clod. This muscle, in contrast, is easy to remove, and packers today routinely cut the small piece for packaging and sale to food-service customers prior to packaging the shoulder clod. Restaurants buy all they can produce and wish there were more than two Petite Tender on each carcass.

Today, the Beef Innovations Group continues to research and develop markets for innovative cuts, both from the Chuck and Round and from middle meats such as the Sirloin and Ribeye.

From the Chuck, these include the Ranch Steak, or Shoulder Center Steak, which is similar to Top Sirloin in tenderness, America’s Beef Roast, Boneless Country-style Beef Ribs, Sierra Cut and the Denver Steak.

In the case of middle meats such as the Top Sirloin and Ribeye, the development of new cuts focuses largely on portion control. As cattle have grown larger, cuts become too big, and have to be cut too thin, to meet restaurant specifications and consumer preferences. So, researchers and marketers are exploring options for alternative cutting methods to provide excellent eating experiences for consumers and value for retailers and restaurateurs.

These include removing the Sirloin Cap, or Coulotte, from the Top Sirloin, for use as a grilling roast or steaks, and creating Top Sirloin Fillets, which are smaller and thicker than typical Sirloin steaks, from the remaining muscle. In a similar process, meat cutters can remove the cap from the Ribeye, creating a new, ultra-tender (and expensive) set of steaks. The remaining “eye” portion, or Longissimus dorsi muscle, becomes Ribeye Fillets, a lean, tender and flavorful steak that can be cut thicker at the same portion weight as a traditional Ribeye Steak.

As with the Flat Iron steak, change will take time. Packers, processors, retailers and food-service operators will need to test these cuts and determine how they perform economically. Some retail and restaurant customers will continue to prefer traditional cuts. But continuing innovation will provide choices as markets, production systems and cattle genetics evolve into the future.
Continued from Page 10

topped road, then up the gravel drive to the Wilburns' house. Then she waited. She did not have to wait long.

She heard the far-off bells first. Soon she saw the reindeer team moving across the sky. And, quickly enough, the sleigh had landed on the roof. It landed as quietly as cotton falling on the floor.

In a flash, Santa was inside the house. In the wink of the eye, he was back out again. Presto, he was in his sleigh. Clarabell mooed. Not loudly, but very determinedly.

Santa came to the edge of the roof and looked down.

"Well, what have we here?" he said. He threw down some of the special talking dust. Clarabell began to moo again -- but in the middle of the moo, it changed to words.

"I want to be a reindeer," she blurted out. Santa stroked his whiskers thoughtfully.

"I see," he said. "How do you like this warm weather?" "Warm weather?" Clarabell asked. "Warm? Why, there's ice on the ground. When I talk, you can see the clouds of my breath."

"But this is warm compared to the North Pole," Santa said. "It's so cold there, sometimes the snow turns blue. And you can only see your breath on the warmest of days. Sometimes your weeds freeze and fall on the ground, it gets so cold. You have to take them in and thaw them out to hear what you said."

Clarabell gulped. But if she could help Billy, it would be worth it. "That's OK," she said. "All right then," Santa said. "Let me get my scissors and I'll be right down."

"Scissors? What for?"

"Why, to cut off your tail," Santa said. "Have you ever seen a long-tailed reindeer?"

Clarabell thought about it and realized that she hadn't. But she was very fond of her tail. All Jerseys are. And it was a very good tail, even for a Jersey. And it would hurt.

But if it would make her a reindeer, then she could help Billy. "Come on down," she said. Santa chuckled. "You're very brave for a cow, Clarabell. But you're not telling me all the truth. Maybe you should tell me why you want so much to be a reindeer."

He listened and scratched his head.

"There is only one way I could help," he said. "I could take someone's dust and use it on Billy. It would cure him, sure. But that would mean some animal would never get to talk again. Never. Not ever. And I couldn't do that to anyone. It wouldn't be fair."

Clarabell thought about it. She would never be a reindeer. And if she did what she had to do, she would never be able to talk to her mother again. But that would mean she never wanted to be a reindeer again -- but that part of the story would not be true. Clarabell did live very long. And she never regretted giving her talking dust to Santa.

"There is only one way I can help," he said. "I could tell Clarabell everything about the reindeer who pulled his sleigh."

He did not tell her that the reindeer were animals changed by Christmas magic. Most of them had never been reindeer before. One was a cat who had led police to find a thief.

He winked down from the rooftop. He was back in the house in a jiffy. He was out. He was back in the sleigh.

"Let him take mine," she told Santa.

"There is only one way I can help," he said. "I could tell Clarabell everything about the reindeer who pulled his sleigh."

He frowned.

"That would be the end of the story -- if Clarabell had been an ordinary cow. The story would not be true."

Santa did not even bother to watch the sleigh leave. It was gone.

Clarabell had calves, and grand-calves and great-grand-calves, which she did.

But that is not all the story, either.

Clarabell lived to a very old age for a cow. The story doesn't end there. It could be said that she never wanted to be a reindeer again -- but that part of the story would not be true. Clarabell did live very long. And she never regretted giving up her talking dust for Billy. Cows don't have to talk. Humans do. And every Christmas, when she heard the bells, a tiny part of her still wanted to fly. It turned out Santa had not told Clarabell everything about being a reindeer.

He did not tell her that the reindeer who pulled his sleigh were magic. Reindeer, you see, are just ordinary animals. They can't fly.

But the reindeer who pull Santa's sleigh are animals changed by Christmas magic. Most of them had never been reindeer before. One was a cat who had led police to find a thief.

Continued on Page 34
The 20th Annual Hokie Harvest Sale Boasts Several Records

Emma Reeves, Virginia Tech Beef Leadership Council Reporter
Dr. Dan Eversole, Dept. of Animal and Poultry Sciences

On the rainy evening of October 31, 2014, students, alumni, and supporters gathered in the Livestock Judging Pavilion at Virginia Tech to make history at the 20th annual Hokie Harvest Sale. The trusted VPI prefix that has been featured in bull studs worldwide was added to the herds of buyers from Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina at this event that has become a tradition in Blacksburg.

This year’s record-setting sale registered 161 buyers from 12 states and grossed an all-time high of $234,700 on a total of 55 purebred and commercial lots with record averages of $4,404 and $3,064, respectively.

There were four Angus and two Simmental cow/calf pairs sold with averages of $7,000 and $5,850 for each respective breed. The highest-selling pair consisted of Lots 1 and 1A which commanded a $7,700 total. Lot 1 is a two-year-old Carl Benson, Jr. of Daleville, VA.

Fifteen Angus, Simmental, and Hereford yearling bulls brought an average of $4,113. The group was topped by Lot 19, an Angus bull sired by Con- nosity Consensus 7229 who sold for $5,800. Lot 19 was also the highest-selling individual animal in the sale. His calving ease genetics combined with tremendous curve-bending $W and $B will certainly turn a profit for his new owner. This promising Angus bull was purchased by Dr. Dan Eversole, Dept. of Animal and Poultry Sciences, Blacksburg, VA.

The 67 students in the 2014 Livestock Judging class did an excellent job organizing the Hokie Harvest Sale in an experiential learning environment. For the past 20 years, this class has served as valuable hands-on experience for students in all aspects of organizing and hosting a livestock sale. The nine student committees were clerking, animal display and sale prep, food and beverage, registration, clipping and photography, sale ring prep, advertising, catalog and social media, and decoration.

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Hokie Harvest
Continued from Page 14

and cooperation are greatly appreciated.

There continues to be a very strong interest among Virginia Tech students and prospective buyers in hosting future Hokie Harvest Sales. Due to the historical record of the cattle market and the reputation of this student-run sale, we are optimistic to host the 21st Annual Hokie Harvest Sale on Friday, October 30, 2015. Mark your calendars now and we hope that you can ‘Come and Experience the Harvest’. If you would like to be added to the mailing list for future Hokie Harvest Sales, email Dr. Dan Eversole at deversol@vt.edu or call 540/231-4798.

K.C. Williamson
Extension Specialist
Animal Science Department

The 41,427 calves sold through special sales in Virginia during the fall of 1979 were about 5 percent more than last year. The number of steer calves increased by 11 percent, while the number of heifer calves decreased by about 4 percent. Heifer calves made up 41 percent of the total offering in 1979, compared with 44 percent of the two previous years which is the lowest percentage since 1974 when beef herd expansion was still in progress. The decrease in the number of heifers sold in 1979 suggests beef producers in Virginia are starting to keep a few more heifers for herd replacements than they have in the past four years. During the late sixties and early seventies, when beef cow numbers were expanding rather rapidly, heifer calves made up only 37 to 38 percent of the total number of calves sold.

All of the steer calves sold through the 1979 series of special fall sales in Virginia averaged $89.00 per hundred head. This price was $18.76 per hundred head higher than a year earlier and the highest on record for a fall series sales. The average weight of all steer calves sold was 442.63 pounds per head.

The heifer calves sold averaged $75.20 per hundred head with an average weight of 460 pounds each, returning an average $345.79 per head.

The price of heifer calves was $36.60 per hundred higher than the previous year and were selling for 84.5 percent of the price of steer calves, a slight improvement percentage wise over the last year.

If we compare steer and heifer calves on an equal basis, the average calf sold through the 1979 Virginia sales averaged 478.5 pounds, $82.11 per hundred, and $394.20 per head. This was about $85.00 per head more than the average calf brought in the sales a year earlier.

The weight of the calves sold in 1979 was practically the same as the calves weighed a year earlier, indicating the extra good grazing season had little effect on the average weight of the calves.

In 1969 the average calf sold through Virginia sales averaged 460.5 pounds per head indicating calf producers in Virginia have increased weaning weights by 18 pounds per head over the past 10 years.

Yearling steers averaged $75.20 per hundred with an average weight of 575 pounds each, returning an average $394.20 per head. The price of yearling steers was $8.63 per hundred, or about 15 percent lower than the previous year.

Yearling heifers averaged $69.21 per hundred, or about 4 percent. Heifer calves made up about 4 percent.

The weight of the calves sold in 1979 was practically the same as the calves weighed a year earlier, indicating the extra good grazing season had little effect on the average weight of the calves.

In 1969 the average calf sold through Virginia sales averaged 460.5 pounds per head indicating calf producers in Virginia have increased weaning weights by 18 pounds per head over the past 10 years.

Crossbreeding continued to expand in the state as those calves classified as crosses increased to 42.5 percent of the total number sold. This is a 2.5 percent increase over the 12 percent crossbreeds recorded at the 1970 sales.

Yearling Cattle Numbers Down
There were 40,042 beef yearling sold through the fall series of yearling sales, about 12 percent less than last year. Contrary to the trend noted in calves, the number of yearling heifers sold was up 19 percent while the number of yearling steers was off almost 6,000 head, or about 15 percent fewer than the previous year.

Traditionally steer make up about 90 percent of the cattle sold through the fall yearling sales, so the increase in heifers full short of making up the reduction in steers.

The yearling steers averaged $76.31 per hundred, a $16.63 increase over the prices received a year earlier but $5.00 to $7.00 per hundred below the price of similar weight cattle brought in the Spring sales of 1979.

Yearling heifers averaged $69.21 per hundred, up almost $15.00 per hundred over prices a year earlier but well below prices received in the spring of 1979.

The yearling steers sold averaged $743 pounds per head, 5 pounds heavier the last year, and the heaviest average weight since fall yearling sales were started in 1932. Yearling heifers averaged 637 pounds per head, 22 pounds heavier the last year.

As we look at the price trend on yearling cattle for the 1979 sales season, we note prices were very good during early September and held up well throughout most of the month.

By late September, slaughter cattle prices started trending lower and the announcement of higher interest rates in the early October created an even greater bearish attitude toward feeder cattle. The bottom in prices for the fall season was around mid-October. By late October and early November prices had made some recovery but the special sales season ended before any great amount of enthusiasm had been generated and prices at the late sales continued to average below the sales held in September.

REMEMBER WHEN IN December 1979
VIRGINIA’S FALL FEEDER PRICES - HIGHEST EVER
While drought is still affecting dairy producing regions like California it is not as widespread. Currently only 12% of beef cow herd and 5% of corn production is being affected by drought. As we’ve transitioned from the dry period of 2012 to a wetter 2014 we’re seeing beef cow slaughter drop off, Zimmerman says.

Many beef producers are holding back more cows to capitalize on record high calf prices. In the past 4 years 500 lb. feeder calf prices have increased 83%. Other animal protein sectors have also seen record high prices thanks to demand and a drop off in production. Pork producers had to deal with PEDV and broilers had fertility issues. However, both of these industries can rebound much quicker because it takes weeks to hatch more chickens and months to farrow more piglets. Beef and dairy producers need 5 years to develop a heifer into a cow.

“We’re going to have larger protein supplies next year by just a couple of pounds, but it is all going to be due to the other proteins, not beef,” Zimmerman adds.

Zimmerman believes it is likely that fed cattle and culled cow prices will still be in the same area next year for the highs, with maybe a $5/cwt increase. It will still be nothing like the $20 to $30/cwt increase from this year.

“Where we’re going to get the depreciation is the lows. I think $1/lb. is going to be pretty normal for the low in the culled cow market,” Zimmerman says. “The high on those culled cows is going to be right in that $1.20-$1.30/lb range.”

Looking forward the beef industry will be in a supply driven environment.

“Anytime we’re in a supply driven environment, it doesn’t matter if it is beef, chicken or Mercedes Benz, the leverage situation changes where the guys down the food chain hand leverage to the guys up the food chain,” Zimmerman says.

Retailers can’t stand open shelf space so they will bid more on a product to keep their stores full. In the case of the beef industry that price gets handed down to the packer. Zimmerman relates packers will have to bid more for cattle.
Merry Christmas
from the Virginia Simmental Association

What is API?

ASA’s All Purpose Index

- Uses USDA technology and CattleFax price projections to predict profit differences between sires in units of $ per exposed female.
- API is designed to work best when selecting sires for use in herds where daughters are retained and cull females and steers are finished and sold grade and yield.
- ASA data establishes that bulls with higher API value tend to sell for more money than lower API bulls.
- Given the above factors, breeders selecting for API are likely to improve their customers’ profitability as well as their own.
- For more detailed information on API go to: http://simental.org/site/rec_library/ and click on "making selection decisions".

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- 6% Soy Hull Pellets
-.ddgs and other feed ingredients
- Dairy-influenced beef will continue to be a bigger part of the beef story. Dairy calf cows are increasingly important to beef production,

Dairy Cattle
Continued from Page 16

to help cover the fixed cost of keeping plants open and hopefully make a profit.

“The guys holding the supply, whether it’s day-old Holstein calves, cull cows or a cow-calf producer in central Kansas, you guys hold the chips for a little while longer,” Zimmerman says.

These tight supplies should last for another year to 2 years before it will transition towards the retailer and packer. Dairy cows account for 6% of beef production, while fed dairy calves account for 14%. Even though the beef cow herd has declined in the past few years, the dairy herd has remained relatively stable.

The drought forced the majority of beef cows out of the traditional feedlot region south of Interstate 70 in the High Plains of Texas, Kansas, Colorado and Oklahoma. To help fill those pens and keep packers near capacity feedyards had to buy an increasing number of dairy calves, driving up prices. Additionally, more grove yards and feeder development facilities have been taken on at feedlots in the region.

The biggest driver in all of this will be consumer demand. International markets will help drive the boat more and more as countries like China continue to eat increasing amounts of protein. Domestic demand will be the primary market, particularly for grinding meat.

“I think you could easily say 55-60% of U.S. consumption this year is ground beef,” Zimmerman says. “For years the beef industry cried ‘we need our own chicken nugget or chicken breast’, My message to everyone in the beef industry that will listen is you have it.

It’s called a hamburger.” Trim accounts for approximately 65% of a cow carcass, and it accounts for a lot of value. At one point in 2014 trim was worth 75% of the total value of a cow carcass. “Dairy-influenced beef will continue to be a bigger part of the beef story. Dairy calf cows are increasingly important to beef production,” Zimmerman adds. “Feedlot overcapacitv has made dairy-influenced calves attractive andveal isn’t the only market.”
The Northeast Beef Promotion Initiative (NEBPI) invited Virginia Beef Industry Council to participate in their plans for the Marine Corps Marathon this October in Washington DC. This marathon is the 3rd largest marathon in the US, and attracts people from around the world. Unlike the Boston Marathon, which requires you to qualify to enter, the Marine Corps Marathon is done by a lottery system, including runners of various levels. Not only was this a great chance to interact with the DC demographic, but was a great event to attend with our own Virginia Team Beef being rolled out in early 2015.

NEBPI set up a booth at the Expo to receive their running bib and registration information. It was also open to the public. An estimated 30,000 people attend the expo. Jason and Valerie were able to assist with the booth. We both learned quite a bit from NEBPI’s strategies to interact with the public. The beef jerky and Team Beef brochure (outlining how beef helps fuel an active lifestyle) went over very well. NEBPI also recruited a triathlon trainer, Kim Schwabenbauer, who spoke at the First Timer’s Pep Rally on Friday Night and was widely acknowledged as the best speaker of the event.

NEBPI plans to launch their own Team Beef in the early spring. Team Beef is a group of athletes that value the importance of beef in a healthy, active lifestyle, and are willing to be ambassadors of the brand, so to speak. Updates and information about the program will be available in early December at www.vabeef.org/team.

### BEEF AND BLUE CHEESE STUFFED MUSHROOMS

These perfectly bite-sized mushrooms are stuffed with a savory blend of Ground Beef, blue cheese and chives.

- **Total Recipe Time:** 40 to 50 minutes
- **Makes 36 to 40 mushrooms**

**INGREDIENTS**

1. 1/2 pound Ground Beef
2. 1/4 teaspoon salt
3. 36 to 40 small button or cremini mushrooms (about 1-1/2 to 2-inch diameter)
4. 1/3 cup crumbled blue cheese
5. 1/4 cup soft whole wheat bread crumbs
6. 3 tablespoons minced chives
7. 1/2 teaspoon steak seasoning blend
8. Minced fresh chives (optional)

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR BEEF AND BLUE CHEESE STUFFED MUSHROOMS**

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Remove and reserve stems from mushrooms. Season mushroom caps with salt; set aside. Mince stems to yield 1/2 cup; discard remaining stems.

2. Combine Ground Beef, minced stems, blue cheese, bread crumbs, 3 tablespoons chives and steak seasoning. Spoon beef mixture evenly into mushrooms.

3. Place stuffed mushrooms on rack in broiler pan. Bake in 375°F oven 15 to 20 minutes. Sprinkle with additional chives, if desired.
The Blue Ridge Cattlemen’s Association, in conjunction with the Northern Virginia Angus Association, held their fall quarter meeting on September 30th, at Lazy Lane Farm (Uperville, VA), with over 165 attendees.

Lazy Lane Farm hosted the meeting, and provided a tour of the cattle and horse operations. Participants loaded on four wagons to tour the cattle herd, visit the brood mare facilities, and see “Hansel” the Thoroughbred stallion bred by Lazy Lane Farm.

“Hansel” is the oldest living winner of the Preakness Stakes and Belmont Stakes, having won both in 1991.

After a great tour, the group sat down to a RibEye steak dinner prepared by Rodney Lillard of Mill Valley, Inc. The dinner was topped off with homemade ice cream provided by Don and Helen Taylor of Windy Knoll Farm.

Our special guest of the evening was Mr. Colin Woodall, NCBA Chief Lobbyist and Vice-President of Government Affairs for BeefUSA. Mr. Woodall spoke about several issues that may impact cattle producers. He encouraged participants to contact their government representatives to express how WOTUS and COOL programs directly effect their cattle business. In addition, he encouraged joining the NCBA to support and promote our cattle industries.

The Blue Ridge Cattlemen’s Association was originally formed in 2003 as the Loudoun Cattlemen’s Association. As membership and interest grew from adjoining counties, the Association changed the name to Blue Ridge Cattlemen’s Association in 2011. Currently the BRCA has 157 members from Virginia and West Virginia, and represents over 18,000 head of cattle.
Lawsuits Aim To Reverse Use Of Livestock Supplement

A coalition of advocacy groups sued the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, seeking to vacate its approvals of several livestock feed supplements that are widely used in Nebraska and elsewhere to add weight to farm animals, especially beef cattle and pigs, but also turkeys. In lawsuits filed Thursday in the U.S. District Court of Northern California in San Francisco, groups including the Center for Food Safety, the Humane Society of the United States and United Farm Workers of America argue that in approving 11 new and almost all pigs are treated. Industry sources say most cattle and China. Russia has banned imports of meat from livestock residues from the drugs can escape from manure lagoons, it can imperil the surrounding habitat, contaminate groundwater and endanger wildlife. "In its report on the toxicology of ractopamine, FDA says that exposure to the drug for humans can lead to heightened heart rate and a higher systolic blood pressure. Over time, exposure to the drug can lead to abnormal heart rhythms, tremors, nervousness and metabolic problems. But the drug is safe," says the agency, since the residues left in animals after slaughter don’t reach harmful levels.

Environmental Policy Act, which requires the agency to conduct an environmental analysis on the drugs. According to the lawsuits, residue from the drugs can remain active in animal waste, and when applied to fields, or escaped from manure lagoons, it can imperil the surrounding habitat, contaminate groundwater and endanger wildlife. In its report on the toxicology
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Anne Burkholder, The Feedyard Foodie, Is BEEF Magazine’s 2014 Trailblazer

To today’s average consumers, the vast majority of whom are generations removed from the land, the terms “feedyard” and “foodie” don’t seem to share much compatibility. Anne Burkholder is out to change that, and she loudly trumpets that mission in the name of her popular blog, just that: “Feedyard Foodie.”

Perhaps there’s no better person to take up that challenge. Burkholder is herself a contradiction of sorts. She’s a city kid raised in Palm Beach County, FL, and Ivy League-educated with a degree in psychology from Dartmouth University. Yet, to a degree in psychology, the couple considered her options.

“I’m known for saying what I think, but if you don’t push and don’t look for things that can get better, then you never get better,” Anne Burkholder

“I didn’t know what a feedyard was when I came to Cozad the first time. I didn’t think negatively of it. I just didn’t know it existed.”

Enthusiased, she says, by the animals and the process, she decided it was something she wanted to try. “So I asked my father-in-law, Dave, if he would give me a job. He took a tremendous leap of faith when he said yes,” she says.

A determined Burkholder started at the bottom, at $6.85/hour. “I learned how to run a feed truck and a scoop shovel and how to walk pens, most of these jobs I still do today.” In fact, she says, the operation’s small size is one of the big attractions for her. “My feedyard is small enough that I don’t have a desk job. I’m out there every day handling animals, working with my crew,” she says.

She credits “two very wonderful men” as instrumental in her professional growth. “My father-in-law is a tremendous mentor and businessman, with an MBA from Stanford [University]. I learned the business side from Dave,” she says.

Meanwhile, Archie Curtice, the feedyard’s longtime manager who is now retired, was an invaluable resource, too, she says, as were other crew members at the time. “They were willing to take me in and teach me, and I was willing to work very hard. I tried to work harder than anyone else because I had to prove myself, she says. It wasn’t an easy transition for a city kid with no background in agriculture. “But I tell my children that the road to excellence is never comfortable. Excellence isn’t about comfort; it’s about digging deep and trying hard to achieve more than you ever thought you could. That’s very much the way I’ve lived my life, and I hope my kids do as well.”

Between farming and feeding, she and Matt were success-
Anne Burkholder

Continued from Page 23

As the business owner, Anne says, while "I hope I've proven myself. I've worked hard to try to do a lot of volunteer work to give back to the industry that's given me a profession. I do believe I bring a unique perspective because I didn't grow up in the beef industry. I'm known for saying what I think, but if you don't push and don't look for things that can get better, then you never get better." And she hopes more producers, but particularly cattle feeders, will follow her lead.

Burkholder has been a cornerstone of the Will Feed Inc. team since the company was founded by her father, John Burkholder, in 1970.

"I hope I've proven myself. I've worked hard to try to do a lot of volunteer work to give back to the industry that's given me a profession. I do believe I bring a unique perspective because I didn't grow up in the beef industry. I'm known for saying what I think, but if you don't push and don't look for things that can get better, then you never get better." And she hopes more producers, but particularly cattle feeders, will follow her lead.

The eldest child, Ashley Grace, turns 15 in December, while Megan is 12 and Kevyn is 10.

Low-stress cattle management

Back at the feedyard, Anne has taken over the operation. She's owner, assistant cowboy, bunk reader, environmental steward and marketing manager. She does all the cattle buying, mostly in the local area and direct off the ranch. Will Feed Inc. feeds mostly its own cattle, but does a little custom work and some partnering with ranchers who want to retain ownership.

She buys directly because she seeks to establish relationships, so that information can be passed up and down the system. All cattle are sold on the grid.

Beef quality assurance (BQA) programs are a cornerstone at Will Feed Inc., and low-stress animal management is practiced religiously. Buying calves locally and directly minimizes the transportation stress, she says, while finished cattle have only a 20-mile transport to the Tyson plant down the road.

Anne even spends time each morning for several days acclimating new arrivals to their home pen, getting them used to their new surroundings and handling by their own feet.

Burkholder served on the Nebraska BQA advisory group for a decade and currently serves on the national committee. In fact, she worked on the team that created the Transportation Quality Assurance program. Will Feed Inc. was also one of the first practitioners of the BQA feedyard assessment tool.

But Burkholder wanted to move beyond BQA, to "something we could use possibly to build a brand, an even more powerful management tool to ensure that our feedyard was running as well as it absolutely could," she says.

Her industry volunteer work put her in touch with John But- ler, CEO of Progressive Beef, and they discussed participation in the Progressive Beef Quality System Assessment (QBQA) program. It's a third-par- ty verified series of protocols in the areas of food safety animal welfare and sustainability. She signed on.

A few months later, Will Feed Inc. became part of the Beef Marketing Group, a producer cooperative focused on creating value throughout the beef supply chain. "With a 3,000-head feedyard, I don't have enough cattle to exert a lot of say relative to the actual selling of my animals and my beef. I've always dreamed about taking my beef to the consumer and it was obvious to me that that wasn't something I could do myself. I needed partners," she says.

Together, Burkholder says the two affiliations have proven "These have been a great group of people to work with, and we've put there producing good cattle using the Progres- sive Beef QSA to make sure our management is outstanding, and we're trying to back the consumer to create some relationships and try to sell some beef," she says.

Long industry shadow

"I hope I've proven myself. I've worked hard to try to do a lot of volunteer work to give back to the industry that's given me a profession. I do believe I bring a unique perspective because I didn't grow up in the beef industry. I'm known for saying what I think, but if you don't push and don't look for things that can get better, then you never get better." And she hopes more producers, but particularly cattle feeders, will follow her lead.

Pick up your copy of Cow-Calf Weekly to get the latest industry research and information in your inbox every Friday.

"Anne behaves on a daily basis as if every beef consumer is watching over her shoulder. If she can't justify it to our con- sumer, she won't do it. She is constantly searching for newer and better ways to care for her animals to meet our consumers' expectations. In industry meet- ings she asks tough questions and expects straight answers. She is a driving force in our journey towards continuous improvement," Williams says.

Burkholder credits the BQA award and the MBA experience for giving her the opportunity to reach beyond her farm gate. "These are what really got me started in telling my story. But I couldn't travel much because of my kids and its feedyard. So that's where the idea of blog- ging came in."

Williams calls her a "cone- woman trust-building ma- chine" on behalf of the entire beef community. "By mak- ing herself so accessible, she benefits everyone in the beef community by addressing con- sumer concerns about the way beef is raised. She isn't just a beef advocate. She is an advoc- ate for the consumer, and I think that's what makes her so effective," he says.

Butler on the Virginia Cattleman
Mandatory COOL: Still Detrimental To Trade, Still No Easy Solution

Katie Allen, K-State Research & Extension News

Abolish? Make further tweaks? Or perhaps, make it voluntary? On the heels of the World Trade Organization’s (WTO’s) latest ruling on U.S. mandatory country-of-origin labeling (COOL), debate on both sides of the issue continues. It’s a debate that has spanned more than a decade, and finding a solution that will please everyone involved is likely impossible.

For the second time, the WTO has sided with two top U.S. trading partners—Canada and Mexico—saying COOL has caused less favorable treatment to imported livestock from those countries compared to U.S. livestock, and furthermore, it has caused a detrimental impact on the competitive trade opportunities of imported livestock. (“Mandatory COOL guts Canadian and Mexican livestock producers at a disadvantage to U.S. livestock producers,” said Glynn Tonsor, K-State Research and Extension livestock economist. “As an economist who has looked at it, the additional costs that come with the more precise tracking and segregating get built into what a packager and pack- ing plants are willing and able to pay for animals not born in the United States.”)

The current rule requires that several fresh foods, including meat sold at grocery stores, indicate the individual country or countries where the product was born, raised and slaughtered on the product’s label. “The main difference consumers saw from that rule change was meat labels, such as that on a beef steak, would now be labeled as ‘Born, Raised and Slaughtered in different countries,’” Tonsor said. “Sticking with the same example I mentioned before, the label would now say, ‘Born in Canada, Raised and Slaughtered in the U.S.’”

Not only has mandatory COOL shown to be costly and hinder trade, concerns have also come to light questioning if U.S. consumers overall are aware of origin labels or use them to make purchasing decisions. In his research, Tonsor said he’s found no evidence of demand for origin information by the typical meat consumer in the United States. Furthermore, he’s found most U.S. consumers don’t know that COOL even exists. “Nearly two years ago, we wrapped up that research after the 2009 rule was implemented,” Tonsor said. “We’re able to see how actual consumption patterns did or didn’t change, as opposed to doing it beforehand and speculating. We found no evidence of beef demand increase following implementation of origin labeling. We found no evidence of pork demand increase. We found no evidence of poultry demand increase.”

The meat products Tonsor studied were all covered products through the grocery store chain, as these products must abide by the ruling. Many products he didn’t study because they are exempt from mandatory COOL, such as a food item sold in a restaurant and further processed items, such as cured bacon. “We also did a lot of survey work that shows most of the public isn’t aware of COOL, and origin information is not the most important piece to them (when buying meat products),” he added. The advocates of COOL might say more precision and detail on labels now lends the right to label origin. Compos- ers of the WTO ruling have appeal the latest WTO ruling or continue to shop for foods by origin. Consumers could continue to shop for foods by origin preference, if the packers or retailers decided the added cost of labeling would be offset by consumer demand.

The groups that are advocates of mandatory COOL are point- ing out the United States has the right to label origin. Compo- nents of the WTO ruling have also said the United States has that right.”

Tonsor said he believes it would be difficult to technically redesign mandatory COOL in a way the WTO would view as giving information to consum- ers while not continuing to negatively affect U.S. trading partners. “Moreover, I don’t know if it has to be a manda- tory COOL policy,” he said. “Perhaps we could have de- veloped (COOL) in a voluntary sense.” Voluntary COOL might still be a possibility to consider, as it would allow packers and retailers the option to label the origin. Consumers could continue to shop for foods by origin preference, if the packers or retailers decided the added cost of labeling would be offset by consumer demand.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture and trade negotiators on behalf of the United States have yet to make statements as to whether or not they will appeal the latest WTO ruling or focus on modifying the rule for another time, Tonsor said. Many people and groups are politi- cally involved in the issue and want different outcomes. “The groups believing there is no con- sumer demand benefit and an increase in the cost of labeling would have a strong preference to abolish (mandatory COOL) or get as close to abolishing to the policy as possible,” he said. “The groups that are advocates of mandatory COOL are pointing out the United States has the right to label origin. Compo- nents of the WTO ruling have also said the United States has that right.”

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With strong numbers in September, U.S. beef exports broke the $5 billion value mark during the first three quarters of the year, according to statistics released by USDA and compiled by the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF), a contractor to the beef checkoff.

Year-on-year beef exports in September increased 8 percent in volume to 220 million pounds and skyrocketed 25 percent in value to $631.9 million. For year-to-date through September, beef exports rose 3 percent in volume to nearly 2 billion pounds and 15 percent in value to $5.38 billion.

“These are impressive results, especially given the headwinds we faced in September – including a very strong U.S. dollar and a significant decline in beef production,” said USMEF President and CEO Philip Seng. “It was just three years ago that U.S. beef exports eclipsed the $5 billion mark for the first time in an entire calendar year, so it’s very gratifying to see our industry reach this milestone by the end of the third quarter.”

Beef exports surged despite lower slaughter numbers

With herd rebuilding gaining traction in the U.S. beef industry, fed slaughter numbers have trended lower. Still, the value of exports in September reached $313.67 per head of fed slaughter – down from the record set in August, but 26 percent higher than September 2013. For January through September, per-head export value was $283.29 – up nearly $40 from the same period last year.

Exports equated to 14 percent of total beef production and 13 percent for muscle cuts only – up from 13 percent and 10 percent, respectively, last year.

Market leader Japan was the pacesetter for September beef exports, with volume to Japan climbing 36 percent year-on-year to 51.1 million pounds and value up 55 percent to $155.7 million. For January through September, exports to Japan were steady in volume at 406.3 million pounds and 7 percent higher in value to $1.17 billion.

Other January-September beef export highlights include:

- Exports to Hong Kong were up 28 percent in volume to 234.6 million pounds and 15 percent in value to $768.3 million.
- Export volume to South Korea was up 12 percent to 387.1 million pounds while value soared 41 percent to $890.3 million.
- The summer surge in exports to Taiwan moderated in September, but the market remains on a record pace in both volume, which is up more than 9 percent to 56.1 million pounds, and value, up 16 percent to $215.1 million.
- Exports to Mexico were up 19 percent in volume to 394.2 million pounds and up 34 percent in value to $860.8 million. (As USMEF has previously noted, however, data from early 2013 may have understated last year’s exports to Mexico.)

Save the Date for Virginia Cattlemen’s Association 2015 Winter Producer Meetings

All meetings will be free to VCA members and in the evening from 4:30 – 8 PM with supper included. Topics will range from nutrition/vaccination response to calf preconditioning to operation investment strategies in times of record profitability. Meeting locations and dates will be as follows:

- January 26th – Orange/Madison area
- January 27th – Weyers Cave
- January 28th – Chatham
- January 29th – Abingdon

Watch for more details to come from local Virginia Cooperative Extension and January 2015 edition of The Virginia Cattleman newspaper.
Below are some facts about our 14th Fall Herd Improvement Sale, hosted by Virginia Tech on November 8th.

Auctioneer: Smith Reason, Sale Manager: Bob Morton of Morton Marketing

Thanks to consignors, bidders and buyers for participating in our sale. A very large crowd was on hand and the phone stayed busy with bidders.

Total gross sales: $50,200 with an average of $4,046

Top selling lots:

- $10,250 Bull from VA Tech to Todd Thompson, White Cottage, OH.
- $10,050 Pair/heifer calf split from J - M ar Genetics, VA. Cow for $7,750 to Happy J C charolais, Zapata, TX. Heifer calf for $2,300 to Snyder Farm, Maysville, WV.
- $4,800 Bred heifer from VA Tech to J - M ar Genetics.
- $4,250 Open heifer from Testerman Charolais, True, WV to Travis Steffensen, Arlington, SD.

During this holiday season, we need to keep Christ in Christmas. All members of the Virginia Charolais Association are entitled to join all the sales we sponsor.
A Dirt Road Diary
If God Had Chosen Cowboys
Steve Lucas

If God had chosen cowboys, instead of those fellers herdin’ sheep
To welcome the Baby Jesus, while the world
was fast asleep,
Would the Christmas story, and the carols
that we sing
Be a little different, maybe have a different ring?

When the cowboys got the message from
them angels heard on high,
They’d have ridden into town, shootin’ their
pistols in the sky
And thundered to the stable bathed in that
star’s bright light,
I’m tellin you boys, it would not have been a
silent night.

And little town of Bethlehem, you would not
be still
When the cows, spooked by the angels, stamp-
ed over the hill.
And that bunch of rowdy cowboys had to
turn ‘em all around,
And not quit lookin’ until every calf was
found.

Then come back into town, and belly up to
the bar,
To buy a round for them kings who’d travel-
ed from afar.
The next morning on the mountain they’d tell
outfits far and near
About the angels, and the stampede and the
savior who’d come here.

“The Lord is my cowboy” would begin the
most familiar psalm, and
The parable of the lost calf is the story that
would calm
The sad and lonely cowboy spending Christ-
mas on the trail.
If God had chosen cowboys to headline the
Christmas tale.

Did You Know ...

... your beef checkoff will soon be launching a
multi-pronged approach to beef literacy?
Building on the popular educational platform
www.MyAmericanFarm.org, the checkoff will launch a new Beef Heritage game, celebrating how
producers care for animals, care for the land and
provide quality beef products using a variety of
production methods. Other platform details include
a volunteer kit, containing resources to conduct beef
literacy classroom visits and activities; a second My
American Farm game, emphasizing nutrition and
health benefits of beef products; a mobile applica-
tion featuring both new beef games; and, a new Beef
Ag Mag elementary school reader, targeting parents,
teachers and families of young learners.

2014 Dublin Feeder Cattle
SALE SCHEDULE

SECOND WEDNESDAY IN
JANUARY 14TH, 2015

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Sale time 7:30 p.m.
For Info Contact: Joe Meek
540-674-6080 H, 540-674-5311 O

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If God had chosen cowboys, instead of those fellers herdin’ sheep
To welcome the Baby Jesus, while the world
was fast asleep,
Would the Christmas story, and the carols
that we sing
Be a little different, maybe have a different ring?
Gate Man

John B. Rhudy

I am the man on the cut gate. There are other jobs on shipping day, but this one is mine. I am the last line of defense between a clean sort and having to bring them back again. Whether heat and dust, rain and wind, or frozen tracks and blowing snow, if there are trucks to be loaded, I am on my gate.

When I first started here, we had an older, more experienced day work hand, hand on the gate. I learned a lot pushing up cattle and watching him work. Now it’s my job. The boss does the sorting, with an eye for cattle I’ve seen few match. With one hand to push out of the sort, and sometimes another to keep the flow, we break them down. It’s not too tough when several are coming and they all go one way. It is a bit different when I hear, “By. By. By. ah, catch that baldy in the back.” Then I swing, pun intended, into action. Stay out of the hole, no wasted motion; let the cattle think it’s their idea to go that way. Step, either up or back, as the steers turn the way I need, the gate in time with my steps and an extension of my arm. Halfway down the gate; too close to the end and the cattle won’t go, too close to the hinge and the swing of the gate is too slow. You’ve heard of the bucking horse ballet, poetry in motion between horse and rider. This is more like a Waltz crossed with a dramatic interpretive dance.

No tolerance for whooping and hollering; the help learn quick that’s not our style. They also learn to not second-guess the boss’s call, even I don’t do that unless I see that look. Then I just hold ’em up until he gives the word, or I might ask if a steer is the one he’s eyeing to help out on a tough call.

I would like to say I never miss one, or never have one get away. Alas, I’m getting older, and sometimes my swing of the gate, or step, is a little slow when there are two going different ways. And, the snot blowing, get in your pocket type often wins the battle. But I’ll win the war, after I go bring them back and correct my mistake. Yes, I’m the man on the cut gate; to say I take pride in my job would be an understatement indeed.
FOREIGN MARKETING, as defined in the Beef Promotion & Research Act, means promotion, research, consumer information and industry information conducted in foreign markets. This includes checkoff-funded market development and promotional programs worldwide.

Expanding Market Share in Japan — A total of more than 500 food distributors, grocers and restaurant buyers from Fukuoka, Osaka and Nagoya — three major cities in Japan — recently participated in a series of seminars that provided detailed information about U.S. beef production. Funded in part by the national beef checkoff and the Texas Beef Council, the seminars were part of an effort to boost sales of beef in regions for which those cities serve as hubs. Cutting demonstrations at the seminars focused on the top blade and shoulder clod heart to show how U.S. beef can help meet their specific product needs. For details, visit Seminars in Japan.

Sharing U.S. Beef Benefits in Taiwan — The checkoff helped fund a recent branded-beef seminar that drew almost 100 food-service and retail operators in Taipei, Taiwan to learn about high-quality, branded U.S. beef. Information conveyed through the two-day seminar included new preparation methods and other ways that U.S. beef can help grow beef business for restaurants and grocery stores in Taiwan. This event featured four chefs, who created and shared innovative dishes that combined U.S. branded-beef products with popular local ingredients. For more about this event, visit U.S. Beef in Taiwan.

Educating Beef Importers from China — Checkoff funding brought a 13-member team of senior-level beef importers from China to the U.S. for a tour that included a Meat 101 class at Kansas State University, as well as tours of cattle ranches in Kansas and Nebraska, processing plants in Nebraska, and numerous U.S. retail outlets. Before returning to China, the visiting team also participated in a product showcase with 120 international buyers and 21 U.S. beef exporters. Learn more at China Team Tours U.S.

Maximizing Food-Production Technologies — The beef checkoff helped fund participation of a team of Mexican meat scientists in the American Meat Science Association’s five-day 2014 Reciprocal Meat Conference (RMC), which draws meat scientists, regulators and academics from throughout the Americas to examine food production and safety-related issues in the U.S. The team from Mexico represented food companies and government agencies here to learn more about important food-production/safety practices and discuss issues and challenges that involve food-production technologies. For more about the visit Researching Beef Technologies.

FOREIGN MARKETING, as defined in the Beef Promotion & Research Act, means promotion, research, consumer information and industry information conducted in foreign markets. This includes checkoff-funded market development and promotional programs worldwide.
Dollar Strength Leaning On Beef, Pork, Poultry Exports

As the U.S. animal protein industry relies increasingly on exports, recent dollar strength bears watching, according to BB&T Capital Markets analyst Heather Jones. The U.S. dollar index is 5 percent stronger than last year, and, critically, the dollar has advanced against major U.S. beef, pork and chicken importers as well as against competing protein export countries. “Our analysis shows a strong inverse correlation between the dollar and combined protein exports,” Jones wrote in a note to investors. The cited as mitigating factors, however, increased pork and chicken production next year, which should pressure pricing, and the fact that dollar strength also weighs on the corn and soybean meal prices, pushing down key producer input costs.

Exports comprise 20 percent to 25 percent of U.S. chicken and pork production and 10 percent of U.S. beef production. While dollar depreciation since 2009 has boosted exports, dollar appreciation in the past three months has been significant. The dollar has appreciated 5 percent relative to the Japanese yen, 12 percent relative to the Brazilian real, 7 percent against the Australian dollar and 4 percent against the Mexican peso. For example, because of the U.S. dollar has appreciated over the past three months relative to the yen and peso, importing U.S. pork and beef is now 4 percent more expensive for Japan and 5 percent more expensive for Mexico. Because of the deterioration in currency rates in Brazil and Australia relative to the yen, pork and beef from Brazil are now 6 percent less expensive and Australian beef is 2 percent less expensive in Japan.

The currencies for major chicken imports such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have also appreciated against the Brazilian real, making Brazilian chicken export pricing favorable in those markets. “It is difficult to say how long the dollar strength will be sustained as many factors are at play, but we believe it is something for producers, buyers and investors to be mindful of,” Jones wrote.

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Virginia Cattleman, December 2014, Page 31
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**Calendar of Events**

**December 5**
Knoll Crest Farm
Fall Bull Sale
Red House

**December 6**
Southwest VA Finest
Angus Sale
Abingdon

**December 13**
BCIA Sr. Performance
Tested Bull Sale
Culpepper
GOP Victory Clears Path To Weaken Wotus, School Lunch

Now that they’ve secured the Senate, Republicans have a clear avenue for doing away with EPA’s Waters of the U.S. rule and the USDA’s new school lunch standards spending legislation. Even with many individual contests still unknown election night, it was apparent the GOP had wrested away control of the Senate from the Democrats. Republicans needed to gain just six seats and Sen. Thom Tillis’ victory in North Carolina gave it to them. Now it’s time for Congress to get back to work, and a top priority when both chambers open for business again on the Hill next week will be to address the current short-term spending bill that only funds the government through Dec. 11.

Senate Appropriations Chairwoman Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.) is hoping to pass a full omnibus spending bill, wraping 12 separate bills into one that will last until the end of the fiscal year in September. But whether a Waters rule defunding measure will make it into a spending bill could depend on how high the rule ranks on the GOP wish list and whether leadership is willing to attach riders that could “be successful, especially in what outcome it wants to see,” said Ford Hoefner, policy director for the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition. “There’s going to have to be some picking or choosing” of issues for the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition. “There’s going to have to be some picking or choosing” of issues for an omnibus, Hoefner said. Trying to push through every Republican priority in the appropriations bill would set up a battle with the White House and senior leadership staffers to sit down and bargain and we will wait for the smoke to come out.”

Another issue that could be on the table during budget negotiations is child nutrition. Health advocates are very concerned about what the new landscape will mean for the Agriculture Department’s efforts at implementing the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 — a legacy issue for first lady Michelle Obama. Advocates and the White House say they expect Republicans will look to continue on page 34.

Continued on Page 34

THE VIRGINIA CATTLEMAN, DECEMBER 2014, PAGE 33
GOP Victory

Continued from Page 33

an omnibus spending bill as a chance to revive their push to give waivers to schools losing money under the new nutrition rules. The first lady has pledged to fight against such efforts “until the bitter end.”

But the omnibus play is only one of two options for a GOP-controlled Senate. Lawmakers looking to scale back the nutrition policies also have Child Nutrition Reauthorization next year. Rep. John Kline (R-Minn.), chairman of the House Education and the Workforce Committee, has made it clear he is staunchly opposed to HHFKA. Sen. Pat Roberts (R-Kan.) — the presumptive chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee after he survived a close race Tuesday night — has raised concerns in the past about plate waste, serving enough calories for student athletes and what kind of impact the rules are having on school food pro

Clarabell

Continued from Page 13

lost little girl. Another was a parakeet, another a dog, and so on. All they had in common was that they had given, time and again, when it would have been real easy to do nothing. That’s all Christmas magic is. The magic doesn’t take effect until they’re old. It happens on their last Christmas.

It happens at midnight.

Clarabell could feel the cold in her bones. It was cold like her very first Christmas, many, many years before. Even colder. She knew this would probably be her last Christmas.

She had been hoping to see Santa one more time — but she was surprised when he appeared in her barn.

“There are so many children in the world today that eight reindeer can hardly carry all the presents,” he said.

Clarabell smiled. “I’m too old,” she said.

Santa just smiled. And waited. The hands on the clock in the Wilburns’ house swept toward midnight.

Clarabell felt suddenly warm.

She felt something happening to her horns. She felt lighter and lighter, and younger and younger. She felt like a little calf again.

Santa knelt beside her and put the reindeer bells around her neck. “Come, Clarabell,” he said.

“The children are waiting.” And they stepped out into the night together.

ABOUT THIS STORY
Today’s M section features “Clarabell the Christmas Cow,” first published in The Commercial Appeal in 1976. The story was written by the late Dan Henderson, who was an assistant managing editor of the newspaper. Illustrations were done by the late Charles Tuthill, who was an artist at the newspaper. In 1997, the story was turned into an animated film, “Annabelle’s Wish.”

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“SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA’S FINEST ANGUS SALE”
REGISTERED ANGUS BULL: AAA 176823682
Poor Valley Farm will have the load off bull of “SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA’S FINEST ANGUS SALE” on Saturday, December 6, 2014 at Washington County Fairgrounds, Abingdon, VA. The bull, Reg. AAA 176823682 is a G&R Prophit son with a 15.6 %B/day and 380 of .3. Along with other Great Bulls will sale.

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NCBA And PLC TELL EPA: Don’t Drown Land Owners In Regulatory FLOOD

The National Cattlemen’s Beef Association and the Public Lands Council filed comments calling for the immediate withdrawal of the Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers’ proposed “waters of the United States” rule. The proposed rule vastly expands the agencies’ jurisdiction and attempts to regulate all land uses.

“The agencies’ proposal jeopardizes private property rights and violates Supreme Court precedent by subjecting nearly all waters to regulation,” said NCBA Environmental Counsel Ashley McDonald. “Through the use of broad and ambiguous language, the proposal is a limitless expansion of authority that cannot be supported by the Clean Water Act or the U.S. Constitution.”

In the eight months the proposal has been public, cattlemen and women have voiced their concerns only to have them deemed “ludicrous” by EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy. NCBA and PLC state the agencies must start over with a transparent and inclusive process with more stakeholder involvement.

“Dustin Van Liew, Public Lands Council executive director, added that while there is a need for clarification, this attempt by the EPA and the Corps will only add layers of bureaucracy and subjectivity to the Clean Water Act, further muddling the landscape.

“The proposed rule places no limit on the federal government’s authority over water, violating the Clean Water Act as articulated by the Supreme Court, and will eviscerate over a century of settled water law in much of the country,” said Van Liew. “Contrary to the agencies’ claims, the exclusions and exemptions in the proposal are unclear and provide the livestock industry no certainty.”

McDonald added, “Through this process, cattlemen and women have learned one thing, the only thing that is completely unregulated is the arrogance of the EPA.”

The EPA and Corps are required by law to consider public comment; therefore it is imperative livestock producers voice their opposition to this land grab either online or by sending the original and three copies of your comments to: Water Docket, Environmental Protection Agency, Mail Code 2822T, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20460. Attention: Docket ID No. EPA-
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**EPD**
- CED: .73
  - WW: .90
  - YW: .84
  - YR: .71
  - SC: .51
  - Doc: .84
  - HP: .23
  - CEM: .25
  - Milk: .31
- $EN: .39
- $CH: .41
- RE: .45
- Fat: .41
- $W: 48.53
- $B: 74.77
- Acc: 10
  - WW: 64
  - YW: 110
  - SC: 1.7
  - Doc: 1.32
  - HP: 2
  - CEM: 14
  - Milk: 24
  - $EN: 7.00
  - $CH: 25
  - RE: .44
  - Fat: .45
  - $W: .41
  - $B: .45
  - %Rank: 15

**EPDs as of 10/2/14**

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