

Beef Month 2026

THE

*South Dakota*

CATTLEMAN

The official publication of the South Dakota Cattlemen's Association



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# SDCA Calendar of Events

May: Beef Month

May 28-June 4: Young Cattlemen's Conference

June 20: SD Cattlemen's Foundation Prime Time Gala

July 10: T-Bone Classic | Madison Country Club

July 12-14: NCBA Summer Business Meeting



July 12-14, 2026

Gaylord Rockies

Save the Date

## Summer Business Meeting

Join the cattle industry's leading voices and organizations at the Cattle Industry Summer Business Meeting

## Advertising Opportunities

**The South Dakota Cattleman** is published six times a year and sent to SDCA members including beef producers, beef industry supporters, property owners, allied industry partners, as well as state and local government officials.

Advertising deadline is the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to publication.

The SDCA e-newsletter, **The Cattle Guard**, is emailed to all SDCA members every week. **The Cattle Guard** contains updates and news from SDCA, industry partners, and NCBA.

Follow us on our social media platforms to stay informed of the latest SDCA news, events, and information.



Scan to access  
SDCA's Media Kit

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### Mission

To advance the interests of South Dakota Cattlemen through representation and promotion of the beef industry.

### Vision

To be an organization where members can work together to protect their interests; seek solutions to industry problems; provide a unified voice, and to build the good will, esteem, and recognition the industry deserves.



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# SDCA

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For a donation of \$150, your brand can be incorporated into exclusively designed wild rags and neck ties creating a wearable tribute to the people and operations that shape our association.



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and Submit Your  
Brand Today!



Space in the design is limited. Once finalized, it will be permanently set — making every brand a part of a lasting piece of South Dakota Cattlemen's Association history.

Visit [sd cattlemen.org](http://sd cattlemen.org) or scan the QR code to submit your brand.

Please reach out to Megan at [office@sd cattlemen.org](mailto:office@sd cattlemen.org) with any questions.

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# SEEING THE RANCH THROUGH A NEW LENS

Craig Bieber, SDCA President

Recently, my family, our employees, and I had the opportunity to be part of Episode 7 of Cattle Calling which is a Beef Checkoff project dedicated to telling the stories of the people who raise cattle. It was a unique experience to step back and look at our operation through someone else's lens. As producers, we're usually focused on the day-to-day and we don't often take the time to reflect on where we've been or what has shaped us along the way.

In the episode, my wife Peggy shared something that I hadn't thought about in years. There was a period when we were operating with the expectation that someday we would sell the ranch. Like many families, we didn't think that the next generation would come back. Our two children had chosen different career paths, and that was okay with us. We understand that this line of work requires an immense amount of passion. Without passion, it's a tough road and we never wanted to force that on our children.

And I think that's something worth saying: if your kids choose a different path, that's okay. There's no one definition of success in agriculture, and success doesn't always mean transition. Each family and each operation is different, and there is no one-size-fits-all answer.

For us, the outlook of the ranch's future changed when our daughter Kristin married Jake and they made the decision to come back to the ranch. Coming back to the ranch wasn't an overnight decision for them, it was a major life and career change. Jake grew up as a city kid from Sioux Falls. If you've met Jake, you probably wouldn't have guessed that because his passion for ranching and the knowledge he has acquired over the years rival that of any ranch kid.

Today, Jake is involved in the daily management of our operation, Kristin plays an active role in overseeing our marketing and record-keeping, and we have the privilege of watching our grandchildren grow up on the ranch. We went from not having a next generation involved, to having two generations running cattle right along with us.

We went from managing for today to intentionally planning for the future. It changed how we approach growth, investment, and risk. The focus became building an operation that could support another generation and give them a real opportunity to succeed.

As we think about our future, it reminds me how much our

industry has evolved and continues to evolve. I think about the tools and systems my parents used when I was growing up compared to how we operate today. Producers now have access to more information and better tools than ever before. Advances in genetics, data, and technology help us make more informed decisions that improve efficiency and profitability.

You don't have to adopt every new technology, but it's important to recognize that you'll be competing with those who do. The producers who are willing to learn and adapt will continue to have an advantage moving forward.

The same long-term perspective applies to investments in land and infrastructure. Looking back, decisions that once seemed risky, like purchasing land in the 1990s, have proven to be strong investments over time due to appreciation and favorable interest rates. That's a reminder that in agriculture, we're always playing the long game.

Being part of Cattle Calling reinforced how important it is to share our stories as an industry. The public doesn't always see the thought, care, and responsibility that go into what we do. They don't always see the long-term commitment or the family aspect behind it. Opportunities like that allow us to tell a more complete story about beef production, one that reflects both our values and our dedication.

At the end of the day, whether it's through sharing our story on a platform like Cattle Calling or making decisions on our own operations, it all comes back to stewardship. We are caretakers of our land, our livestock, our industry, and if we are lucky, our families.

And when you have the opportunity to pass something on to the next generation, that stewardship takes on even greater meaning. You're not just building for today, you're building for the future.

A JOB. A DUTY. CATTLE CALLING A WAY OF LIFE.

To watch the Bieber Red Angus Ranch Cattle Calling Episode, scan the QR Code:

# Allied Industry Members

## Prime Members



## Choice Members



## Auction Market Members



## Corporate Members



## Standard Members

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Diesel Machinery, Inc.	Renner Corner Locker
DNB National Bank	Ritchie Industries
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J&R Feeds	Titan Machinery
Millborn Seeds	White Insurance P&C Inc.

## Select Members

Agtegra Cooperative	The Meathouse
Central Farmers Cooperative	Nutrient Advisors
Custom Genetic Solutions	Rush-Co
Dakota Ethanol, LLC	Security Bank
Elanco Animal Health	

## Supporting Members

3D Security, Inc.	De-Tye Vet Supply, Inc.	Lyle Signs Inc.	Sioux Nation, LLC
Animal Clinic, Ltd. - Winner	Farmers & Merchants State Bank	Midwest Livestock Structures	Statewide Ag Insurance - Winner
Bankwest, Inc. - Pierre	Feldhaus Trucking, Inc.	Moly Manufacturing LLC / SILENCER	US Premium Beef
Bryant State Bank	First National Bank - Ft. Pierre	Montrose Veterinary Clinic	Y-Text Corporation
C-Lock, Inc.	Huron Veterinary Hospital	NDEco	Zinpro Corporation
Cattlecents Consulting, Inc.	Kingbrook Rural Water System, Inc.	Rick Dockter/ Wealth Partners	
Chase Consulting	Lilac Lane Media	Rivers Edge Bank	
Dells Veterinary Services	Liphatech (Rozol)	Sioux International	

Allied Industry Membership information available online at [sd cattlemen.org](http://sd cattlemen.org)



## GROWING STRONGER TOGETHER

Dawn Butzer, SDCA Vice President of Membership

Every year it feels good to get to spring. The green grass, the red breast of a robin, or the hop of a baby calf brings a sense of accomplishment that we have another winter under our belts. That same sense of fulfillment carries over into the work we've accomplished together in building SDCA membership the last several months.

We have added some new businesses to our strong group of Allied Industry Members! I encourage you to take a moment to review these valued businesses on page 5. These industry partners go out of their way to invest in our organization and in South Dakota's cattle industry. If you see a business that you currently work with on that page, thank them for their support! If you're searching for a service, the Allied Industry page is a great place to start.

Our affiliates and members have been hard at work investing in the organization and helping cattle producers in need. Several Cattlemen's affiliates and members have been organizing hay drives for fellow cattle producers affected by the Morrill Fire in Western Nebraska. Over 40 loads of hay and supplies have gone from South Dakota to our neighbors in Nebraska. That is true servant leadership in action. Thank you to the producers who have donated hay, the truckers for donating their time, and the businesses who have donated money to go towards fuel and fencing supplies. Good things happen when cattlemen work together.

And speaking of working together, we have several opportunities to work together at the beef grilling events taking place this summer. Find more information about the Dakotafest Beef Booth and other Cattlemen's Cookouts on page 7. Not only are these events the main fundraiser for SDCA, but they also help us promote beef and connect with consumers. Please consider volunteering for a shift in Mitchell, Huron, or Aberdeen.

We also have several social events and educational programming taking place across the state. Region Directors are hard at work on planning Region Roundups

that will bring SDCA to a community near you- find full list of Region Roundups on page 11. These events are a great opportunity to learn about local affiliate work, enjoy fellowship with area producers, and learn what the association is doing in terms of policy and advocacy. I encourage you to join us and bring a friend or neighbor.

To close I want to reflect on May, which is both Beef Month and Mental Health Month. When you're involved in agriculture, your business partner is Mother Nature. She calls the shots and somehow, we play offense, defense, and sometimes both! The highs are high and the lows can get real low. It's important to take time to balance it.

Take a minute to clear your mind before you walk through the door to your family. Give yourself grace when things don't go as planned. Talking to someone can help you realize you're not the only one going through the same thing and keep things in perspective. Cattle in spring mud always bothered me, but I can still hear my grandpa say, "nothing looks good in the mud."

In honor of Mental Health Month and to celebrate Beef Month, I suggest checking in on a friend and inviting them over for a steak!

Thank you for the opportunity to work for you!



# BEEF BOOTH *at* DAKOTAFEST®

Introducing an  
*all new* menu!

We are excited to announce a brand new menu coming to the Beef Booth at Dakotafest! SDCA will be serving smokey & flavorful burnt ends and quarter pound burgers made with beef from local producers.



## Tickets:



Scan the QR code to order pre and post-pay tickets or review the “print your own” ticket guidelines.

Dates: August 18-20

## Volunteer:

Help make this fundraiser a success by volunteering for a shift!



## *Cattlemen's Cookouts*

Dakotafest isn't the only place SDCA is cooking up beef!  
Join us at other Cattlemen's Cookouts throughout the summer:

Red Power Roundup  
June 25 | Huron, SD

Agtegra Appreciation Event  
August 1 | Huron, SD

Full Circle Appreciation  
August 14 | Aberdeen, SD

To volunteer, please email [office@sdcattlemen.org](mailto:office@sdcattlemen.org)



## WHY A FARM BILL STILL MATTERS

Rep. Glenn "G.T." Thompson, U.S. House Committee on Agriculture

**O**n Capitol Hill, it's an old adage that every farm bill takes its own unique path to becoming law. This certainly holds true in 2026, as the House Committee on Agriculture works to get this critical legislation across the finish line.

There's no other way to put it: A new farm bill is a long time coming. Producers have been operating under an extension of the 2018 farm bill since 2023, and the simple truth is that these policies are no match for the challenges of 2026.

It's time to get a farm bill done — that is, it's time to pass the provisions that weren't already included in the Working Families Tax Cuts last summer. This is the bright spot in all the political gridlock that has surrounded the farm bill: A significant portion of it has already been signed into law. In fact, I like to refer to the agriculture title of the Working Families Tax Cuts as "Farm Bill 1.0" because so many farm bill programs were reauthorized and funded through this bill.

The Working Families Tax Cuts invested over \$2 billion into what is often referred to as the "three-legged stool" of animal health protection: the National Animal Health Laboratory Network, the National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program, and the National Animal Vaccine and Veterinary Countermeasures Bank.

These key programs prevent, mitigate, and treat infectious livestock diseases and pests such as foot and mouth disease, New World screwworm, African swine fever, and highly pathogenic avian influenza.

Getting these programs funded was a huge step forward in the right direction, but there remains a lot of work to be done

on the farm bill. That's why the ag committee passed the Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026 out of committee in early March with strong bipartisan support. Your South Dakota Congressman Dusty Johnson was instrumental in the bill's passage out of committee.

The Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026 ("Farm Bill 2.0") builds on the historic investments made in the Working Families Tax Cuts last summer across all 12 titles and throughout the entire ag industry. It restores certainty to the interstate marketplace, makes historic investments in conservation programs, brings down costs for everyday Americans, and keeps rural America moving forward.

Importantly, the new farm bill more than doubles funding for key export promotion programs that work to expand market access for American ag products around the world, whether ribeye steaks or soybeans.

The new farm bill also protects our livestock markets by codifying USDA's existing authority to negotiate advance agreements with trading partners regarding regionalization, zoning, and compartmentalization for animal disease threats.

We're looking forward to holding a farm bill vote on the House floor soon and then sending it over to the Senate. It's critical that we get this legislation to President Trump's desk as soon as possible.

South Dakota's cattlemen and women deserve a new farm bill — one that protects herds, expands market opportunities, and reflects the modern challenges of their day-to-day operations. The Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026 does all of that and much, much more.

# LONG LIVE THE AMERICAN CATTLEMAN



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From the wide-open ranges of the 19th-century Western frontier to the family ranches that have stood steadfast for generations, America's story has always included the men and women who sweat and toil to raise the cattle that feed our nation. The **American Cattleman Tribute Edition Rifle** is our tip of the hat to this enduring way of life.

Built on our brass-framed .30-30 lever action platform, this rifle is made for those who put in the long, hard hours from sunup to sundown, and it stands as a testament to the animals and their stewardship at the heart of it all. Featuring genuine American walnut furniture paired with an engraved, highly polished brass receiver, every detail honors the grit and tradition that define the cattleman's trade. **Long live the American Cattleman.**



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# DTSF BURGER BATTLE

Over 95,000 burgers were sold during the 2026 Downtown Sioux Falls Burger Battle, and even more impressively, \$3,684,768 was added to the local economy. What was the slowest month for restaurants, January is now known for its annual burger competition meaning big business for local eateries. For the 13th year, Downtown Sioux Falls has challenged local eateries to create masterful new dishes and the public votes on their favorites. In 2026, ten new restaurants joined the contest and brought the official number of entries up to 50 unique burgers.

One downtown restaurant, Minervas, featured local beef from the Hadrick Ranch in their Italian-influenced, Don Corleone's Vendetta Royale: Minervas Edition Burger. The burger was served on a garlic herb brioche bun with mozzarella and a sun-dried tomato basil aioli next to a hand-breaded 10-ounce 'mobsterella stick' and marinara sauce.



For the second year in a row, Monk's Ale House was recognized for selling the most burgers. From their kitchen alone, they sold 9,095 burgers, and announced their creation, The Bob's Popper Burger, would be added to their official menu.



Taking home the top Burger Battle trophy this year was the Bayou Stack Burger from Swamp Daddy's kitchen. Topped with a bananas foster-inspired topping with bacon, onion, and pepper chutney, the patty was a blend of beef, short rib, and brisket, layered with American and pepper jack cheese, and Swamp Daddy's Cajun burger sauce.



As the grills cooled and the final votes were tallied, the 2026 Downtown Sioux Falls Burger Battle proved once again that a simple burger can do something extraordinary. What began as a creative spark to energize a quiet month has grown into a powerful celebration of community, competition, and beef.

**95,758** Burgers sold;  
13% increase from 2025

**\$1,754,768** Dollars spent on 2026  
Battle Burgers

**\$3,684,768** Total economic impact

## FINAL 2026 RANKINGS

- |                         |                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Swamp Daddy's - 9.20 | 4. Crawford's - 9.04 |
| 2. CH Patisserie - 9.17 | 5. Sanaa's - 8.95    |
| 3. Chef Lance's - 9.11  |                      |



# REGION ROUNDUPS

## MITCHELL

BLARNEY'S SPORTS BAR  
AUGUST 18, 2026

## PHILIP

KOOKS  
SEPTEMBER 22, 2026

## SHIOUX FALLS

W.H. LYON FAIRGROUNDS  
JUNE 19, 2026

## HURON

SD STATE FAIR  
SEPTEMBER 4, 2026

## PIERRE

CATTLEMAN'S CLUB  
SEPTEMBER 23, 2026

## GETTYSBURG

BOB'S STEAKHOUSE  
AUGUST 6, 2026

## BROOKINGS

SDSU  
BEEF BOWL

## BUFFALO

NO. 3 SALOON  
NOVEMBER 7, 2026

## KIMBALL

CLUB VEGA  
AUGUST 7, 2026

## SPEARFISH

KILLIAN'S  
SEPTEMBER 13, 2026

**R**egion Roundups are about bringing cattle producers together at the local level to connect, learn, and move our industry forward. These events are a welcoming, casual setting where producers can share perspectives, stay current on cattle industry issues, and engage directly with the South Dakota Cattlemen's Association (SDCA). Whether it's policy updates, market challenges, or opportunities ahead, Region Roundups provide a valuable chance to discuss the topics that impact your operation today and tomorrow.

We know cattlemen and women are busy, which is why we hit the road to meet you where you're at. With 10 Region Roundup stops across South Dakota this summer, SDCA is making it easier than ever to participate without traveling far from home. Each stop includes a free meal, making it just a bit easier to step away from the ranch, enjoy good food, and spend time with fellow producers. Beyond the conversation, attendees can expect education and hands-on demonstrations focused on practical, real-world applications. We strive to provide information that you can take home and put to work on your operation.

We're also proud to partner with Merck Animal Health to support SDCA programs through cartridge recycling. If you have any REVALOR® or RALGRO® implant cartridges, bring them along to the Roundup and recycle them on site. Merck Animal Health donates 25 cents for every cartridge collected, and those quarters add up fast. The funds go straight back into SDCA programs like our Cattlemen's Leadership Academy, educational events, and other key initiatives that help strengthen South Dakota's cattle industry.

Region Roundups are about connection, education, and investing in the future of cattle production in our state. These gatherings only work when producers show up, speak up, and get involved. Here's your opportunity to build community, recycle those empty cartridges, and make a difference by bringing them with you when you join us this summer. With 10 stops around the state, we hope to see everyone at a Region Roundup near you!

# Cattlemen's Leadership Academy

## Class II Kicks Off in the Capital City

The South Dakota Cattlemen's Leadership Academy (CLA) started its second year where emerging leaders will acquire industry knowledge, refine leadership capabilities, and enhance communication skills. The first seminar of Class II CLA, focused on general leadership principals and critical thinking; the history of the cattle industry and the rise of various advocacy organizations; and how bias impacts communication.

Teigen Hadrick, of Faulkton, SD, said that the first session was both informative and a springboard for what's to come. "I was excited to learn a more extensive knowledge of South Dakota Cattlemen's history, as well as being able to apply my already known skills to this program." Hadrick said. "I am looking forward to being a part of such an amazing organization and cannot wait to see what comes next."

To begin the morning in Pierre, the class heard from SDCA Executive Director, Taya Runyan, with a look at key leadership qualities and how to separate facts from opinions. Searching for facts and truth can be challenging in a world full of miscommunications, falsehoods, and a constant barrage of 'trending' content with no sources. Learning how to sift through that information as well as recognizing media bias as well as personal bias, was part of the discussion. The group explored how to approach issues with an open mind and practiced critical thinking skills to draw conclusions.

Next, Hillary Makens and Will Swope with the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) Issues Management team joined virtually to share about their online monitoring and the Digital Command Center. The class learned about how NCBA follows along with hot topics, beef in the media, and trending socials that connect to the industry. In addition to monitoring beef topics around the clock, the team also



creates promotional efforts in collaboration with leading chefs, influencers, and of course, beef producers from around the country.

After a brief overview of the various advocacy organizations that represent segments of the cattle industry in South Dakota, SDCA Southern Region Director Kory Bierle along with Shorty and Scott Jones joined the group in the afternoon to share their unique perspective on South Dakota's cattle industry history. The panel discussed where they started, how they grew on their leadership journey, and why they prioritized involvement in the industry. They also shared more about challenges they encountered along way and what that meant for their operations.

To share more about the cattle industry on a national level, NCBA CEO, Colin Woodall, joined the session. The class got an inside look at key issues from Washington, D.C. and how issues on Capitol Hill can impact the entire industry. Colin provided the class with an in-depth perspective on NCBA's structure and how state cattle organizations

like SDCA work together to shape national policy.

To round out the day, the class took a tour of the capitol to see the remodeling happening over the summer and hear about South Dakota's history as a state. The next session of the leadership academy includes industry tours in southeastern South Dakota and Nebraska in June.

Class II SDCA Leadership Academy participants include: Teigen Hadrick, Faulkton, SD; Maggie Mendel, Carpenter, SD; Taylor Grussing, Chamberlain, SD; Logan Schlim, Carthage, SD; Santana Hanson, Brookings, SD; and Ella Stiefvater, Salem, SD.



South Dakota *Cattlemen's* Association  
**LEADERSHIP ACADEMY**  
*Spotlight*

**Meet Taylor Grussing**

By *SDCA Contributor Isabelle Mairose*



**T**aylor Grussing hails from south-central South Dakota, where she lives with her husband, Tyler, and their three young boys. Together, the Grussings raise registered Red Angus and commercial Sim-Angus cattle.

In addition to her work on the ranch, Taylor serves as a Cow/Calf Field Specialist with SDSU Extension. In this role, she works closely with cattle producers across the state, answering production questions and guiding them through new management strategies. Her expertise spans a wide range of topics, including ration balancing, herd health protocols, grazing systems, fencing and corral infrastructure, and breeding strategies. Through her work, Taylor is committed to delivering unbiased, research-based information that helps cattle producers make informed decisions and improve their bottom line.

👉 **IT TAKES A STRONG PERSON TO RAISE CATTLE, AND I'M PROUD TO SAY I ENJOY DOING IT MYSELF WHILE HELPING OTHERS PROVIDE SAFE, WHOLESOME, NUTRITIOUS BEEF TO FAMILIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY.** 👉

- Taylor Grussing

Taylor owes a lot of her skills and interests to 4-H. As she explains, "Growing up on the farm, we spent most summers in the barn preparing calves for 4-H Achievement Days, working cattle, and making hay." She also participated in public speaking, special foods, and livestock judging, experiences that sparked her interest in research and giving presentations, which have helped her confidently defend her decisions in front of others.

While completing a degree in animal science at South Dakota State University, Taylor developed an interest in livestock breeding and genetics. She went on to complete a master's at Iowa State University and became certified for artificial insemination. She began breeding cattle for both her dad's operation and her husband's family. Taylor shared, "I enjoy picking out genetics and then breeding the cattle over the years to see how it has shaped our current cowherd," adding that there's nothing better than driving through the pasture in the summer, checking grass, and watching pairs graze.

Taylor and her husband have transitioned their entire herd to artificial insemination and embryo transfer, giving them

greater flexibility and helping them meet industry demands. Their operation not only includes a registered Red Angus herd and commercial Sim-Angus herd, but also a custom recipient embryo transfer herd, and a heifer development program. This system allows them to add value to their commercial cows, retain more replacement females, and help other producers make faster genetic progress by placing embryos into recipient cows. It also helps them better utilize grass resources while providing flexibility in grazing and marketing bred females in the fall.

Building on her background and experiences, Taylor has grown into a strong leader within the cattle industry. From her childhood on the farm to her time in college and now as a Cow/Calf Field Specialist, each step has shaped her leadership style. She believes, "Leaders don't always have a title, but they show up, are good listeners, and offer a lending hand when needed." She also credits her mentors for showing her that simply showing up is one of the most important ways to make a difference in agriculture.

Although the cattle industry can be challenging at times, Taylor finds it incredibly rewarding. One thing that keeps her encouraged is seeing healthy calves on the ground after a year of hard work breeding and feeding the cow herd. Her biggest motivation, however, comes from watching her kids enjoy the same lifestyle, spending time outside with cattle and tractors. She is grateful they get to live and love this way of life, too.





# RANGELAND LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION IS OFTEN “AVERAGED” — BUT THERE IS NOTHING AVERAGE ABOUT IT

## Hector Menendez

*South Dakota State University Extension Livestock Grazing Specialist*

***How is rangeland livestock production changing in Western South Dakota, and what should producers know about it?***

Rangeland livestock production has long been discussed in averages—average rainfall, average stocking rate, average gain. But anyone who has spent time on the ground in Western South Dakota knows there is nothing “average” about it. Every pasture, every herd, and every season brings variability that challenges even the most experienced producers. I was fortunate early in my career to be mentored by Dr. Roger N. Gates (former SDSU Rangeland Extension Specialist for 20 years), whose work emphasized applying sound rangeland ecology directly with producers. His approach was simple but powerful because it harnessed fundamental livestock and rangeland management skills and experience with a learning attitude and willingness to listen to understand. A recent article in the *Harvard Business Review* emphasized that core skills matter more than fleeting “fad” skills. That idea resonates strongly in agriculture right now. Across South Dakota State University classrooms, ranches, and extension meetings, there is growing attention on precision livestock technology, the Internet of Things (IoT), and artificial intelligence. At the same time, producers are navigating an unprecedented volume of information—more data, faster delivery, and more sources than any previous generation of ranchers.

***So what does this mean for rangeland livestock production?***

Over the past five years, I’ve consistently emphasized one concept: margins. Not just financial margins, but biological and management margins, the small, often overlooked differences that ultimately determine success or failure. That’s where I believe the next gains in production will be won. Precision livestock technologies are giving us the ability to see those margins more clearly than ever before. Tools like GPS-enabled ear tags, virtual fencing systems, and automated monitoring platforms allow producers to collect data at the individual animal level. Instead of managing a herd as a single unit, we now have the ability to understand variation within that herd. Take virtual fencing as an example. While it is often promoted as a grazing management tool, one of its most valuable unintended benefits is location data. At the SDSU Cottonwood Field Station near Philip, South Dakota, we have used virtual fencing software not just to control grazing, but to understand where cattle choose to spend time. That insight alone opens the door to better grazing distribution, improved forage utilization, and more informed pasture management decisions. But location is just the beginning. Emerging technologies are expanding into behavioral monitoring, health indicators, and reproductive status. These systems can detect changes in movement patterns, feeding behavior, or activity levels—signals that may indicate illness,

stress, or estrus long before they are visible to the human eye. The challenge, and opportunity, for producers is not just collecting this data, but leveraging it. Individual animal data must translate into decisions that matter at the herd and ranch level, both in the short term (e.g., treating a sick animal earlier) and long term (e.g., selecting for more efficient or resilient cattle). The future of rangeland livestock production is not about replacing traditional knowledge—it’s about enhancing it. The core skills that Roger Gates emphasized are still the foundation. What’s changing is our ability to see more, know more, and act with greater precision.

***How SDSU is Partnering with Producers:***

One of the most exciting developments in this space is the next step—bringing all of these pieces together into a single, working system. Over the next three years, my graduate student Federica La Manna will be leading work at Jorgensen Land and Cattle (Ideal, SD) that does exactly that. Her research is focused on linking soil characteristics, forage production and quality, grazing distribution, and animal phenotypes into one integrated framework. Instead of looking at each component in isolation, the goal is to understand how they interact in real-world ranch conditions. Why do cattle prefer certain areas? How does that relate to soil properties or plant communities? And how do those choices ultimately influence performance, efficiency, and long-term rangeland health? This is where the idea of “nothing average” becomes very real. With tools like GPS tracking, virtual fencing, and emerging sensor technologies, Federica’s work will connect individual animal behavior—what a single cow is doing on the landscape—to measurable outcomes across the entire system. That means tying an individual heifer or cow decisions to forage utilization, pasture condition, and ultimately to pounds of beef produced per acre. But more importantly, it means translating complex data into something producers can actually use. The end goal is not more data for the sake of data, it is better decisions. Decisions about where to place cattle, how to adjust stocking, when to intervene, and how to select animals that perform within specific environments. By grounding this work in a commercial ranch setting like Jorgensen Land and Cattle, the focus remains on practicality, scalability, and real-world impact. As this research unfolds, it will help answer a critical question for producers across South Dakota: how do we take the increasing flow of information and turn it into meaningful, profitable action? Ranching has always been about managing variability. What’s changing is our ability to measure it, understand it, and respond with precision. The producers who can bridge that gap, combining time-tested instincts with emerging tools, will be the ones who continue to thrive. Because at the end of the day, the goal hasn’t changed. It’s still about healthy land, productive cattle, and sustainable operations. We’re just gaining new ways to get there.



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**CALL MARSHALL AT: (641) 220-7731**

## MAY BEEF MONTH: A TIME TO CELEBRATE THE FLAVOR, TRADITION, AND PEOPLE BEHIND BEEF

When May rolls around, grills heat up, pastures turn green, and it's time to celebrate one of America's most iconic foods—beef. May Beef Month is more than a nod to great burgers and steaks; it's a tribute to the hardworking ranchers, that care for the land, and the powerful role beef plays in our meals and communities across South Dakota and the world. This May, savor the flavor and celebrate beef.



## NEW! LOCAL BEEF DIRECTORY IN PROGRESS

SDBIC has had an influx of consumer questions about where to buy local, home-raised South Dakota beef. To make it easier for them to connect with you, we're launching a statewide local beef directory. Want to join? Sign-up to join our South Dakota Local Beef Directory by completing our online form available on [sdbeef.org](http://sdbeef.org).

**Scan the QR code to sell your beef with SDBIC!**



## COMING SOON...SDBIC WEBSITE GETS A FACELIFT

We're excited to announce a refreshed version of our website coming soon! This facelift brings a more modern design, improved navigation, and a smoother experience across all devices—making it easier than ever to explore all content about beef.

## AUTHORIZATION REQUEST PERIOD NOW OPEN

Initial Funding Requests are open and due: June 17, 2026. Applications will remain open after June 17 and all will be evaluated, but funding is not guaranteed within our fiscal year of October 1, 2026 - September 31, 2027.

Funding Criteria: Project funding request must be submitted to the South Dakota Beef Industry Council 30 days prior to a quarterly board meeting (June). The proposal must fit into at least one of the following program areas: Promotion, Consumer Information, Industry Information, and Research. Projects must deal with beef or beef products and cannot be used for production related projects. No funds may be used for lobbying purposes or to influence government action. Please visit our website [sdbeef.org](http://sdbeef.org) or see the QR code below for authorization form.



**Scan the QR code to submit an authorization request form.**

# Checkoff Dollars at Work

Industry Council Executive Director

## ORDER YOUR RANCH SIGN TODAY

The South Dakota Beef Industry Council (SDBIC) has announced that its popular ranch signs are once again available for order, featuring a fresh new design for 2026.

The signs, made from durable 1/8 inch thick metal, are offered in both single-sided and double-sided options.

To place an order, customers can access a form submission link through the SDBIC's official Facebook page (South Dakota Beef Industry Council) or on the organization's website, [sdbeef.org](http://sdbeef.org).

## MAY BEEF MONTH COLORING CONTEST

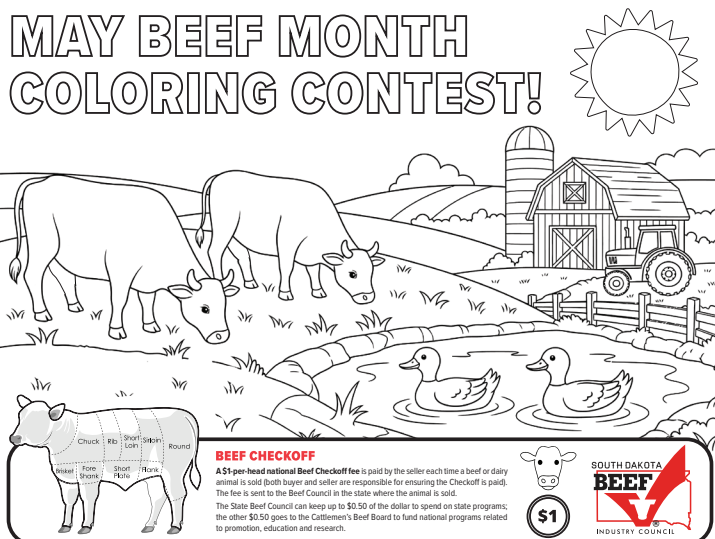
To celebrate May Beef Month, we'd like to invite South Dakota kids to take part in our May Beef Month Coloring Contest! Find information on coloring sheets, rules, prizes, deadlines, and how to submit at [sdbeef.org](http://sdbeef.org) in the Beef Month section under Programs & Events!



Scan the QR code for coloring contest information!

Ranch Name

**BEEF.** IT'S WHAT'S FOR DINNER.®



### BEEF CHECKOFF

A \$1-per-head national Beef Checkoff fee is paid by the seller each time a beef or dairy animal is sold (both buyer and seller are responsible for ensuring the Checkoff is paid). The fee is sent to the Beef Council in the state where the animal is sold. The State Beef Council can keep up to \$0.50 of the dollar to spend on state programs; the other \$0.50 goes to the Cattleman's Beef Board to fund national programs related to promotion, education and research.



Scan the QR code to order your sign today!

To learn more about the Checkoff, visit [DrivingDemandForBeef.com](http://DrivingDemandForBeef.com) or contact the South Dakota Beef Industry Council.

Cattlemen's Beef Board | 303-220-9890

## SDBIC UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

May	Beef Month Coloring Contest
May	Beef Month (All Month Long!)
June 20	SD Cattlemen's Foundation Prime Time Gala   Sioux Falls
August 18-20	Dakotafest   Mitchell
Sept. 2-7	SD State Fair   Huron

Follow us on Facebook or check out [sdbeef.org](http://sdbeef.org) for more SD BEEF information.

# BEYOND THE PRICE TAG

## THE REAL VALUE OF BEEF

**B**eef prices have made headlines lately. As grocery store prices climb, some shoppers pause when they reach for their favorite cut. While sticker shock is understandable, consider what consumers are actually getting when they put beef in their cart and what it truly takes to turn cattle into beef.

One pound of 80/20 ground beef is about \$6.68. That's four servings, each providing about 280 calories, 22 grams of fat, zero carbohydrates, and 19 grams of high-quality protein.

Even in traditionally more expensive cuts, the value continues to stand out. A recent sale at Fareway offered an eight-ounce USDA Choice New York strip steak for \$8.88. That single steak provides an impressive 64 grams of protein. Shoppers could also find a USDA Prime sirloin filet priced at about \$8.99 for 8 ounces. Even when broken down into a standard 3 ounce serving, sirloin delivers a nutrient-dense source of protein, essential vitamins and minerals with no carbohydrates.

Behind the grocery store price is a production process that many consumers will never see. As cattle producers, we understand the time, labor, and management required to turn cattle into beef. From the cow/calf sector through sale barns, order buyers, feedlots, and other segments of the industry, there are many steps before a retail-ready delivery is made to the meat counter. Decisions about genetics, animal care, nutrition, and cattle handling all play a vital role in producing a beef product that is safe, consistent, and efficient.

Once cattle leave the farm or feedlot, the process is far from over. The packing sector is an essential part of turning cattle into the beef that fills grocery store shelves, restaurant menus, and home freezers. Whether cattle are harvested at a local processor or one of the "big four" packing plants, there are significant costs involved. Labor, safety equipment, machinery, buildings, transportation, wastewater management, rendering, and regulatory compliance are just a few examples of the costs that go into processing.

Time is another factor that sets beef apart. Beef is not the fastest protein produced, and it is not the simplest. It takes at least 18 months from the day a calf hits the ground before it becomes beef. Because of that extended timeline, beef cannot be compared to other animal proteins like chicken or pork that can be produced much more quickly.

When all of these factors are considered, the question becomes whether beef is truly expensive or simply misunderstood. Beef demand remains strong, even as prices fluctuate. Quality continues to improve, and today's consumers are increasingly focused on protein, nutrition, and overall value.

Beef stands tall as one of the most nutrient dense and high value proteins available to consumers. Every package in the meat case represents years of work, significant investment, and careful stewardship by the people who raise cattle and those who process our beef. Beef is many things, but when you look at what goes into it and what you get out of it, expensive is not one of them.

**TO GET THE SAME 19 GRAMS OF PROTEIN IN  
ONE SERVING OF GROUND BEEF, YOU'D NEED:**

**5.5 TABLESPOONS PEANUT BUTTER**



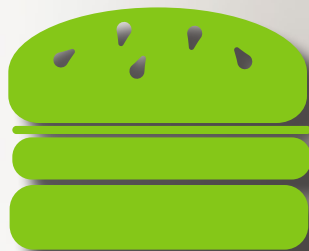
**500 calories | 40 g fat | 25 g carbs | 19 g protein | ~\$1.22**

**2.5 CUPS QUINOA**



**555 calories | 9 g fat | 116 g carbs | 19 g protein | ~\$4.11**

**4 OUNCES GROUND BEEF**



**280 calories | 22 g fat | 0 g carbs | 19 g protein | ~\$1.67**





# SUPPORTING MENTAL HEALTH

## *During the Busy Spring Season*

**Andrea Bjornestad, Ph.D., LPC, NCC** | *Professor, SDSU Extension Mental Health Specialist*

Spring has arrived, where farm and ranch families work together to accomplish numerous tasks. During this time, producers experience varying levels of stress that can impact their mental health. Normal amounts of stress encourage productivity, whereas chronic stress can lead to symptoms of depression or anxiety. When stress becomes overwhelming and chronic, the risks for experiencing symptoms of anxiety, depression, substance use, and physical health ailments increases. Thus, it is important to notice your stress signs and symptoms and effectively manage stress. Here are some tips related to stress management:

**Recognize your stress symptoms.** The first step in gauging how you feel is to recognize when you are experiencing stress. Where do you notice your stress in your body? Our stress symptoms can be emotional (moodiness, irritability, anger, loneliness, anxiousness, panic), cognitive (forgetful, constant worrying, pessimism), physical (fatigue, headaches, aches and pains, gastrointestinal), and behavioral (issues with sleep, eating too much or too little, use of alcohol, drugs, or cigarettes, procrastination). Write down your stress symptoms. Do others notice your stress? Do they notice different stress signs about you?

**Determine your control.** You know you are stressed, and you recognize your stress symptoms. Think about everything that is on your plate – all your stressors. Maybe your stressors involve finances, strained relationships, weather, market prices, limitations with the pandemic, etc. Which stressors can you control? Which stressors are outside of your control? When we worry about stressors

that are outside of our control, our thoughts and feelings spiral downwards where it can be difficult to dig out of negative thought patterns. Try to focus on what you can control.

**Seek support from others.** Oftentimes, sharing thoughts and feelings related to stress is avoided, because you do not want to burden others, or your family just never discusses their feelings. However, did you know that positive social support can enhance your resilience to stress in difficult situations? To strengthen your social supports, you may want to evaluate your social network. Do you have family members or friends in which you can confide? What about a pastor, neighbor, or mentor? It is important to let your supports know how they can best support you. This might involve checking in on you occasionally, providing physical help on the operation, engaging in social activities, or sharing advice and feedback. Finally, make sure to check in on your social network as they may also need emotional support during difficult times.

**Engage in stress management strategies.** Once you have identified your symptoms of stress and level of control, it is important to try different strategies to manage your stress. Here are some tips to help decrease stress:

- Eat healthy.
- Try to keep a positive attitude. You cannot control everything, but you can control how you respond.
- Utilize effective time management. By managing your time wisely, you may feel less overwhelmed.
- Laugh. The act of laughing can help ward off stress.


- Try to obtain enough rest and sleep.
- Practice breathing and find inner peace.
- Engage in hobbies or interests. Your stress levels will be high if you do not make time to have fun.
- Politely stand up for yourself. Do not become angry or passive; rather, thoughtfully share your feelings, opinions, and beliefs.
- Avoid relying upon alcohol, drugs or food to help you feel more relaxed.
- Exercise regularly. Try to incorporate exercise into your daily routine.
- Seek out community resources if needed. Visit <http://www.helplinecenter.org> or dial 211 to access these resources.

**Admit when you need help.** Spring can feel like a whirlwind with incredible pressure. When you feel like your stressors are extremely overwhelming and your stress symptoms are intense and persistent, it is important to seek support. Support can be from family, friends, neighbors, pastors/spiritual leaders, and counselors. The Avera Farm and Rural Stress hotline (1-800-691-4336)

provides professional assistance that is free, confidential, and available 24/7.

SDSU Extension also offers an agriculture behavioral health voucher program for farmers, ranchers, agribusiness professionals, and their immediate family members. The voucher program will include funding for up to five free mental health counseling sessions at Rising Hope Counseling. Farmers/ranchers, their family members, and agribusiness professionals can complete a voucher interest form at <https://extension.sdstate.edu/agriculture-behavioral-health-voucher-program> or call Rising Hope Counseling at 605-494-1500 to schedule an appointment.

**Forgive yourself.** If you are currently struggling with your thoughts and feelings, you are not alone. It is okay to have days where you feel competent and accomplished, and other days where it might be a struggle to accomplish one task. Forgive yourself for the hard days.



**SOUTH DAKOTA STATE  
UNIVERSITY EXTENSION**

## Agriculture Behavioral Health Voucher Program

**SDSU Extension has partnered with Rising Hope Counseling to provide free behavioral health counseling services to those working in agriculture.**

- » Any farmer, rancher, spouse, child, or agribusiness professional qualifies for the voucher program
- » Up to **FIVE FREE** counseling sessions
- » Counseling sessions can occur in-person or via telehealth

*Funded by USDA-NIFA 2024-70028-43552*

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Complete the **voucher interest form** at [extension.sdstate.edu/agriculture-behavioral-health-voucher-program](https://extension.sdstate.edu/agriculture-behavioral-health-voucher-program), and you will be contacted by Rising Hope.

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Or call Rising Hope Counseling at **605-494-1500** to schedule an appointment.

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Visit **risinghope.com** for more information on services and locations.

# THE POWER OF BRANDING



Branding can make all the difference. A product's brand tells the consumer immediately what they can expect based on the company's reputation, experience, and their own perception of its value. Why does one black backpack cost \$100 and another only \$20? It could correlate to what logo it sports, and more importantly its perceived quality.

In the same way, branded beef programs take the eating experience to the next level by creating written standards for high-quality products that consumers can recognize instantly. While over one hundred branded beef programs are approved by the USDA, one specific program has developed a dominant marketplace presence backed by years of success. The Certified Angus Beef® (CAB) stamp is unmistakable by producers and consumers alike who associate the label with consistently exceptional beef.

Since its start in 1978, many cattle producers have taken advantage of the brand to receive a premium for their high-quality beef on the rail, but a new branch of the program is bringing that label closer to the ranch.

“The Certified Angus Beef® Ranch to Table program was established to allow cattlemen who are involved in direct-to-consumer beef sales access to CAB® branding,” said Kara Lee, Director of Producer Engagement for CAB. “Purchasing Certified Angus Beef® Ranch to Table cuts are a great opportunity for restaurants with a desire to tell a local, direct-from-the-ranch story without sacrificing quality and consistency. For ranchers who have been targeting high carcass quality standards, the ability to label their product as Certified Angus Beef® is a great way for them to get credit in the eyes of the consumer for the hard work they've put in to raising high-quality cattle.”

The new direct-partnership program allows participants to use the Certified Angus Beef brand logo on products in direct-to-consumer products. The requirements to participate in the CAB® Ranch to Table program include:

- active and good standing with the American Angus Association
- maintaining a cow herd and beef supply chain primarily influenced by registered Angus genetics
- a current Beef Quality Assurance certification (or equivalent program)
- standard procedures from processors
- cattle that meet the brand's live animal and carcass requirements as verified by a USDA grader

The first operation in South Dakota to become CAB Ranch to Table certified is no stranger to bringing beef directly to consumers. The Hadrick Ranch of Faulkton is known for using genetic selection and result-driven methods to consistently produce high-quality beef. Their efforts make them trailblazers in the direct-to-consumer space and sparked opportunities for collaboration with CAB®. Troy Hadrick, who owns Hadrick Ranch alongside his family, says that their partnership started with an early appreciation for the brand.

“We've always admired the Certified Angus Beef® brand and worked hard to make our cattle qualify for that program,” said Hadrick.

But when they decided to begin their direct consumer beef business, they were disappointed that those cattle wouldn't be able to qualify for Certified Angus Beef®.

“When this new Ranch to Table program came about it looked like that was going to be a great opportunity for us to get the best of both worlds.” Hadrick said. “We were really privileged to be the very first ranch in South Dakota to be approved for the program. All our restaurants and consumers that buy beef from us were thrilled to have that extra stamp of quality on our home-raised beef.”

Hadrick added that they consider it a win-win situation to now have their own ranch connected to an iconic brand that's been around for decades.



*Scan the QR code learn more about the CAB Ranch to Table program.*



# HONORING HERITAGE

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Join NCBA and stand with fellow cattlemen and women, creating a powerful network that advances the interests of the cattle industry. Together, we strengthen our rural communities and our industry, preserving a heritage that is the backbone of America and your family's legacy.



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TAILORED TO YOUR NEEDS
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PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

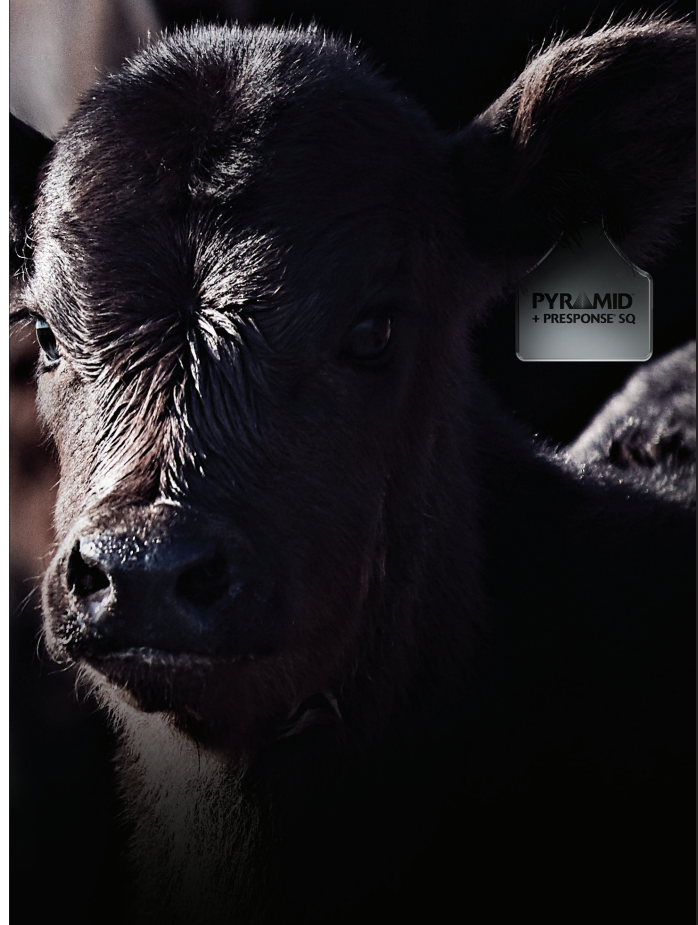
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*The South Dakota Cattleman*



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# SDCA *Working for You*

Taya Runyan, SDCA Executive Director

## MARCH BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The second meeting of the year was held virtually on March 18. In addition to region updates and regular business, the group heard from Senator Sydney Davis for a post session recap. Also joining the meeting was Kristen Conzet from the Western Dakota Regional Water to discuss upcoming projects.

### **Resource Committee**

Prior to setting the budget which will take place later this spring, the resource committee met for a special meeting to review and recommend changes to membership dues and allied industry fees. Membership dues have not been increased since 2021. The committee recommends the following dues:

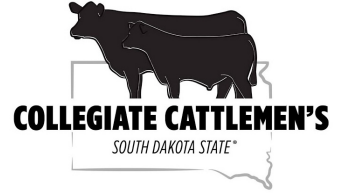
	<b>Current Dues</b>	<b>2027 Dues</b>
<b>Producer Membership (1 year)</b>	\$150	\$175
<b>Producer Membership (3 year)</b>	\$400	\$500
<b>Ranch Membership</b>	\$150 + \$75 per additional member	\$175 + \$100 per additional member
<b>Supporting Allied Industry Membership</b>	\$200	\$225
<b>Standard Allied Industry Membership</b>	\$350	\$375

### **Cattlemen's Cookout Committee**

The exciting news is an all new menu at Dakotafest and new signage going up at the beef booth thanks to a collaboration with the SDBIC. The committee has been hard at work planning other events throughout the summer too (see page 7 for more dates and details). Please consider volunteering to work the grill or the register during a shift at one of these events. They serve as an important fundraiser to support the work SDCA does around the year on behalf of members. Reach out to the office at [office@sd cattlemen.org](mailto:office@sd cattlemen.org) if you are interested in volunteering and we will connect you with the Cookout Committee.

## NCBA COLLEGIATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

NCBA launched its collegiate partnership program which gives student led organizations the opportunity to add value to their organization and give club members exclusive access to education, scholarships, internships, and other opportunities. SDCA sponsored the first Collegiate Partnership in South Dakota with the SDSU Collegiate Cattlemen's Club extending NCBA membership to each of its members at no cost to students. If you know of a student led agricultural based collegiate organization that might be interested in learning more or would like to request SDCA sponsorship, please reach out to [office@sd cattlemen.org](mailto:office@sd cattlemen.org).



## CARTRIDGES FOR CASH

Thanks to a partnership with Merck Animal Health, SDCA can cash in on an opportunity to support educational programs.



Save your empty REVALOR® (trenbolone acetate and estradiol implants, trenbolone acetate and estradiol extended-release implants) or RALGRO® (zeranol implants) cartridges.

Cartridges can be dropped off at any one of the Region Roundup events planned across the state this summer and into fall (see page 23 for a full line up of date and locations).

Merck Animal Health will donate 25 cents for every cartridge to support ongoing youth initiatives.

## FFA SPONSORSHIP

The SDCA was proud to sponsor the 2026 State FFA Beef Production Placement Proficiency Award. Past President Warren Symens was on hand to present the awards this year. Congratulations to the award recipients: First Place - Dylan McGregor, McCook Central; Second Place - Ireland McAreavey, Tri-Valley; Third Place - Kelton King, Buffalo Christian.

## SESSION WRAP UP & LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026 ELECTIONS

Legislators gathered in Pierre at the end of March to consider vetoes and determine what topics would be studied in greater detail during the summer and fall. Governor Rhoden issued two vetoes this year, including HB 1077 which sought to amend the definition of adulterated foods to include cell cultured protein. With a vote of 32-32 in the House, there were not enough votes to override the veto.

Early voting for the June primary will be well underway by the time this magazine hits mailboxes. Before the final votes are tallied, get to know the candidates running in your district. Invite them to the ranch for a visit or grab a cup of coffee. Offer to put a sign up on your property or help knock on doors. Most importantly, VOTE!! Some communities see elections come down to just a handful of votes!

## SUMMER BUSINESS MEETING

Industry leaders from around the country will meet in Denver this July for the annual Summer Business Meeting. Make plans to attend and help shape the future of the beef cattle industry July 12-14 at the Gaylord Rockies Resort & Convention in Aurora, CO. If there is new policy you would like to see SDCA bring forward, please contact the office or a member of the board to discuss next steps.

## LEGISLATIVE FLY IN

Cattle producers and industry leaders from across the US gathered in the nation's capital April 21-24 for the NCBA Legislative Conference. They met with congressional representatives and federal agencies and advocated for policies that support the beef industry. SDCA President Craig Bieber, Peggy Bieber, Colin Geppert, and Courtney Geppert, attended the event on behalf of SDCA.



After arriving in D.C., NCBA and the Public Lands Council hosted a rooftop reception where we were able to hear remarks from the association presidents. House Ag Chairman G.T. Thompson met with the group and conveyed his determination to get the Farm Bill across the finish line.

SDCA met with all 3 of South Dakota's congressional delegation to discuss the priorities of our members.

*The South Dakota Cattleman*



## *Updates from Capitol Hill*

### PRODUCT OF THE USA

The "Product of the USA" rules were fully implemented and available in January of 2026. This past March, USDA launched an awareness campaign for the new label. Under the new USDA rule, when consumers see the label on meat, poultry or processed egg products, it means the animal was born, raised, harvested, and processed *entirely* within the United States.



### AMERICA 250 CATTLETRAILS CONGRESSIONAL RESOLUTION

A congressional resolution to celebrate the "contributions of the American cowboy and historic cattle trails in advancing American history" as part of America 250 celebrations was introduced last month. Many states have a cattle trails connection including South Dakota. SDCA offered a statement of support for the resolution.



# RIPARIAN GRAZING MANAGEMENT USING VIRTUAL FENCING

**Dawson Uhl**

Graduate Research Assistant

**Jameson Brennan**

South Dakota State University Extension Livestock Grazing Specialist

Riparian zones are areas adjacent to creeks, rivers, and streams, typically characterized by distinct plant communities including woody species such as cottonwood and willow. These areas play a critical role in both ecosystem function and livestock production. Due to their proximity to water, riparian zones often exhibit higher soil moisture, increased forage production, and provide essential resources such as water and shade for grazing livestock. As a result, cattle frequently concentrate in these areas, leading to disproportionate grazing pressure.

This preferential use by livestock presents significant management challenges. Concentrated livestock activity in riparian areas can contribute to streambank erosion and poor water quality. Additionally, overuse can reduce vegetative cover, lower soil moisture retention, and ultimately diminish the long-term productivity within riparian pastures. Healthy riparian plant communities effectively act as a sponge, by absorbing water and slowly releasing it, extending live water and soil moisture into the summer and fall season. While exclusion of cattle from riparian zones is commonly recommended for restoration, this approach is often impractical for producers due to the critical role these areas play in providing water and high-quality forage. Furthermore, traditional fencing solutions can cost between \$10,000 and \$20,000 per mile, making widespread implementation expensive.

Virtual fencing represents a promising tool for managing livestock distribution on the landscape. This technology utilizes GPS-enabled collars worn by animals, which communicate with a centralized software system that allows managers to define virtual boundaries. As animals approach these boundaries, they receive an auditory cue followed by a mild electrical stimulus if they continue forward, effectively guiding movement without the need for physical fencing, like an electric shock collar used for dogs.

To evaluate the effectiveness of virtual fencing in managing riparian grazing, a study was conducted in 2025 at the SDSU

Cottonwood Field Station in western South Dakota near Philip, SD. The study utilized 40 Angus heifers equipped with Gallagher eShepherd virtual fence collars. Animals underwent a one-week training period prior to the trial to ensure proper response to virtual fence cues.

The study was conducted on three pastures with Cottonwood Creek running through each of the pastures. For each pasture, cattle grazing occurred for 28 days total. Within each grazing period, cattle were excluded from riparian areas for the first 14 days using virtual fencing, followed by 14 days of unrestricted access. The objective was to evaluate whether virtual fencing could effectively control access to riparian areas while achieving a targeted utilization rates of approximately 50% once access was allowed.

Results indicated that virtual fencing was highly effective, achieving approximately 99% exclusion of cattle from riparian areas during the restricted period. When cattle were allowed access, they spent approximately 44% of their time in riparian zones, despite these areas comprising on average only about 22% of the total pasture area. This highlights the strong preference cattle have for these areas adjacent to streams.

Vegetation analysis revealed that riparian areas produced approximately twice the biomass per month compared to upland areas. Overall, riparian areas accounted for approximately 22.2% of the total land area across pastures but contributed 38.2% of total forage biomass and 37.7% of total digestible nutrients. Livestock utilization levels were consistently higher in riparian areas compared to uplands; however, utilization remained below the targeted threshold of 50% across all pastures. These findings suggest that virtual fencing can successfully manage grazing pressure in riparian zones while still allowing producers to capture the substantial forage benefits these areas provide.

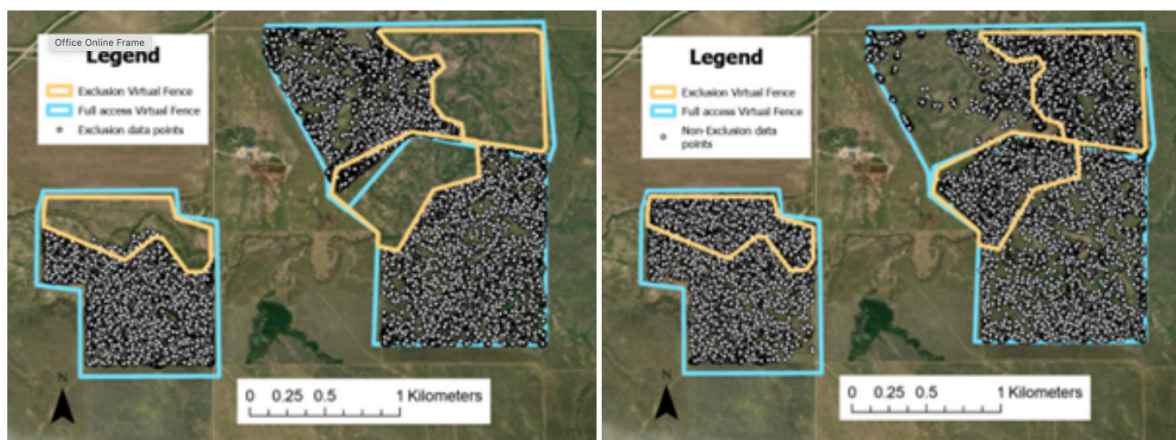


Figure : GPS location data of heifers grazing three pastures with Cottonwood creek running through each pasture. The yellow line is the virtual fence boundary where animals were excluded during the first 14 days of the trial (left image). The right image is when cattle had complete access to the entire pasture.

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## SDCA Member Spotlight:

# *The Meathouse*

A short detour off the four lanes of Highway 12 will bring you to a smorgasbord of Wagyu steaks, sausage, snack sticks, flavored bacon, brats, cheese, and SDSU ice cream in a town of only 66 people. For nearly three years, The Meathouse in Andover, SD, has brought high quality meat and South Dakota made products into the spotlight.

What started as a family butcher shop on the farm in 1975 has turned into a 25-head-per-week USDA-inspected processing facility that uses the latest technology and techniques for maximum quality. At the beginning, Brad Morehouse and Herman Eklo used the farm butcher shop as a place for both themselves and neighbors to process their livestock and wild game. Since the butcher shop was often a social place for family and friends to gather, it became known as 'The Meathouse.'

In the 1980s, Brad married Diann and together they started the next generation on the family farm. The four Morehouse children, Justin, Brent, Jesse, and Desiree grew up being actively involved with both the demands of their family's 75 head of dairy cattle and the butcher shop. That early experience taught them critical skills according to Justin Morehouse.

"All of us, brothers and sisters could all cut meat as soon as they could hold a knife," Justin remembers.

As the children grew, the family transitioned into new ventures including raising bucking bulls for a time before taking on a completely new opportunity. One of the brothers, Brent, had heard good things about Wagyu genetics, and the family invested in a single Wagyu bull. In 2015 they bred just 23 cows Wagyu and within only a couple years had increased the influence to 250 heifers. By 2018, they harvested their first Wagyu-influenced cattle and were rewarded with phenomenal results.

"It started with just family and friends wanting to try it, but thanks to word of mouth about the quality of the beef the demand really grew," Justin said. "Our shop on the farm wasn't custom exempt so we needed to have a different place to have them processed."

The need for an updated meat processing facility was brought front and center but the question of how and when became the next step. It wasn't until 2020 that a clear answer came.

"It was definitely a God thing," Justin said.

It was while working cattle with the family one day in 2020, a stranger from Illinois pulled into the farmyard. One of the brothers stepped away from the work to talk, and they became

deeply engrossed in a conversation. The result of that seemingly random interaction was the answer they had been waiting for.

"Turns out he was a retired federal meat inspector," Justin laughed. "He could get us in contact with the people who now had his position, and we took that as a sign that we were supposed to do this."

That simple conversation became the catalyst for building a new processing facility and carrying on the family business in a fresh, new way. They started by doing extensive research traveling across the country from South Dakota to Montana to Minnesota and even Kansas to learn from other successful meat lockers. Shortly after the learning phase, the family broke ground in Andover, SD, in 2022. As one could imagine, the state of the world during that time had a major effect on the project's budget, inflating expenses to an all-time high. Other challenges like finding a workforce in the sparsely populated area and working with the railroad for building permissions required problem-solving and forward-thinking.

Today, The Meathouse employs a full team who commute daily from Aberdeen, Webster, and everywhere in between.

"My hat's off to them," Justin added. "They do a fantastic job of running the day-to-day operations so we can do other things to make sure it can keep running and working."

Incorporating the latest methods for increasing tenderness was top of mind when the facility was being built and led to the use of the 'tender stretch' method. By hanging the carcasses by the aitch bone rather than the Achilles tendon, researchers have found a



correlation to more tender beef. Another benefit of this method is less days of dry aging and increased cooler space to accommodate 50 head per week.

The facility focuses on beef, pigs and bison, but Wagyu has continued to be a staple for The Meathouse.

The Morehouse family has continued to build their own herd of Wagyu, while also purchasing back their genetics in the form of feeder calves from other producers. They feed out these cattle in their own feedlot until they reach harvesting age which is approximately 24 months old to meet USDA maturity standards. The timeline can present somewhat of a challenge to make sure the cattle are properly finished and processed before 30 months of age which is the cutoff for USDA Grade A maturity. It also requires special handling during harvest like keeping it colder and working with it for less time than regular beef to protect the higher fat content. Still, Justin says the end result is worth the extra time and investment.

“You kind of get the best of everything: health, flavor and tenderness, a really nice eating experience,” Justin said. “[Wagyu beef] is actually higher in Omega-3 fatty acids than regular beef.”

Those are just a few of the reasons that the product has become a fan favorite not only in the retail case but also on the menu.

“The [Dakota Meat Company] in Rapid City specializes in making smash burgers, and they decided to try out Wagyu beef from our shop as a trial. The results were incredible,” Justin explained. “It was literally a physical reaction from his customers that were impressed by the quality, and now they order 1,000 pounds of [Wagyu] burger a month from us.”

Getting their beef on more menus across the state is part of The Meathouse’s vision for the future, but transportation logistics and cost have made that a challenge. They have also have a goal to raise 100% of the Wagyu they process on their own family’s operation. Another vision for the future is incorporating the next generation in the family business.

“It’s easy for generations to slip away from the farm and lose that knowledge and connection,” Justin said. “We’ve certainly seen that happen all around us.”

But they hope that some of the grandchildren find their own unique place in the operation whether it’s working on the farm or joining the butcher shop team. Regardless of the future, Justin is thankful for where the family business is today and how far they’ve come.

“We’ve got to give a lot of credit to God, He keeps us here, He keeps us going. Faith is a big thing for us, without it we couldn’t be doing this.” Justin reflects. “He’s called us to do it, and we’re doing what we’re supposed to be doing.”

From their parents, Brad and Diann, who raised them, kept them grounded, and kept pushing them at the same time, to all four grown Morehouse children, the entire family plays a part in the business. Brent and his wife Jessica help with the day-to-day; Justin and his wife Jeanne manage and promote the business; Jesse, fixes and engineers the things they need, and alongside his wife Julie, who operates a full retail store, ‘Saddle Corral’, in



Aberdeen for The Meathouse products; and finally, Desiree and her husband Cory assist with the financial side of the business and help with decision making. A true family business where each family member contributes in their own way.

As they look forward to building the future together, they hope to provide continued opportunities for education and give back to the community. Today, they welcome several high school classes and even Lake Area Technical College students into the shop throughout the year to watch the entire harvesting process from stunning to breaking down the carcass.

💡 **WE’VE GOT TO GIVE A LOT OF CREDIT TO GOD, HE KEEPS US HERE, HE KEEPS US GOING. FAITH IS A BIG THING FOR US, WITHOUT IT WE COULDN’T BE DOING THIS.** 💡

*-Justin Morehouse*

“It’s a great way to connect them with a side of agriculture that they wouldn’t typically see,” Justin said. “Dealing with meat, dealing with people’s food... showing them this is what we do, and it is as humane as it can get.”

When asked what advice he would give to cattle producers, Justin’s answer is simple.

“Find what you love and don’t give up, that’s the biggest thing, keep pushing,” Justin stated. “You have your negative people, complaints from all sides, and if I let those people get to me, I would quit. But you can’t let them get through. Make sure you have the right people behind you, do everything that pleasing to God, and if all that lines up, you’re on the right track.”

At the end of the day, The Meathouse continues to build on a simple phrase coined by one of their employees, “Your meat, done right, in every bite.”



# Three Categories. One Winner Two Podiums Three Top 10s

Kinzie Foods placed in three categories at the American Royal World Series of Barbecue Sauce Contest, the largest sauce competition on the planet. Including a first-place win for Dubai Chocolate in Specialty Sauce.

### Where to find Kinzie Foods:

Mead Lumber Rapid City - West	Rapid City
Mead Lumber Ace Hardware - East	Rapid City
Black Hills Bagels	Rapid City
Boyd's Drugs	Rapid City
Cutting Edge Market	Rapid City
Breadroot	Rapid City
Timmons Market	Rapid City
Dakota Seafood	Rapid City
Cutting Edge Market	Piedmont
Lynn's Dakotamart	Custer
Custer Ace Hardware	Custer
Rapid City Hardware	Rapid City
Sioux Nation	Fort Pierre
Branding Iron Bistro	Pierre
Renner Corner	Renner
Uncle Ed's	Sioux Falls
Back Alley Meats	Volga
Tulare Meats	Tulare
The Meat House	Andover
Mead Lumber Spearfish	Spearfish
Ace Hardware Black Hawk	Black Hawk
Ace Hardware Box Elder	Box Elder
Grocery Mart	Sturgis
Ace Hardware Sturgis	Sturgis
Lynn's Dakotamart	Sturgis
Lynn's Dakotamart	Lead
Ace Hardware Lead	Lead

## Sweet BBQ Hotdogs



### Ingredients

- 8 beef hot dogs
- 8 hot dog buns
- ½ cup Kinzie Sweet BBQ Sauce
- Mustard, to taste
- Pickle relish, to taste
- ½ cup chopped onions

### Instructions

1. Preheat your grill to medium-high (about 350–400°F).
2. Place hot dogs on the grill. Cook for 5–7 minutes, turning occasionally until heated through and nicely charred.
3. Brush each grilled hot dog generously with Kinzie Sweet BBQ Sauce.
4. Place each BBQ-sauced hot dog in a bun (toasted or untoasted) and add your favorite toppings—mustard, pickle relish, chopped onions, and extra Kinzie Sweet BBQ Sauce.
5. Serve immediately with classic sides like chips, coleslaw, potato salad, or grilled veggies.

**Pro Tip:** For the ultimate flavor boost, toast the buns directly on the grill for 30–60 seconds just before serving.

# May is Beef Month

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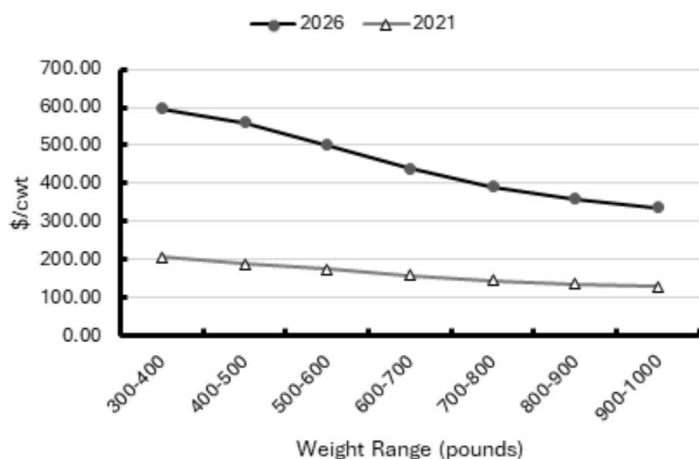
# BASIS FOR LIGHTER-WEIGHT FEEDER CATTLE

**Matthew Diersen, PhD**

*Griffith Chair in Agricultural Finance at South Dakota State University*

Accurate prices are needed by buyers and sellers of cattle. With higher overall price levels, the price differences across cattle of different weights have also increased. As a result, producers may want to revisit some pricing rules reflected in price slides and in basis levels for lighter-weight feeder cattle.

The price slide has become steeper in recent years. To observe the change, consider USDA-AMS reported prices for feeder cattle steers at different weights as compiled by the Livestock Marketing Information Center (LMIC). The price slide from March 2026 is much steeper compared to the slide from March 2021 (Figure 1). The slopes of those curves imply that the price slide increased from 13 cents per pound in 2021 to 46 cents per pound in 2026. Usually, price slides are used mainly for arriving at reasonable prices to complete contracts. However, the 2026 prices reflect large differences in per-head values across weights. Adjusting price slides may result in fairer prices for buyers and sellers.



**Figure 1. March Feeder Cattle Prices by Weight Levels.**

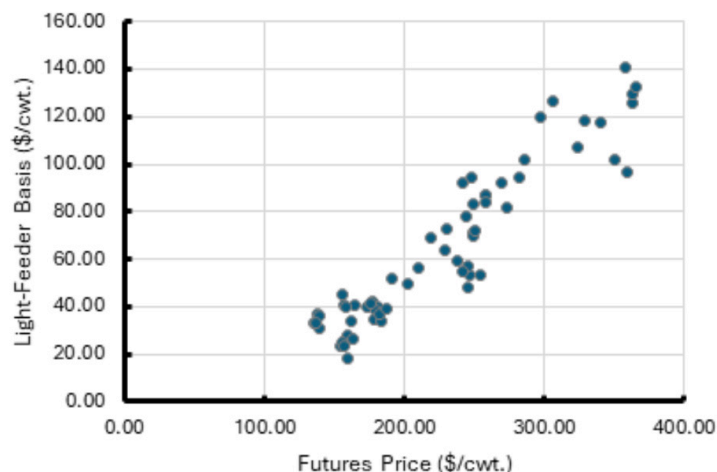
Basis, generally defined as the difference between a specific cash price and a nearby futures price, can be measured and used for feeder cattle of different weights. The underlying futures contract reflects feeder steers weighing 700 to 899 pounds. When the cash price reflects similar weight feeder cattle, the basis is usually small, and for South Dakota it mainly reflects a small premium or positive basis level compared to other states. For planning purposes, an average of basis levels from recent prior years can be used to arrive at an expected basis. That convention does not work well for lighter-weight feeder cattle.

For light-weight feeder cattle, recent basis levels are much higher than historic averages. A primary reason for the wider basis is the higher feeder cattle futures price. As the underlying futures prices have moved higher during this cattle cycle, the relative price for lighter feeder cattle has also increased. Consider the monthly



basis on 550-pound steers in South Dakota from January of 2021 through March of 2026. The basis is the cash price minus the nearby futures price. The futures data is from the CME Group as compiled by the LMIC. The basis averaged \$61.00 per cwt. from 2021 through 2025. During the first quarter of 2026 it averaged \$134.00 per cwt. The underlying futures prices have generally moved higher during that period, and the

basis has become larger as well (Figure 2). Almost 90 percent of the basis variability can be explained by fluctuating futures prices. For every \$50.00 per cwt. change in the futures price level, the basis has changed by \$23.00 per cwt. Feed prices and profitability are responsible for the variation observed around a given futures price level.



**Figure 2. Light-Feeder Basis and Futures, January 2021 through March 2026.**

Using recent basis levels would be more indicative of expected basis levels compared to using historic averages. In March 2026 the cash price for 550-pound steers in South Dakota averaged \$498.00 per cwt. The nearby (March 2026) feeder cattle futures price averaged \$358.00 per cwt. during March. The basis was thus \$140.00 per cwt. and reflected the feeding margin. The futures price reflected the value of an 800-pound steer worth \$2,864.00 per head. The cash price for the 550-pound feeder reflected the value of \$2,739.00 per head. The difference in those values, \$125.00 per head, reflects the cost of feed, yardage, and profitability (or lack thereof), to add 250 pounds to the lighter feeder.

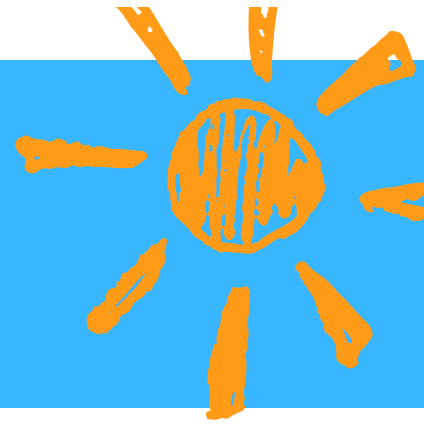
The price slide is much steeper than in prior years, as reflected in the basis on lighter-weight feeder cattle. For hedgers, using a more-recent basis on lighter-weight feeders should result in better price risk management. This would apply to both buyers and sellers.



Beef Month

# COLORING CONTEST

May 1 - 31



SDCA is excited to host a special Beef Month Coloring Contest celebrating the importance of beef in our communities. Prizes will be awarded and winners will have their submission featured in a later edition of *The South Dakota Cattleman*.

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or visit [sdcattlemen.org](http://sdcattlemen.org) for more information, contest rules, and printable coloring sheets!

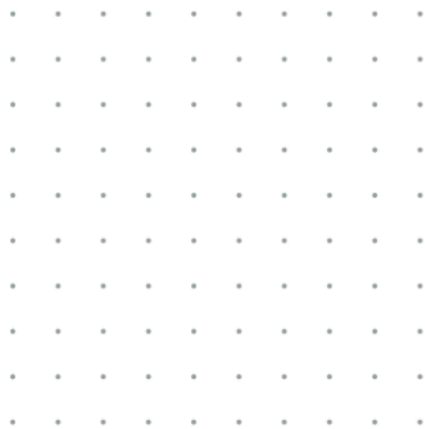
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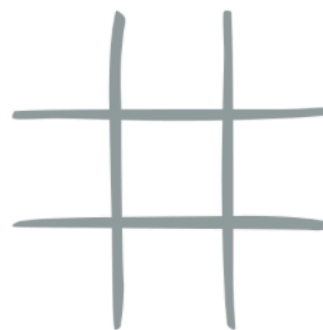


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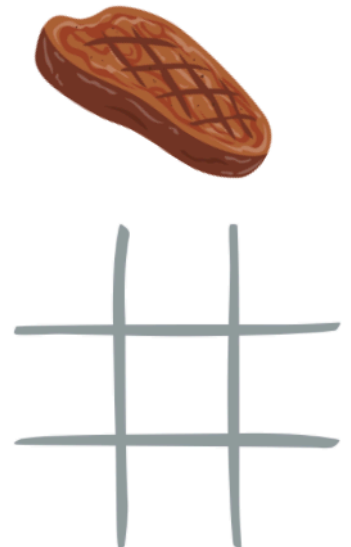


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# LIMOUSIN AND LIM-FLEX® CATTLE EXCEL

## *on NALRF/SDSU Research Project and Economic Analysis*

The NALRF/SDSU research project comparing 3 different sire groups consisting of Angus, Lim-Flex® and Limousin sires bred to commercial Angus cows is evaluated in the SDSU study and economic analysis that is detailed in the link below. The study examined extended days on feed (DOF) to 3 different harvest end points on growth performance, feed efficiency and carcass composition differences of both steers and heifers with different proportions of Angus and Limousin genetics. A.I. sires utilized were independently selected by Dr. Robert Weaber, KSU for relative EPD equivalency also utilizing USMARC breed adjustments to better measure breed comparisons.

Commenting on the research project, Dr. Robert Weaber stated, "As the beef industry continues to drive for increased production through feeding cattle to heavier end weights, selection for animals with the genetic potential for improved muscularity and retail yield is essential.

Physiologically maturity of beef cattle results in carcass tissue deposition shifts from lean to fat. As this occurs, feed conversion worsens decreasing the efficiency of body weight gain and ultimately, profitability. At the end of the feeding period, dressing percentage increases, but primarily due to increased fatness. Increased body fat decreases retail yield.

Decreasing the production of waste fat in our industry will be key to improving our sustainability metrics. One simple way to improve retail yield is selection of animals (and breeds like Limousin) with improved carcass muscularity. Recent beef x dairy carcass work has demonstrated the importance of muscle shape in the chuck and round to improved fabrication yields. As our industry considers new technology to predict red meat yield, we'll need to expand our utilization of breeds and tools that add end meat carcass muscularity.

The utilization of crossbreeding systems to leverage heterosis and breed complementarity is a key tactic to improving beef production efficiency. This research reaffirms the value to crossbreeding systems that leverage breed strengths and improve profit opportunities through optimization of carcass quality and yield attributes at heavy out weights. In the current study, cattle with increased days on feed had more profit opportunity as did cattle with increasing percentage of Limousin genetics demonstrating the value of managing

both carcass composition and feedlot performance traits to maximize profit.

Profit in the feeding sector is driven by managing both input costs and the value of the beef carcass. Injecting genetics into the breeding program that reduce the cost of gain during extended feeding through improved carcass conversion and feed efficiency adds substantial profit potential and market flexibility at heavy out weights."

Mark Anderson, Executive Director at the North American Limousin Foundation commented " The SDSU study details that value of crossbreeding for the commercial cattleman when utilizing 2 breeds that are very complimentary of each other like Angus and Limousin in today's cattle feeding industry, where cattle are fed to much larger outweights. The ability to achieve profitable feed conversion rates, while achieving industry demanded quality grade levels and reduce yield grade 4 & 5's with increased red meat yield for all sectors of the beef industry is a direction the industry will be headed."

Assumptions, questions and economic value analysis:

What is the effect of adding days on feed and resulting impact on revenue, cost and return on all cattle and differences between the sire groups?

Constant grid values are used for all 3 harvest dates spread 30 days apart. Breeds are analyzed by groups at 200, 235, & 270 days on feed after an initial warmup period of 78 days.

Cattle feeders have extended days on feed resulting in hot carcass weights exceeding the upper bounds of existing slaughter datasets. Consequently, there is a need for new research to evaluate cattle growth, efficiency and carcass outcomes as cattle are fed to heavier HCW(>1000 lbs for steers).

Cattle were fed to larger outweights to be more reflective of the larger outweights being seen in the current fed cattle industry today and the increasing trend in larger carcass weights.

Grid values were based on a Cargill grid, base price = \$310.00/cwt., reference quality, yield grade and carcass weight premiums and discounts in attached slide presentation by Dr. Warren Rouche and Grace Olinger, SDSU.

Cost assumptions in value established using January 2024

starting weights and South Dakota USDA report (Steers & Heifers). Ration cost = \$200.00/ton, yardage at \$0.50 per day along with trucking, vet, etc. = \$85.00/head. Interest @ 8.5% on feeder cattle and feed. Ending values were calculated from Cargill settlement.

**TAKEAWAYS:**

All breed groups reflected an increase in value and profit with added days on feed.

The added value in revenue & margin for all 3 breed groups increased to offset increasing costs at all 3 harvest dates for all cattle combined. This is very reflective of today’s increasing overweight trends in fed cattle production and subsequent hot carcass weights.

Profit for “all” cattle by DOF - \$/hd increased at each DOF harvest endpoint as DOF increased:

200 DOF = \$284.61/head

235 DOF = \$347.17/head

270 DOF = \$417.03/head

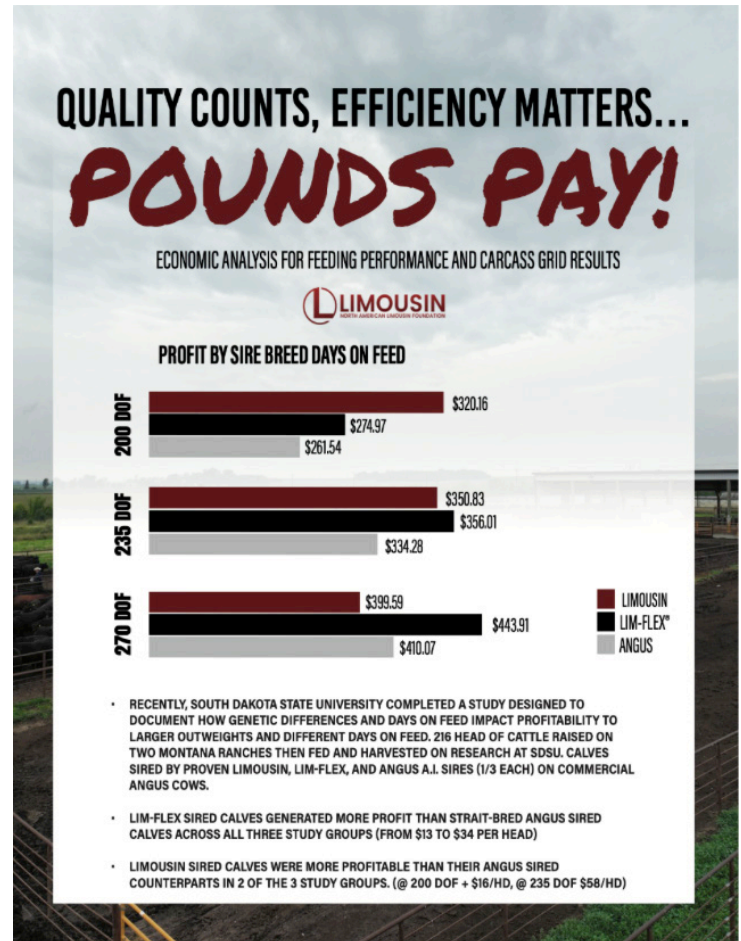
Overall profit by sire breed and DOF was led by Limousin and Lim-Flex® sired calves when combining cost of gain and carcass results (Figure 1).



**NOTE:** Increased Limousin influence improved dry matter conversion and resulting lower cost of gains to enhance their profitability. Although Limousin cattle had no prime carcasses, they also had no select carcasses and increased Limousin influence resulted in superior yield grade resulting in fewer

yield grade 4 & 5 cattle and resulting yield grade discounts when fed to larger outweights. A ration cost increase from \$200/ton to \$275/ton also increased profitability for Limousin and Lim-Flex® sired calves given improved feed conversion rates.

Limousin & Lim-Flex® sired cattle excelled in Profit by Sire breed and DOF at each of the 3 harvest dates when combining feed cost of gain and carcass results (Figure 2).



**NOTE:** Lim-Flex® sired progeny had an equivalent number of prime grading carcasses as compared to Angus while achieving superior yield grade and dry matter conversions within the final 70 days.

**BREED DIFFERENCE EFFECTS IN OVERALL RESEARCH TRIAL:** Breed did not affect ADG, final BW, or HCW. Increased Limousin influence reduced DMI and improved F:G. Increased Limousin influence increased REA and reduced rib fat and yield grade. Angus influence increased marbling score. Lim-Flex sired calves had similar proportion of premium carcass grades compared to Angus for CAB and Prime carcasses in addition to improved yield grade.

Grace Olinger<sup>1</sup>, Zachary Smith<sup>1</sup>, Forest Francis<sup>2</sup>, Becca Grimes Francis<sup>1</sup>, Riley Leeson<sup>1</sup>, Michael Gonda<sup>1</sup>, Robert L. Weaber<sup>3</sup>, and Warren Rusche<sup>1</sup>

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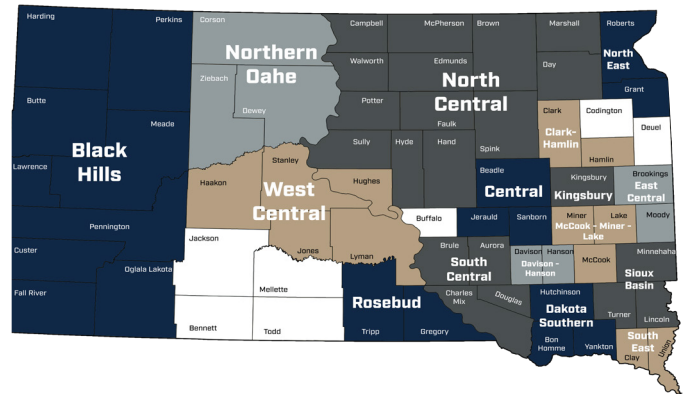
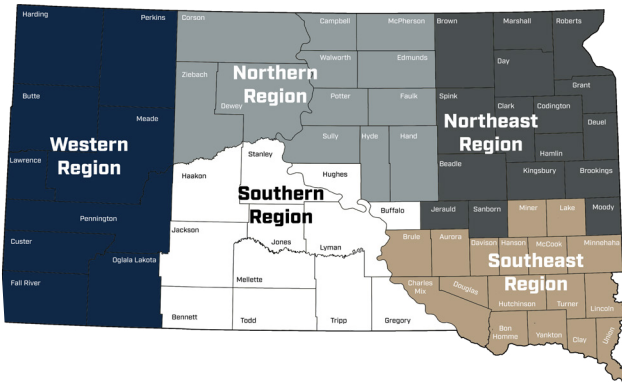
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