LIVESTOCK 2023



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Honoring the past, planning for the future Page 2A Bacon Buddies program expands in Iowa Page 4A Hay supply variable across the state Page 7A New animal prescription rules start in June Page 9A

TELLING STORIES FROM THE CATTLE FARM

Dan Hanrahan, a cow/calf producer from Madison County, enjoys sharing his experiences on and off the farm and promoting to a wide audience. By Corey Munson

arms can carry history in the soil and in the genetics of a cattle herd. The institution of the farm is a legacy that outlasts individuals, families and centuries. At least, that's how Dan Hanrahan sees it.

"Being a farmer helps me feel connected to something bigger," Hanrahan said recently, from his Madison County Black Angus cow/calf farm.

"The cows change but the herd is still here," he said. "The same with the farm, this is my time here, but others came before me. The farm remains."

Hanrahan is the fourth generation of his family on his plot of land, and the fifth to farm in Madison County.

His herd is about 120 head, mostly commercial, with a few bull calves held back each season as part of a seedstock business, North River Cattle Company, that he started a few years ago.

Hanrahan said the herd still carries Angus genetics from the first few cows his grandfather bought in the 1920s.

"We're trying to be really cognizant of quality as we build our herd, very selective," Hanrahan said. "The registered Angus herd allows us to refine those genetics."

Those lines to the past serve as an inspiration and motivator for Hanrahan's work both on and off the farm.

CONSERVATION EFFORTS

He is passionate about conservation efforts, implementing many water management improvements on his farm, including ponds and terraces, in the last 15 years. He also utilizes rotational grazing, allowing native grasses to get reestablished in his pastures on spots they have been missing for generations.

SEE COW/CALF ON PAGE 3A





Dan Hanrahan, a cow/calf producer from Madison County, watches closely as a cow interacts with her newly born calf. Hanrahan is a fifth generation farmer in Madison County and the third to oversee the famregistered ily's Black Angus herd. PHOTO / CONRAD SCHMIDT

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COW/CALF

FROM PAGE 2A

"I've worked to boost fertility on our grazing acres," Hanrahan said. "As we see higher land values and input costs, getting more out of an acre of grass is even more important."

Just as the farm was available to him to come back to, so Hanrahan wants to leave the land in even better shape for the next generation.

"I also think the conservation improvements give me a chance to make connections off the farm, with people who may not be familiar with what we do out here," Hanrahan said.

THE FARMER'S VOICE

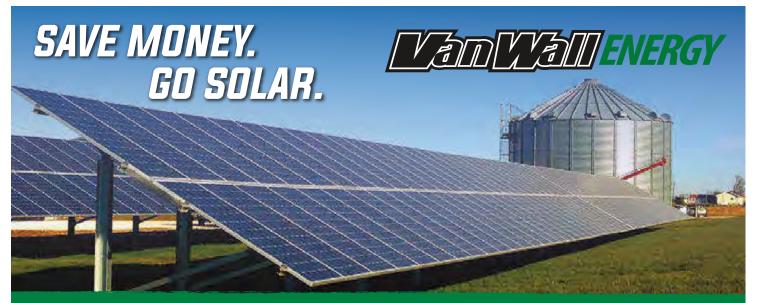
About a decade ago, Hanrahan started looking off the farm for ways to give back to the people and organizations that had helped him along the way.

"A lot of guys my age are busy maintaining the farm, but also going to kids" events and taking care of their family," Hanrahan said. "I don't have that, so I feel like I have a responsibility to help in other ways."

He is a 2013 graduate of the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation (IFBF) Ag Leaders program. Hanrahan said that experience not only gave him a lot of tools to be an advocate and promoter of farm life, but sparked a real passion



A calf takes its first steps on Dan Hanrahan's farm, located in Madison County. PHOTO / CONRAD SCHMIDT



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for understanding and affecting state and federal policy related to farming.

Since then, he has volunteered time to not only IFBF, but also the Iowa Cattlemen's Association and the Iowa Beef Industry Council (IBIC) which oversees the state beef checkoff funds.

BEEF CHECKOFF

This year, Hanrahan is chair of IBIC, a role he said has really opened his eyes to the practical aspects of promoting ag products to a wide audience.

"Farmers and ranchers are still a trusted source of information," Hanrahan said. "The beef checkoff gives us the chance to translate everyday experiences on the farm to demand for our products."

Checkoff funds can only be used for research and promotional purposes, so Hanrahan had to change focus from his policy work.

"It's actually been great learning about the promotion side of the beef industry and being involved in that process," he said. "As the population moves further from the farm, it's vital that we offer them our perspective."

From his yard, Hanrahan can see downtown Des Moines, and his farm is less than 15 minutes from Mills Civic Parkway in West Des Moines by truck. This gives him a front row seat to urban creep and the continued separation of farmers from city folk.

PERSONAL CONNECTIONS

"I've found that shared values can help in making emotional connections between people," he explained. "People interact with you in a different way after you share a really personal story."

To that end, in 2014 Hanrahan started "True Stories and Tall Tales," a personal blog which records his experiences and thoughts on farm life.

"I guess I see it as a way to hold onto things that are really important to me," he said. "Through writing I can flesh out these experiences and share them with others."

On the blog he not only reports on conservation efforts and multiple generations of his cattle herd, but he also addresses less talked about topics like mental health and changing relationship and family dynamics.

"I try to remind folks that mental health is health, and that we can all benefit from paying attention to that part of our life," Hanrahan said. "Sometimes I think people wonder if their problems amount to enough to talk to someone else about. Even though I might not know what someone else is working through, I know them and the people they care about amount to more than enough."

But at the end of the day, Hanrahan said his favorite part of being a farmer is seeing his animals grow up strong and healthy. In February, Hanrahan was midway through calving and took a lot of pride in showing off new calves to farm visitors.

"It's nice to watch a calf grow up," he said. "I'm proud and humbled to do this job."

TRANSFORMING LIVES: BACON BUDDIES EXPANDS TO COUNTY FAIRS ACROSS IOWA

By Darcy Maulsby

s a long-time Special Olympics competitor, Abbie Kliegl knows a thing or two about the importance of practice, staying positive and doing your best. There were some things, however, that she could only experience from a distance.

"When Abbie's brother and sister were in 4-H in Madison County, Abbie stood outside the show ring and watched while they exhibited livestock at the fair," said John Kliegl, Abbie's father, who is also president and CEO of Special Olympics Iowa. "Abbie didn't get to experience the camaraderie and socialization that occurs when kids get their livestock ready for the show ring."

That's why Kliegl is a strong supporter of Bacon Buddies. These unique livestock shows are designed to give people with disabilities the opportunity to work with a pig in the showring.

After holding three successful Bacon Buddies swine shows at the Iowa State Fair in 2019, 2021 and 2022, the Iowa Pork Producers Association (IPPA) is encouraging lowans across the state to organize their own local Bacon Buddies shows at county fairs and other local livestock shows. Bacon Buddies participants experience acceptance by working with 4-H and FFA mentors. They also get the opportunity to talk with a livestock judge in a public setting and experience the thrill of earning a blue ribbon for their efforts.

"Bacon Buddies gives all the athletes the same feeling of confidence and accomplishment that the FFA and 4-H livestock exhibitors feel," said Joyce Hoppes, consumer information director for the lowa Pork Producers Association (IPPA), which is supporting Bacon Buddies statewide. "It's a great experience for everyone involved."

EARLHAM TEEN BROUGHT IDEA TO IOWA

The idea for Bacon Buddies took root about five years ago after Kylee Brown, a 4-H and FFA member from Earlham, attended the Wisconsin State Fair. Brown was inspired by the All For One show, where people with disabilities gain real-life experience showing livestock.

"After seeing the smiles on the participants' faces and the tears of joy in the audience. I knew immediately I wanted to bring something like this to Iowa," said Brown, who has enjoyed showing livestock, especially pigs.

She pitched the concept to lowa's pork industry leaders, who embraced the idea and helped make it a reality at the 2019 Iowa State Fair. Bacon Buddies participants met with their mentors (4-H and FFA livestock exhibitors) about an hour before the show to familiarize themselves with "their" pig and learn some pointers about how to show the pig. Then they headed into the showring to interact with the judge.

"We had so many 4-H and FFA students who wanted to serve as Bacon Buddies mentors in 2019 that we couldn't use them all," said Dr. Jodi Sterle, an Iowa State University animal science professor who serves as the swine show superintendent at the Iowa State Fair.

The Bacon Buddies show remains a highlight of the Iowa State Fair, plus counties across lowa are coordinating their own Bacon Buddies shows. The Madison County Fair hosted its first Bacon Buddies show in 2022, with 12 participants ranging in age from 6 to 30. SEE BUDDIES ON PAGE 5A



A Bacon Buddies winner shows off his ribbon at the lowa State last Fair vear. The unique livestock shows are designed to give people with disabilities the opportunity to work with a pig in the showring. This year it is being expanded from a state fair event, to include shows at the county level. SUBMITTED PHOTO



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BUDDIES

FROM PAGE 5A

"The show was excellent," said Brown, 20, a Buena Vista University junior who is majoring in pre-law, with an emphasis in ag law. "I can't wait to see Bacon Buddies develop across Iowa."

HOW TO GET INVOLVED



Jackson Sterle, an ISU sophomore who is majoring in animal science and international agriculture, judged the Bacon Buddies event at the Boone County Fair in 2021.

"That was one of the most fun things I've ever done," Sterle said. "It was so gratifying to serve others, and I was happy to introduce more people to the industry I care so much about. My Bacon Buddies have inspired me with their determination to try something new and work to get a job done, no matter your personal obstacles."

A group of Boone County 4-H swine exhibitors turned Bacon Buddies into their service project and added a fundraising component.

"That took it to a whole new level," Jodi Sterle said. "I believe they raised more than \$2,000 to donate to Special Olympics. Talk about a win-win!"

What happens in the showring isn't the main event, added IPPA President Trish Cook.

"Rather, it's the connections, friendships and memories built as participants prepare for the show. Bacon Buddies honors the pork industry's We Care principles of caring for people and for our communities," Cook said.

To encourage more Bacon Buddies shows, IPPA has established "Bucks for Bacon Buddies." IPPA will provide up to \$500 for groups that plan and host these events. The money can be used for event signage, T-shirts, awards, advertising and more.

Details are available at www.iowapork. org/bacon-buddies/. Click on the Plan Your Own button for tips on getting started and guidelines for applying for funding.

"I'm so excited that more counties across lowa are offering Bacon Buddies," Brown said. "The more people we can include, the better."

Maulsby is a freelance writer from Lake City.

LITTER SIZE OF PIGS ON STEADY INCREASE

By Doug Schmitz

Although the specific trend may vary for different lines in different genetic companies, current trends in litter size for maternal lines of pigs has seen a steady increase.

That's due to the introduction in 2000 of litter size into the selection index for several maternal lines, said Juan Steibel, Iowa State University (ISU) professor of animal science, and Lush Endowed Chair of animal breeding and genetics.

"Currently, there is broad recognition from pig breeders that to sustain this trend, more emphasis should be put on other maternal traits, such as the number of functional teats, and to consider using piglets weaned instead of the number of born alive in selection indexes," he said.

Depending on the population, average litter size has improved by about 0.2 to 0.3 piglets per year over the past decade – and most of that is the result of genetic selection, said Jack Dekkers, ISU distinguished professor of animal science.

"While the general thinking several decades ago was that litter size was difficult to select because it has low heritability (only approximately 10%), the differences in litter size between sows are due to genetics, the current use of genomics in advanced breeding programs, combined with advanced statistical methods, have allowed effective genetic improvement for even these lowly-heritable traits," he said.

But Stiebel said in his opinion, the biological limit does not matter.

"What matters is how we envision the production system, and what would be an acceptable range of piglets per litter, considering all the other implications that come with that," he said. "From my talks to colleagues in genetic companies, I think that the focus now is not so much on increasing the total of pigs born per litter, but on increasing piglet survival and growth (reducing mortality and morbidity in weaned pigs), and on increasing sow lifetime productivity (increasing number of litters per sow), given the current litter sizes, which are already of acceptably large sizes," he added.

Dekkers said, "Obviously, litter size cannot increase indefinitely, but what the limit will be is impossible to predict," he said. "At present, however, there's no indication that current rates of improvement are going to slow down in the near future.

"However, selection for litter size should not be the sole goal," he added. "We also

SEE LITTER SIZE ON PAGE 11A

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ISU FEED MILL NEARS COMPLEX COMPLETION

By Darcy Maulsby

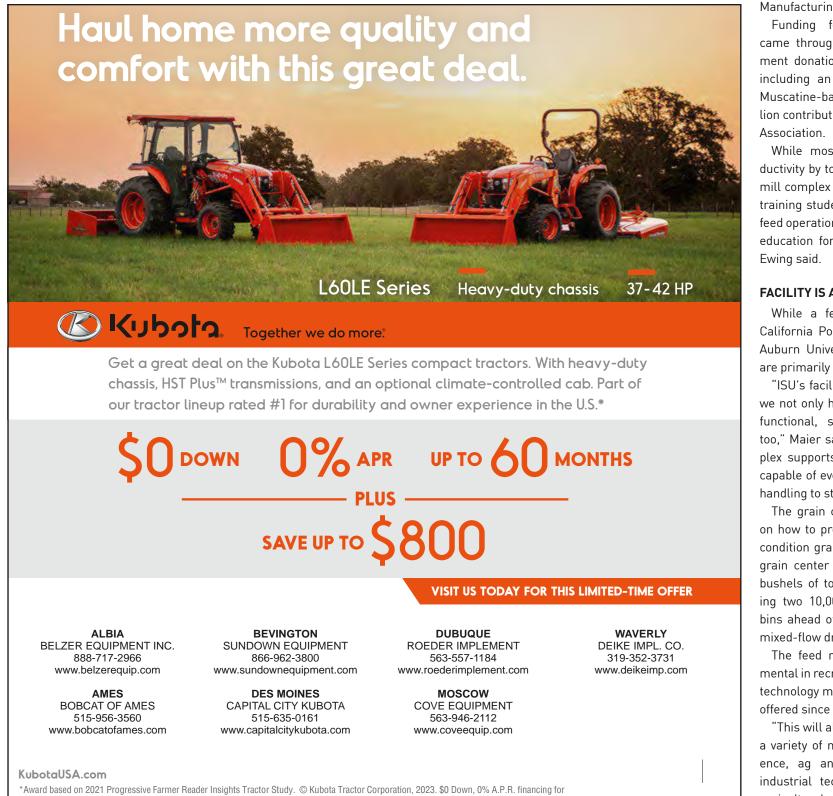
f you've driven along the southwest side of Ames in the past few years, you've probably noticed a large, new feed mill taking shape on the south side of Highway 30. This is the Iowa State University (ISU) Kent Feed Mill and Grain Science Complex, and project leaders expect to be turning tonnage by June 2023.

"Central Iowa is a Midwestern ag hub, and it's long overdue for a complex like this," said Dirk Maier, director of the complex and an ISU professor of agricultural and biosystems engineering. "We're excited this facility is finally coming to fruition."

The feed mill will produce an estimated 4,000 to 6,000 tons of feed per year for teaching, training and research purposes, as well as for maintenance diets for animals at ISU's Research and Demonstra-



Iowa State University (ISU) Kent Feed Mill and Grain Science Complex, as seen from overhead. The facility is expected to be operational by June. While the ISU complex is geared towards the needs of ISU students, it will also provide a unique venue for short courses, workshops and other training for ag industry professionals. SUBMITTED PHOTO



tion Farms. The remainder of the mill's 30,000-ton-per-year capacity will focus on specialized, commercial feed volumes.

"Sometimes the private sector isn't willing or able to produce multiple 1-ton batches of specialized feeds, and we can help fill that gap," said Anthony Ewing, associate director and operations manager of the Iowa State University Kent Feed Mill and Grain Science Complex.

At the heart of the complex is the 100foot concrete mill tower that was slipformed in late August 2021 by Ames-based Todd & Sargent. The 47,000-square-foot complex also includes a 40-foot concrete pelleting plant, analytical laboratory, ingredient warehouse, education building with a 50-person classroom, and 200,000 bushels of grain storage, with handling and drying equipment donated by Sukup Manufacturing Co. in Sheffield.

Funding for the \$30-million-facility came through financial gifts and equipment donations by suppliers nationwide, including an \$8 million contribution by Muscatine-based Kent Corp., and a \$4 million contribution by the Iowa Corn Growers Association.

While most feed mills measure productivity by tons of feed output, ISU's feed mill complex is focused on people. "We're training students for careers in grain and feed operations and will provide continuing education for ag industry professionals," Ewing said.

FACILITY IS A 'CROWN JEWEL' AT ISU

While a few other universities (from California Polytechnic State University to Auburn University) have feed mills, they are primarily focused on research.

"ISU's facility is a crown jewel, because we not only have the feed mill, but a fully functional, self-contained grain center, too," Maier said. "The grain storage complex supports the feed mill, but it's also capable of everything from grain drying to handling to storage."

The grain center will educate students on how to properly dry, store, aerate and condition grain. Sukup donated the entire grain center consisting of about 200,000 bushels of total storage capacity, including two 10,000-bushel wet corn holding bins ahead of the 2,000-bushel-per-hour, mixed-flow dryer.

The feed mill complex will be instrumental in recruiting students for ISU's feed technology minor, which the university has offered since the fall of 2019.

"This will allow us to help students from a variety of majors, including animal science, ag and bio-engineering, ag and industrial technology, agribusiness, and agricultural education, take advantage of feed technology and safety classes," Ewing said. "Students are excited about these

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SEE FEED MILL ON PAGE 7A

HAY PRICES VARIABLE ACROSS IOWA THIS SPRING

By Steve Mever oisture levels have varied across the state of Iowa from adequate to extreme drought in the past two years. Mirroring those extremes is the availability of hay across the state with the northeast corner of the state having good supplies while the southwest corner appears to have a fraction of the hay usually on hand.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Hay Stocks report from Dec. 1, 2022 estimated all hay stored on Iowa farms at 2.48 million tons, down 21% from Dec. 1, 2021. All hay stored on United States farms totaled 71.9 million tons, which is the lowest Dec. 1 hay stocks since 1954, and was down 9% from Dec. 1, 2021.

Carl Shirk at Fort Atkinson Hay Auction in northeast lowa reports good supply.

"In our area, we weren't really in that drought and we had pretty good production and we've had some good runs on sales. Prices have stayed pretty even with round bale prices at \$130-\$150 per ton," Shirk says.

FEED MILL

FROM PAGE 6

new opportunities, which will prepare them for internships and full-time employment much more effectively."

Operating modern feed mills is a far cry from running the feed mills 50 or 60 years ago. "Back then, everything was run by hand and was pretty straightforward," Ewing said. "With modern technology, you might need only one person to produce more than 100 tons per hour."

The ISU complex will source corn and soybeans from area grain elevators to make feed for a variety of livestock species. "We'll produce everything but pet feed and aquaculture feed, at least in the beginning," Maier said.

Students will get to work with the new pilot plant located in the Iowa Corn Education Building. This consists of a 1-ton pellet mill, three mixers, a micro-batching system, a small-scale roller mill, hammermill and more.

"When I worked in the industry, I always wanted to try some different things, but we had a 60-ton pellet mill and couldn't do it," Ewing said. "ISU's pilot plant offers options and isn't intimidating for students to operate."

While the ISU complex is geared towards the needs of ISU students, it will also provide a unique venue for short courses, workshops and other training for ag industry professionals. In addition, ISU looks forward to hosting international visitors at the facility. "Iowa agriculture depends on connections to the wider world and international buyers," Maier said. "We're very grateful for how supportive the ag industry has been in getting this facility built."

Maulsby is a freelance writer from Lake City.



He says the first crop was decent and second crop was even heavier. Quality is generally good, but he does say there is not very much premium hay. Some producers in his area that are usually buying this time of year are selling off excess hay.

Shirk says a lot of hay is going to buyers in South Dakota, where the drought has been extreme.

Paul McGill at the Rock Valley Hay Auction in northwest lowa, where drought conditions were the worst in the state, says their yields were short and they have been getting hay

out of northeast South Dakota, west-central half grinding hay and half good enough to go Minnesota and North Dakota to make up the difference.

"Local producers have been able to keep a couple weeks supply ahead which really helps prevent panic buying," says McGill.

He says they started hay season with hay that was pretty good quality, which is normal in a dry year, but now some of the hay they are getting from out of state may not be the best quality.

In southwest lowa, the situation is quite different. The Creston Livestock Auction has hay sales twice a month in the fall and winter.

they would sell 400-600 big round bales per auction. This year they are down to 50 to 150. Local hay producers are reporting lower

yields and the hay they are getting is about

in the bale ring.

Frey attributes their lower numbers to several things, with dry conditions and lower yields being primary factors, adding that producers either sold their hay right out of the field or they just don't have it or they are worried about another bad year so they are hanging on to the hay they do have.

He also says high commodity prices have caused a lot of hay fields to get planted to corn and beans. They have been getting \$130-\$160 per bale of grass hay and a little more for prime alfalfa hay.

"The thing that has surprised me this year Cody Frey says that the last couple years is corn stalk bales. We aren't getting many. In a normal year we would sell 50 to 100 per auction," Frey notes.

Meyer is a freelance writer from Garrison.



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DDG AVAILABILITY FLUCTUATES BY LOCAL ETHANOL PLANT

By Doug Schmitz

hile lowa farmers have reported their local ethanol plants running low on dried distillers grains (DDGs), coupled with other high feed costs the last couple years, an lowa State University (ISU) agricultural economist said current availability is likely fluctuating by plant.

"Several plants have looked to lower costs on distillers grains production by marketing more modified or wet distillers grains, saving the drying costs, while still capturing most of the value," said Chad Hart, ISU professor of agricultural economics.

"The plants that have been successful in doing that are reducing their dried distillers grains production, leaving those producers who can only handle DDGs with limited availability," he added. "Or, to put it another way, the feed is there, but it is in a



FILE PHOTO

different form that may fit some producers better than others."

At the moment, U.S. ethanol plants can produce more than 35 million tons of distillers grains per year, said Kurt Rosentrater, ISU associate professor of agricultural engineering.

"About 55% of this is dry (DDGs or DDG), while the remaining 45% is in wet form (DWG or modified DWG)," he said. "Plants will normally produce distillers grains 24/7 for most of the year, although there will be periodic downtime for maintenance, cleaning and sanitation."

During the COVID-19 lockdown (April/ May 2020), he said more than half the plants were closed, which really reduced the availability of distillers grains.

"At the moment, plants in Iowa and the U.S. are mostly operating," he said. "It should be noted that extreme weather conditions in December did lead to some plants temporarily closing or reducing operations, which has led to about 5% less distillers production, compared to previous months."

Katherine Balk, vice president of human resources at Homeland Energy Solutions in Lawler, said, "We were fortunate to have a good crop in northeast lowa as we are not experiencing any shortage of feed stock at this time."

Don Burns, commodity specialist at Absolute Energy in St. Ansgar, said DDGs supplies are relative to corn supplies in areas where the corn crop was shorter.

"So are the DDGs," he added. "Iowa is moving DDGs into the southwest and western markets, filling the feed needs of those markets."

On expectations for 2023, Hart said, "We should expect feed prices to remain high through the first half to two-thirds of the year, as crop/feed supplies will be tight.

"If the crop production estimates are close to right this fall (with corn topping 15 billion bushels and soybeans approaching 4.8 billion bushels)," he said, "then feed costs should fall with the harvest, offering livestock producers a reprieve from the higher feed costs of the past couple of years."

Balk said, "Current pricing is average for DDGs, and we expect this to continue through the balance of this crop year."

Burn said the relationship of DDG prices relative to other feed costs depends on the basis level plants are paying for corn.

"Corn basis levels west of I-35 out to the Dakotas are running 50 cents higher than normal, so feed prices will remain higher in that trade area," he said.

Rosentrater said, "Unfortunately, there are many things happening internationally that are leading to higher feed prices, and increased uncertainties for both 2023 and beyond: trade disruptions in Ukraine are still ongoing; trade challenges with China may become more complicated due to balloons; and now we have the devastation in Turkey and Syria.

"International events have a huge impact on the flow of food and grain products around the world," he added. "These ripple all the way back to lowa and will impact ingredient availabilities and prices. One good item of note is that interest rates appear to be ticking downward, but time will tell if that continues."

As for the outlook beyond 2023, Balk said, "The demands for proteins continue to increase as people across the world improve their diets, which, in turn, depends on the animals they eat, and their diets."

Burns said, "With the increased demand for vegetable oil, more soybean plants are expanding and being built, putting more soybean meal into the marketplace, which will lower the cost of high protein meals and feeds as those plants come on stream."

As a result, Hart said those lower feed costs would extend into 2024.

"Beyond that, the feed outlook depends on weather patterns (influencing crop/feed supplies), and the likely expansion of the cattle herd (impacting feed demand, the faster the cattle herd expands, the more likely feed costs increase)."

Schmitz is a freelance writer from Cedar Rapids.

Nicely done, beef. If you're not for dinner, we're not eating till breakfast.

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BEE

IT'S WHAT'S FOR DINNER!

LIVESTOCK DRUG LAWS SET TO CHANGE IN JUNE

By Terri Queck-Matzie

eginning June 11, livestock producers will need a veterinarian's prescription to administer certain drugs, that used to be available over the counter, to their animals. A prescription will be required regardless of the species receiving treatment.

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Guidance for Industry (GFI) #263 is part of an ongoing effort to combat antimicrobial resistance, a growing concern in both livestock and humans.

The new regulations are a continuation of an effort that began in 2017 with the Veterinary Feed Directive, which eliminated the use of antibiotics for growth enhancement, and required a veterinarian prescription for certain drugs administered in feed and water.

The new rule addresses additional medication forms such as injectables, intramammary tubes and boluses.

Instead of buying such drugs over the counter (OTC) at the local farm supply store or online, the producer will need to get them from their vet or authorized distributor on a by-prescription basis.

Grant Dewell, associate professor of vet diagnostic and production animal medicine at Iowa State University, says the change shouldn't result in major changes for livestock producers who have a veterinarian-client-patient relationship, or VCPR.

With a VCPR, a veterinarian assumes responsibility for making medical judgments and prescribing treatment with sufficient knowledge of the animal(s) to initiate at least a general diagnosis through knowledge of the care and keeping of the animals, the client agrees to follow the vet's instructions, and the vet is available for follow-up.

"There is a small number of producers out there who do not have a relationship with a vet who will have to make that change," says Dewell. "But for most, it will be just one more step when treating sick stock."

Dewell explains that, just like in human medicine, there are basically two types of prescriptions - those for chronic problems that require an ongoing prescription renewed annually and those that are used to treat acute problems that require a onetime course of treatment.

"For many issues, the producer will have the needed medication on hand, according to their established treatment program with their vet," says Dewell. Under current rules, a prescription is valid for 6 months. The veterinarian would need to be consulted to obtain another prescription. "So, if you're getting calves in and expect respiratory problems, or 20 cases of pink eye, the appropriate meds can be prescribed accordingly. The vet can be consulted ahead of time and a treatment regime established. If you have one case of footrot, that will require a prescription just for

that."

For many producers, the significant change will be in where they purchase medications.

Dewell says it is unlikely farm supply stores will find it cost effective to keep a pharmacist on staff to handle veterinary prescriptions, but that remains to be seen. It is not known if the changes will affect antibiotic prices.

In a recent statement, Mike Lormore, head of U.S. cattle and pork technical services for Zoetis, said: "Zoetis is working with veterinarians and producers in this time of change to help ensure continued access to the company's animal health products. We have long been committed to working with veterinarians and livestock producers to help them establish VCPRs that put the animal's best interests at the

Farm Bureau

center of the conversation. Now more than ever, it is important to ensure that a VCPR is in place, and revising treatment protocols and where products are available will be keys to success."

Producers will begin seeing a new label on their livestock medications in the next few months that reads, "Caution: Federal law restricts this drug to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian."

After June 11, products entering distribution channels will be labeled as prescription products. FDA intends to allow existing inventory of OTC-labeled products that may already be in distribution channels to deplete.

In the meantime, as relabeled drugs begin to appear, any product displaying the revised label can only be sold or dispensed on a veterinary prescription, even if the transaction takes place before the June 11 deadline

Dewell warns against producers tempted to stockpile medications prior to the new rules.

"They will just expire, and then when administered will not give an effective response," he says. "The drugs are not going away; it will just require an extra step to get them."

Producers will want to consult with their veterinarian and have a VCPR in place for access to antimicrobial products as well as a plan to address the need for a vet visit for animal health issues.

A complete list of affected products is available online at: https://bit.ly/3kF26sF.

Queck-Matzie is a freelance writer from Greenfield.

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MEYER NAMED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR PLMA

By Bob Bioin

im Meyer has been named chief executive officer of Producers Livestock Marketing Association (PLMA), Omaha, succeeding Rick Keith, who retired on Feb. 20.

Meyer, of Harlan, was promoted after

serving as vice-president of credit at PLMA for the past 10 years.

"I am humbled and grateful for the opportunity to lead Producers Livestock Marketing Association as its next president and CEO," Meyer said. "I look for-



ward to working with our staff members in the marketing, commodity and credit divisions to continue providing the best service possible in 2023 and for many years to come."

Dave Lamb, president of the PLMA board of directors, said Mever is uniquely qualified for the position, having a strong finance and credit background in addition to being a cattleman himself.

"Meyer is prepared to lead PLMA to address the opportunities that it has going forward," Lamb said.

PRODUCERS LIVESTOCK SERVICES

PLMA, with offices in Omaha and Sioux City, has been assisting independent producers market their livestock for more than 85 years across the upper Midwest.

PLMA also offers commodities trading and hedging and loans and credit facilities to independent producers and processors.

"We have marketing staff with years of experience, expertise and market relationships to provide our customers with marketing opportunities they will struggle to find on their own or with other firms," Meyer said.

"Our commodity office features the very popular hedge contract that takes margin call pressure off of producers, and our credit staff continues to provide a diversified menu of credit tools to assist producers of all sizes with financing their livestock."

Meyer's vision is to build on PLMA's already outstanding reputation, striving to deliver marketing products and services that offer additional value to customers.

"Our leadership team is currently exploring numerous ideas for business growth and hope to bring some of those to fruition later in 2023 and in 2024," he said.

The livestock feeding industry fea-

tures some of the most resilient produc-

ers involved in agriculture, Meyer said.

INDUSTRY CHALLENGES

two decades such as BSE, also known as mad cow disease, in 2003 or the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 that shuttered numerous packing facilities, impacting supply chains across the country.

numerous market challenges over the last

"Many challenges lie ahead for those dedicated to livestock production, but I have great confidence in all involved to find a path to success," said Meyer.

The ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) issues continue to place challenges on producers regarding how their livestock are raised, Meyer added.

The beef and pork processing industry has consolidated to levels where market transparency has been compromised and the ever-increasing costs of production make profit opportunities for independent producers very limited, he said.

"Not to mention the noise made by those in support of alternative, plant-based protein products that will never be able to replace the high-quality beef and pork products our customers provide consumers every day," said Meyer.

The local, state and national livestock industry organizations are doing an excellent job representing producers, Meyer noted, and continued support for those organizations is paramount so producer concerns are heard and acted upon.

As of today, numerous legislative bills have been drafted and introduced to increase market transparency and address the lack of competition in the marketplace, with limited success.

"I believe most all livestock producers hope that the industry could resolve these issues without government intervention." Meyer said. "However, the future of independent livestock production does rely on finding solutions sooner rather than later, so a great deal of work remains for our industry leaders with or without government intervention."

FAMILY

Meyer and his wife, Sandy, a middle school science teacher with the Harlan Community Schools, are the parents of daughters Melissa (Jared) Moores of Woodbine; Brooke (Adam) Gau of Treynor; Morgan (fiancé Joey Miller) of Des Moines; Taylor (Michael) Bos of Springfield, Neb.; and Jilian (Travis) McMillan of Salt Lake City, Utah; and six grandchildren.

Meyer has been a board member with the National Livestock Producers Association (NLPA) since 2013, the NLPA representative on the United States Roundtable for Sustainable Beef since 2021, and was an executive board member with the lowa Cattlemen's Association from 2019-2021.

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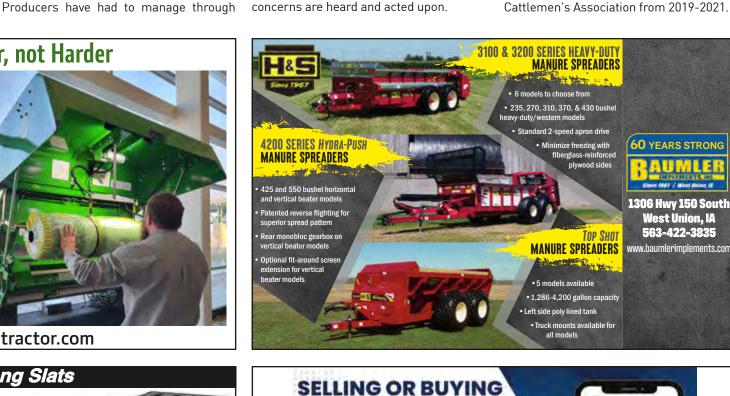
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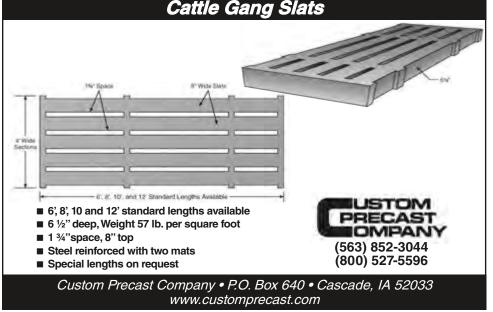
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LITTER SIZE

FROM PAGE 5

need to ensure that most of the piglets born are born alive, and are viable to go on to become market pigs."

He said, "This requires close attention to traits such as piglets born alive, the ability of sows to raise these larger litters, resulting in reduced mortality prior (to) weaning and adequate weaning weights, as well as the ability of sows to produce and raise large litters for multiple parities.

"Current modern breeding programs are continuously monitoring these other traits and combine selection for litter size with selection for these traits."

Michael Langemeier, Purdue University professor of agricultural economics, said in his Feb. 3 FarmDoc Daily article that production performance, measured using pigs per litter, has been particularly strong in the last few years.

Steibel said, "It is recognized by most pig breeders – especially by those in genetic companies – that litter size (number of born alive or total number born) has been included in the selection indexes of pig maternal lines for the past 20 years.

"Current genetic evaluations rely on analyzing large datasets that include: extensive and accurate phenotypic records, large pedigrees and genomic information," he added. "All this results in very effective selection for whatever trait is included in the index. In this case, traits related to litter size."

Dekkers said, "The implementation of genomics and advanced statistical methods for genetic evaluation has resulted in more effective selection for litter size."

He said if pigs per sow per year increases, then fewer sows will be needed to produce the same number of pigs for fattening. "The important result of this improvement, however, is that cost per pig produced will decrease, as the cost of the sow is spread over a larger number of piglets," he said. "This will ultimately result in lower pork prices for consumers, with potential impacts of the total size of the market for pork.

"The net effect of these two counteracting effects (fewer sows needed to produce a given number of pigs and increased demand for pork) on the overall number of sows needed is, therefore, hard to predict," he added. "Regardless, we shouldn't sacrifice potential increases in efficiency of pork production (lower cost price) in order to try to maintain the number of sows needed."

Steibel said management and selection have both played a key role in improving performance at the whole system level for pigs, and for other species.

"From the genetic improvement side, the adoption of genotyping technologies and the ability to measure new traits such as feed intake has definitely resulted in great improvements of the genetic merit for economically important traits in maternal and terminal pig lines."

Schmitz is a freelance writer from Cedar Rapids.

HOLDING ON TIGHT



Drew Bjork of Adel walks his steer through the ring during the annual Iowa Beef Expo Junior Showmanship competition last month. PHOTO /CONRAD SCHMIDT





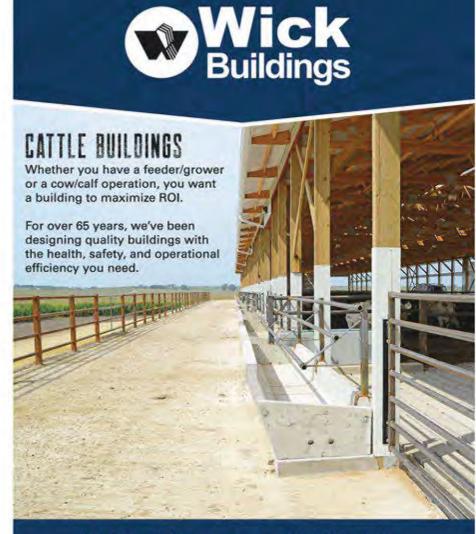




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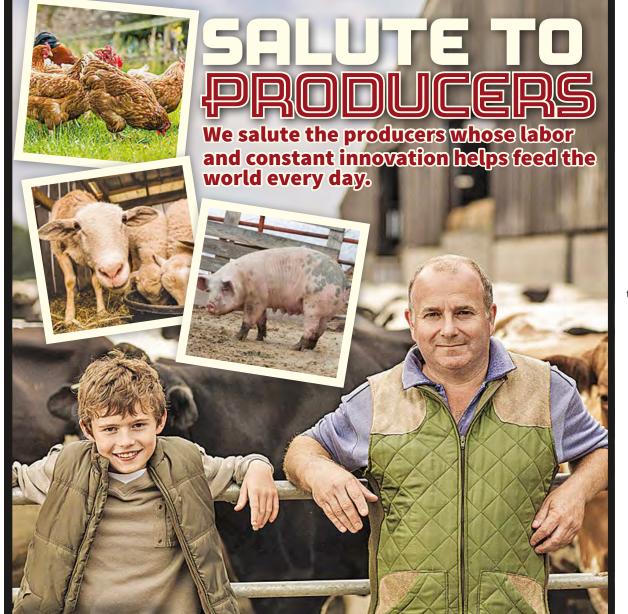
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