



Tennessee Market Highlights

UF Extension

November 27, 2009
Number :46

Livestock Comments by Emmitt L. Rawls

Fed cattle sold last week at \$83 to \$85 in the S. Plains and \$81.50 to \$83 in the North. Dressed sales were mostly \$130 to \$131. Most of the trade was early in the holiday shortened week, but in a limited trade Texas sold cattle for \$85 on Friday. The 5 area prices for last week were \$83.20 live and \$130.79 dressed compared to \$82.78 and \$130.05 the week before. A year ago the live price was \$89.84, with dressed at \$141.23. Cutout values on Friday compared to a week ago were \$141.43 down .37 on the Choice, with Select at \$133.78 +.18. The Choice Select spread was \$7.65 compared to \$6.97 the week before. On the Tennessee auctions last week prices in a very limited trade feeder steers, bulls and heifers were called steady to firm. Cows and bulls were steady to \$2 higher. Cow slaughter for the week ending 11/14 was up 6 percent over a year ago and 9% over the 3 year average. Dairy cow slaughter was up 4.5% and beef cow slaughter was up 7%. We are currently getting cows coming to slaughter from the CWT buyout, but the increase in beef cow slaughter was actually higher that week. It is the normal time of the year for beef cow culling to avoid feeding cows thru the winter that are low or non producers. In any case, the higher level of slaughter points toward fewer cows in 2010 and a smaller calf crop. The most recent fed cattle price projections from the Livestock Marketing Information Center are 1st qtr. \$85 to \$87; 2nd qtr. \$87 to \$91; 3rd qtr. \$83 to \$88; and 4th qtr. \$87 to \$93. Supplies of fed cattle are expected to increase as we move into December and could pressure those prices. Fed cattle supplies continue to be a bit tighter in the S. Plains than the W. Corn Belt which has contributed to \$1 to \$2 higher prices in the South. *Continued on page 2*

Crop comments by Chuck Danehower

Corn and soybeans finished up for the week while cotton and wheat were down. Financial markets as well as the commodity markets were rocked over Thanksgiving as the announcement that Dubai World would ask its creditors for a standstill on paying back its \$60 billion debt until at least May. Dubai World is the investment arm for Dubai, a Persian Gulf city-state and member of the United Arab Emirates. This pushed investors to the safety of the Dollar, causing the Dollar to spike and commodity and equity markets to collapse. Commodity markets did recover somewhat before the close. The impact or possibly non-impact will be most likely felt this next week as market volume returns to pre holiday levels. The U.S. Dollar is weaker for the week at 75.04, down .69. The dollar had traded below 75, but rebounded on the Dubai World news. The Dow Jones Industrial Average closed at 10,310, down 8 points for the week. Crude Oil ended the week down .05 a barrel, closing at 75.04 a barrel.

Corn:

Nearby: December 2009 futures closed at \$3.97 a bushel on Friday, up \$0.06 bushel for the week. Support is at \$3.72 bushel with resistance at \$4.11 bushel. Weekly exports sales were a marketing year high, 64.1 million bushels (48.2 mb 09/10 and 15.9 mb 10/11), above expectations but still below pace to reach USDA's projections. As of November 22, corn harvest is at 68% complete, compared to 54% last week, 87% last year and the five year average of 94%. As of Thanksgiving Day, there were estimated 4.1 billion bushels of un-harvested corn still in the field.

Continued on page 2

Slaughter cows: no trends reported

Slaughter bulls: no trends reported

Feeder steers: no trends reported

Feeder heifers: no trends reported

Fed cattle: 5 area live price of \$83.20 is \$.42 and the dressed price is up \$.74 at \$130.79

Feeder cattle index: Wednesday's index \$93.72

Corn: December 2009 futures closed at \$3.97 a bushel on Friday, up \$0.06 bushel for the week

Soybean: January futures closed at \$10.53 bushel, up \$0.07 bushel from last week

Wheat: December 2009 futures contract closed at \$5.49 bushel, down \$0.11 bushel from last week

Cotton: March 10 futures closed at 73.84 cents/lb. down .20 cents/lb. from last week

Livestock Comments by *Emmit L. Rawls*

The earlier problem with very heavy weight cattle in the North has improved. We do not know where the corn market is going, but covering some of feed needs is one way of managing the risk of higher prices. The market is considering the size of the crop, possible crop damage due to wet conditions and early frost. There could be some surprises when the final crop report comes out in January.

TECHNICALLY SPEAKING: based on Friday's closing prices. December Live Cattle closed at \$83.20. Support is at \$82.98, then \$82.53. Resistance is at \$83.43, then \$83.88. The RSI is 38.13. February cattle closed at \$85.47. Support is at \$85.04, then \$84.32. Resistance is at \$85.77, then \$86.49. The RSI is 44.51. June cattle closed at \$85.02. Support is at \$84.80, then \$84.45. Resistance is at \$85.35, then \$85.50. The RSI is 46.29. January feeder cattle closed at \$92.50. Support is at \$91.95, then \$90.90. Resistance is at \$93.00, then \$94.05. The RSI is 38.63. March feeders closed at \$93.15. Support is at \$92.79, then \$91.87. Resistance is at \$93.72, then \$94.64. The RSI is 35.85.

Crop comments by *Chuck Danehower*

Deferred: The March 2010 futures contract closed at \$4.14 bushel, up \$0.07 a bushel from last week. The September 2010 contract closed at \$4.39, up \$0.09 a bushel for the week. Support is \$4.18 with resistance at \$4.50 bushel. Consider pricing up to 15% of the 2010 crop at current levels. If prices drop to \$4.25, I would add another 5% pricing. Check with your elevator for 2010 pricing.

Cotton:

Nearby: The March 10 futures closed at 73.84 cents/lb. down .20 cents/lb. from last week. Support is at 71.85, resistance at 75.75 cents. Weekly exports sales were 187,500 bales (184,400 bales 09/10 and 3,100 bales 10/11) above expectations. As of November 22, cotton harvest is reported at 72% compared to 60% last week, 73% last year and the five year average of 75%. Speculative fund buying at times has helped push this market up. If funds remain active buyers, then there may be additional upside; however, we may be at a level where buying has started slowing. Keep in contact with your cotton buyer for current quotes on loan equities and or cash prices. Equities for loan cotton were as high as 15 cents earlier in the week ,but on Friday were around 12 cents. The Adjusted World Price for November 27 – December 3 is 57.13 cents/lb.

New Crop: The December 2010 futures contract closed at 76.42 cents/lb., down 1.05 cents/lb. for the week. Support is at 74.93, resistance at 77.85 cents. Equities for 2010 loan cotton were quoted as high as 18 cents during the week ending Friday around 15 cents for the 2010 crop. Consider pricing cotton for 2010, at least a percentage of the crop.

Soybeans:

Nearby: January futures closed at \$10.53 bushel, up \$0.07 bushel from last week. Support is at \$10.08, with resistance at \$10.79 bushel. Weekly exports were 41.7 million bushels, above expectations and above pace to meet the USDA's projection. Chinese demand continues to drive the export market as China has purchased 62% of sales to date. As of November 22, 94% of the crop was harvested compared to 89% last week, 97% last year and the five year average of 97%. As Friday's price action revealed, a down move will most likely be triggered by something unrelated to soybeans. I think that there is more downside risk than upside potential.

Deferred: The March 2010 contract closed at \$10.59 bushel on Friday, up \$0.09 bushel from last week. The November 2010 contract closed at \$10.48 bushel, up \$0.26 bushel for the week. Support is at \$10.09 with resistance at \$10.67 bushel. Consider pricing up to 10% of the 2010 soybean crop at current levels. If prices drop back to \$10.09, add another 5%, otherwise, watch the market.

Wheat:

Nearby: The December 2009 futures contract closed at \$5.49 bushel, down \$0.11 bushel from last week. Weekly exports were 14.5 million bushels (12.9 mb 09/10 and 1.6 mb 10/11), below expectations and still below pace to meet the USDA's export projection.

New Crop: The July 2010 futures closed at \$5.93 bushel, down \$0.10 bushel from last week. Support is at \$5.67 bushel with resistance at \$6.08 bushel. As of November 22, 93% of the winter wheat has been planted compared to 90% last week, 98% last year and the five year average of 97%. Emergence is 84% compared to 77% last week, 91% last year, and the five year average of 90%. As of November 22, the crop condition ratings for wheat were 64% in the good to excellent rating compared to 64% the previous week and 65% a year ago. Depending on your wheat crop condition, consider pricing up to 20% of the 2010 wheat crop at current levels.

PRICES ON 11 TENNESSEE REPORTED LIVESTOCK AUCTIONS (\$/cwt)

November 27, 2009

	This Week Low	This Week High	This Week Weighted Average	Last Week Weighted Average	Year Ago Weighted Average
<u>Steers: Medium/Large Frame #1-2</u>					
300-400 lbs.	----	----	----	106.36	----
400-500 lbs.	----	----	----	96.75	----
500-600 lbs.	----	----	----	86.80	----
600-700 lbs.	----	----	----	81.93	----
700-800 lbs	----	----	----	78.61	----
<u>Steers: Small Frame #1-2</u>					
300-400 lbs.	----	----	----	91.05	----
400-500 lbs.	----	----	----	88.13	----
500-600 lbs.	----	----	----	76.91	----
600-700 lbs.	----	----	----	72.27	----
<u>Steers: Medium/Large Frame #3</u>					
300-400 lbs.	----	----	----	96.38	----
400-500 lbs.	----	----	----	87.56	----
500-600 lbs.	----	----	----	79.54	----
600-700 lbs.	----	----	----	74.68	----
700-800 lbs.	----	----	----	72.48	----
<u>Holstein Steer</u>					
300-400 lbs.	----	----	----	69.00	----
500-600 lbs.	----	----	----	51.00	----
700-800 lbs.	----	----	----	----	----
<u>Slaughter Cows</u>					
Breaking Utility	----	----	0.00	----	----
Cutter & Boning	----	----	0.00	----	----
Canner	----	----	0.00	----	----
Bull YG 1-2	----	----	0.00	----	----
<u>Heifers: Medium/Large Frame #1-2</u>					
300-400 lbs.	----	----	----	86.34	----
400-500 lbs.	----	----	----	80.58	----
500-600 lbs.	----	----	----	76.44	----
600-700 lbs.	----	----	----	72.60	----
<u>Heifers: Small Frame #1</u>					
300-400 lbs.	----	----	----	74.87	----
400-500 lbs.	----	----	----	68.01	----
500-600 lbs.	----	----	----	67.31	----
600-700 lbs.	----	----	----	64.49	----
<u>Heifers: Medium/Large Frame #3</u>					
300-400 lbs.	----	----	----	80.14	----
400-500 lbs.	----	----	----	74.31	----
500-600 lbs	----	----	----	70.28	----
600-700 lbs.	----	----	----	68.66	----

Cattle Receipts: This week: not reported

Week ago: not reported

Year ago: not reported

Average Daily Slaughter (number of head)

	This week (4 days)	Last week (4 days)	Year ago (4 days)	This week as percentage of	
				Week ago (%)	Year ago (%)
Hogs	-----	-----	-----	??	??
Cattle	-----	-----	-----	??	??

USDA Box Beef Cutout Value (\$/cwt)

	Thursday	Week ago	Year ago	Change from week ago	Change from year ago
Choice 1 - 3					
600-900 #	141.43	139.61	-----	1.82	141.43
Select 1 - 3					
600-990 #	133.78	132.07	-----	1.71	133.78

PRICES PAID TO FARMERS BY ELEVATORS (\$ / bushel)**Friday, November 20, 2009 - Thursday, November 26, 2009**

	Fri.		Mon.		Tues.		Wed.		Thurs.		Thurs. Harvest	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
No. 2 Yellow Soybeans												
Memphis	10.42-10.43		10.38-10.39		10.43-10.43		10.42-10.54		-----		-----	
N.W. B.P.	10.37-10.38		10.32-10.33		10.30-10.32		-----		-----		-----	
N.W. TN.	9.78-10.01		9.94-9.97		9.89-10.01		-----		-----		-----	
S.W. TN.	-----		-----		-----		-----		-----		-----	
Upper Md.	10.21-10.26		10.16-10.22		10.11-10.26		-----		-----		-----	
Lower Md.	10.11-10.16		10.07-10.22		10.10-10.26		-----		-----		-----	
Yellow Corn												
Memphis	3.86-3.93		3.82-3.89		3.71-3.75		3.87-3.92		-----		-----	
N.W. B.P.	3.76-3.83		3.72-3.81		3.60-3.68		-----		-----		-----	
N.W. TN.	3.71-3.91		3.67-3.87		3.56-3.76		-----		-----		-----	
S.W. TN.	-----		-----		-----		-----		-----		-----	
Upper Md.	3.64-3.66		3.62-3.64		3.66-3.76		-----		-----		-----	
Lower Md.	3.71-3.81		3.67-3.87		3.92-3.97		-----		-----		-----	
Wheat												
Memphis	4.59-4.89		4.57-4.87		4.39-4.63		4.56-4.56		-----		-----	
N.W. B.P.	-----		-----		-----		-----		-----		-----	
N.W. TN.	-----		-----		-----		-----		-----		-----	
S.W. TN.	-----		-----		-----		-----		-----		-----	
Upper Md.	-----		-----		-----		-----		-----		-----	
Lower Md.	-----		-----		-----		-----		-----		-----	

Crops & Livestock
Friday, November 20, 2009 - Thursday, November 26, 2009

Commodity	Contract Month	Fri. 20	Mon. 23	Tues. 24	Wed. 25	Thurs. 26
Soybeans (\$/bu)	Jan	10.46	10.42	10.46	10.55	-----
	Mar	10.50	10.48	10.52	10.61	-----
	May	10.50	10.49	10.54	10.64	-----
	Jul	10.53	10.52	10.58	10.69	-----
	Aug	10.49	10.49	10.56	10.67	-----
	Sep	10.32	10.34	10.43	10.58	-----
Corn (\$/bu)	Dec	3.91	3.87	3.76	3.92	-----
	Mar	4.07	4.03	3.92	4.08	-----
	May	4.17	4.13	4.02	4.19	-----
	Jul	4.25	4.21	4.10	4.27	-----
	Sep	4.30	4.27	4.18	4.34	-----
	Dec	4.35	4.34	4.26	4.42	-----
Wheat (\$/bu)	Dec	5.60	5.57	5.33	5.50	-----
	Mar	5.81	5.78	5.53	5.72	-----
	May	5.92	5.91	5.66	5.84	-----
	Jul	6.03	6.00	5.76	5.94	-----
	Sep	6.17	6.14	5.90	6.09	-----
Soybean Meal (\$/ton)	Dec	3.17	316	315	318	-----
	Jan	3.10	309	310	309	-----
	Mar	3.04	304	305	304	-----
	May	3.01	301	303	302	-----
	Jul	3.02	301	304	302	-----
	Aug	3.01	301	304	303	-----
Cotton (¢/lb)	Dec	70.41	70.38	71.52	71.07	-----
	Mar	74.04	74.48	75.52	75.22	-----
	May	75.31	75.40	76.47	76.31	-----
	Jul	76.26	75.96	77.04	76.86	-----
	Oct	77.02	76.56	77.49	77.31	-----
Choice Fed Cattle (\$/cwt)	Dec	83.95	84.05	83.40	83.67	-----
	Feb	85.42	85.82	85.50	85.75	-----
	Apr	88.05	88.37	88.12	88.32	-----
	Jun	85.17	85.10	84.95	85.27	-----
	Aug	85.50	85.55	85.45	85.77	-----
Feeder Cattle (\$/cwt)	Jan	92.67	92.87	93.22	93.30	-----
	Mar	93.57	93.90	94.30	94.27	-----
	Apr	94.92	95.22	95.55	95.70	-----
	May	95.90	96.17	96.27	96.37	-----
	Aug	98.10	98.05	98.25	98.20	-----
Market Hogs (\$/cwt)	Dec	57.60	58.30	58.962	59.42	-----
	Feb	64.37	65.52	66.00	67.65	-----
	Apr	68.75	69.22	69.45	70.65	-----
	May	73.12	73.12	73.25	74.57	-----
	Jun	76.60	76.62	76.57	77.67	-----

Milk Futures, Thursday , November 26, CME Futures

Month	Class III Close	Class IV Close
November	14.08	13.49
December	14.83	13.74
January	14.94	13.85
February	15.08	13.98
March	15.37	13.86

**Nashville, TN Monday Nov 23, 2009 USDA-TN Dept Ag Market News
Tennessee Bred & Pairs Replacement****11/20/09 Sweetwater-Replacement Sale
Receipts: 156**

Bred Cows: Med & Lg 1
2-4 years old 950-1100 lbs 7-8 months bred 900.00-1000.00/head.
2-4 years old 1190-1340 lbs 7-8 months bred 910.00-1080.00
2-3 years old 900-1000 lbs 5-6 months bred 800.00-930.00
2-3 years old lot 1428 lbs 5-6 months bred 980.000
Med & Lg 2
2-3 years old 790-935 lbs 4-6 months bred 600.00-750.00

11/21/09 Crossville

Cow and Calf Pairs: Med & Lg 1
6-7 years old 1355 lbs with baby calves 780.00/pair
Bred Cows: Med & Lg 1
5-7 years old 1150-1430 lbs 5-8 months bred 710.00-800.00

****The following news summary is from the National Livestock Producers Association**
For more information please go to www.NLPA.org**

Justice Scrutinizing Capper-Volstead Act (Farm Futures, 11/23) -- The Justice Department is reviewing the longstanding anti-trust exemption for farmer cooperatives. The "Capper-Volstead" anti-trust exemption has been around since 1922 allowing farmers to buy fuel and fertilizer more cheaply and market grain at a higher price through elevators. But some, including President Obama's top anti-trust official, now question the continued need for the exemption as co-ops have gotten bigger and include more agribusiness.

Former USDA Deputy Ag Secretary Chuck Conner, now National Council of Farmer Cooperatives president, says Assistant Attorney General Christine Varney spoke about the issue at a Senate Judiciary field hearing in Vermont.

"The assistant attorney general was quoted as saying that Congress might conclude that the Capper-Volstead might not be the right law for the state of the industry at this time," Conner said. "She was also quoted in that same hearing that co-ops may have grown beyond what was imagined when the statute was enacted."

A USDA-University of Wisconsin study shows more than 29,000 U.S. cooperatives generate more than \$654 million in revenues and employ more than two million workers.

Ag Groups: Use Reduced NAIS Funds to Dissolve Program Altogether (Wisconsin Ag Connection, 11/24) -- A 100-group coalition of farm organizations are urging federal lawmakers to dissolve the National Animal Identification System completely. In a letter to Congressional leaders and officials at the USDA, the organizations said they 'look forward to working with USDA to enhance our nation's animal disease preparedness in a manner that builds upon our past successes and respects the interests of

U.S. livestock producers and consumers.'

The letter asks members of the House and Senate to support the limited use of NAIS funding to shut down the program, and to refocus the agency on measures that truly improve animal health and that respect the interests of both livestock owners and consumers. In the 2010 Agriculture Appropriations Bill, Congress reduced NAIS funding to \$5.3 million, but did not specify how those funds were to be allocated.

Federal Concern Over Illegal Drug Residues Should Concern Markets (Livestock Marketing Assn., 11/23) -- Member markets should be aware of USDA's increased concern with, and enforcement actions taken, concerning illegal drug residues in livestock, and especially violations by what USDA calls "repeat offenders."

Federal concern was ratcheted up last spring, when USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) issued a notice to all federally-inspected plants on dealing with "repeat residue violations." The notice directed the plants to come up with a plan that includes preventive measures to deal with the problem. In response to a question from a packer group, FSIS said that when livestock found to have residues come from a market, packers "should seek out additional information, so that the actual source supplier of the violation is identified."

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is particularly concerned with residue violations found in dairy cattle. On November 13, a federal district court issued an injunction against a Maryland man for allegedly selling veal calves containing illegal drug residues. The man had received "numerous oral and written warnings" from both USDA and the Food and Drug Administration, according to news reports. On Nov. 16, a federal judge took similar action against a Maryland dairy farm and its owner, after the owner admitted, during inspections in 2007 and 2009, that he had sold animals for slaughter before drug withdrawal times had expired, resulting in illegal drug residues.

Statement by Bob Stallman, President, American Farm Bureau Federation, Regarding Delay of Climate Change Legislation (American Farm Bureau Federation, 11/19) -- "We applaud the decision by Senate leadership to delay consideration of climate change legislation until the spring of 2010. This move offers a great opportunity for lawmakers to go back to the drawing board and re-assess the need for this legislation and the impact it will have on all Americans.

"Legislation previously approved by the House, and a similar bill approved on a party-line vote by a Senate committee, would impose higher energy and food costs on consumers. The bills also would create an energy deficit due to limited alternatives. Farmers and ranchers would see higher fuel, fertilizer and energy costs. And the cap-and-trade provisions would do little more than downsize American agriculture and our ability to produce food in this nation. None of those are acceptable results to us, and we will continue to tell our members of Congress, 'Don't cap our future.'

ICE Begins Second Wave of Audits (National Meat Assn., 11/23) -- ICE announced last week that they would be auditing 1,000 businesses of all sizes throughout the United States – reportedly the largest single effort of this kind ever. ICE said these audits would focus on critical infrastructure, but we know companies in the meat industry have been targeted as well. This follows on an ICE announcement in July 2009 of Notices of Inspection to 654 businesses in a variety of industries. This is not trivial. If you receive a NOI from ICE, you should take steps to ensure your company is best positioned to defend the audit and mitigate any liability. NMA has placed guidance material online in the Special Reports area of the members-only section of NMAonline.org, we strongly suggest you review this information.

Interior, Agriculture Secretaries to Purchase 5,026 Acres of Western Land With High Conservation Value (USDA, 11/16) – Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced that their agencies would acquire seven parcels of high value conservation land, totaling 5,026 acres in Colorado, Montana and Nevada for \$11.7 million. The largest is a 4,573-acre property within the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument in Colorado.

Suit Seeks To Stop Grazing Along Upper Missouri (Cattle Network, 11/24) — A push to end grazing along a 150-mile stretch of the Missouri River seeks to bar about 10,000 cattle from federal lands in central Montana so that the river valley can be restored to more natural conditions. The 586-square-mile Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument was created in 2001 by President Bill Clinton, along a route explored by Lewis and Clark in the early 1800s. Cattle have continued to graze there under permits issued by the federal Bureau of Land Management. But now an Idaho-based environmental group and two Fort Benton canoe guides say the cattle are marring the monument's recreational opportunities. On Nov. 20, they filed a federal lawsuit in Missoula challenging the grazing program. Cattle producers say they're using the land responsibly and warn the litigation could drive them out of business.

U.S Beef Sales to Canada (National Meat Assn., 11/23) -- According to U.S. Meat Export Federation, with the exception of one week, beef exports to Canada have trended above year-ago levels since early September. The increased U.S. beef sales to Canada have been seen as a sign of worsening trouble for the Canadian beef industry. Canada's beef prices and exports have been declining.

While the U.S. beef industry is thriving due to the strengthening Canadian dollar, international industry analysts say it's the COOL rules in U.S. that have decimated Canada's cattle and beef exports into the U.S. causing official complaints to be lodged recently with WTO about the impact of COOL, according to Meat International. The WTO dispute panel will determine whether COOL rules comply with U.S. WTO trade obligations. A report is not expected until next summer or early fall.

CCA Pleased With Creation of WTO Panel to Rule on mCOOL (Cattle Network, 11/20) -- The Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) is pleased that the World Trade Organization (WTO) agreed to Canada's request for the creation of a Dispute Settlement Panel to rule on the United States' (U.S.) mandatory Country-of-Origin Labelling (mCOOL) law. The WTO process will take a long time, but the CCA believes there is no other option. CCA Vice President and Foreign Trade Chairman Travis Toews says, "We've been to Washington several times and sense no interest from U.S. lawmakers to resolve this issue, which is unfortunate since Canada is the U.S.' best customer and top buyer of agricultural exports. Obtaining a panel ruling from the WTO may motivate U.S. lawmakers to resolve this problem."

China Executes Two in Melamine Case (Brownfield Network, 11/24) -- China has executed two of the people involved in the melamine contamination of milk last year. More than 300,000 infants were made sick and six died from consuming tainted milk. One of those executed was a farmer convicted of selling more than 770 tons of contaminated milk powder from July of 2007 to August of 2008. The other managed a milk distribution center which supplied the contaminated milk to dairies. The case involved dairy farmers and middlemen who watered-down milk to increase volume then added the industrial chemical melamine to bring the protein test back up to normal levels thus fooling inspectors.

Auction Pays \$31K Fine (Billings Gazette, 11/23) -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture has fined a Billings livestock auction \$31,000 for allowing an auctioneer to buy more than \$1 million worth of cattle and for accounting practices that fell short of "strict conformity" to federal rules. Vermilion Ranch Co., doing business as the Billings Livestock Commission Co., paid the fine without admitting to the violations that the USDA said occurred in 2007.

New Technology Being Used in Livestock Sales (California Chronicle, 11/25) -- With the slam of the gate, the bull runs into the sale ring, the auctioneer begins to shout, and ringmen begin to yell as the audience bids on the animal. However, the only sound of gates opening and slamming shut at the Fink Beef Genetics Bull Sale in Randolph, Kan., is people walking in and out of

the pens outside the building to look at the bulls before the sale. Fink, like other cattle producers, has gone to pre-filming its livestock before a sale. When the sale begins, livestock appear on a TV monitor -- live animals are not brought out in front of the bidders.

Debt Landscape for U.S. Farmers Has Shifted (USDA, Amber Waves, 11/16) -- Farm business debt levels have risen noticeably over the past decade, reaching a record \$240 billion in 2008. But the value of farm assets has grown even faster, increasing the wealth of farm operators. Nonetheless, recent declines in farm income and falling land prices have raised concerns about the financial position of U.S. farms that rely heavily of debt. In 1986, nearly 60 percent of farms used debt financing. By the end of 2007, farm debt was more concentrated in fewer, larger farm businesses, with only 31 percent of farms owing debt. And while the unused debt repayment capacity of farm operators is much lower than it was during the 1980's farm financial crisis, larger farms are more likely to use a high share of their debt capacity. As a result, while the farm sector as a whole is in sound financial shape, some segments of the sector could be over-extended if incomes and land prices continue to fall.

ASI Profile Series Segment Airs (American Sheep Industry Assn., 11/23) -- Targeted grazing utilizing sheep will be showcased by the award-winning television series, The Profiles Series. The show will air on the Discovery Channel on Monday, Nov. 30, at 7 a.m. EST and PST. Narrated by Lou Gosset Jr., the episode will be aired in 80 million television households. This project took life with the funding assistance of an Invasive Species Grant by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service awarded to the American Sheep Industry Association (ASI). With industry funds matching this grant, ASI was able to team up with The Profiles Series to produce a quality program intended to inform, educate and enlighten viewers, both nationally and internationally, about the U.S. sheep industry and how targeted grazing is an ecological-friendly tool that is gaining a foothold to help manage invasive weeds. The full segment is also available to watch at <http://profileseries.com/Americansheep.htm>.

On Flu Vaccine List, Swine Workers Should Be 'At Least Equal' With Santa (National Pork Producers Council, 11/18) -- While acknowledging that, "Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus," the National Pork Producers Council is asking that pork industry workers be given at least equal billing with shopping mall St. Nicks on any priority list of those who should receive the vaccine for the novel H1N1 flu. Several groups representing hundreds of Kris Kringles this week asked that the Jolly Old Elves be given priority consideration for the H1N1 vaccine.

NPPC recently wrote to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), asking that swine workers, swine veterinarians and employees of pork processing plants be put on the H1N1 vaccine priority list. The organization said it recognized the importance of providing the vaccine to children, the elderly and pregnant women – as well as seasonal Pères Noël – but pointed out that, because of their proximity to swine, and the fact that already there has been human-to-swine transmission of the H1N1 virus, pork industry workers also should be provided the vaccine.

Cattle Rustlers Sought in Oregon (Cattle Trader Center, 11/24) -- They were spotted from a small airplane, two cattle rustlers on horseback hazing 125 white-faced cows across Malheur County's forbidding empty quarter in Oregon's far southeast corner. The pilot descended for a closer view but the men didn't look up, said brand inspector Rodger Huffman of the Oregon Department of Agriculture. The pilot finally had to break away, and the Malheur County Sheriff's Office didn't hear about the sighting until a week later. It was one of the few glimpses anyone has caught of men suspected of stealing 1,240 cattle worth \$1.2 million over the past three years from Malheur County ranches. Hundreds more cows have been taken in neighboring areas of Idaho and Nevada

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