

cattleTRAILS



..... December 2021

To promote the Wisconsin beef business through advocacy, leadership, and education.



President's Path

Matt Ludlow, WCA President

Before sitting down to write the President's Path, I try to think through a few different broad topics: what's happening throughout the market on a national scale, have there been any significant legislative updates, and what is taking place at the state level that has affects on our Wisconsin producers. I have done this for each and every article I have written during my Presidency with the Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association.

During my two year term, there has been an astonishing amount of unforgettable events that have taken place; there is no doubt that we have all been through "uncertain" or "trying" times during the last two years. As I wrote about in my last article, it seemed like anything you read regarding the live cattle market talked about a potential leverage switch from the packer to the feeder/producer. At times, it seemed like this was more of a glimmering light in the distance than something that would actually be obtained.

There are many powerful things in our world, but apparently leverage in the cattle market ranks up near the top of that list. After scratching and clawing to gain a dollar here or there in the live cattle market for what seemed like forever, we were finally able to obtain \$130 for fat cattle. It seemed as though a glass ceiling was shattered once \$130 was paid, and within weeks we are flirting with \$140.

We are all well aware of the tremendous run-up we saw this past year in boxed beef and associated retail beef prices. Remarkably, even with these all-time high prices, our beef demand has never been better. With cow slaughter up 20% and heifer slaughter up 11% in 2021, our herd numbers are going to continue to tighten as we move into 2022 and beyond. My hope is that we as producers can capture more of the market share as we move into what appears to be good times ahead.

Moving Forward

After serving a two-year term, Matt Ludlow shares his final insights as WCA president.

It seems like times are always busy within the agricultural world, but at least within our operation, the spring and fall seem to be exceptionally fast-paced. So, I want to thank you for taking time out of your schedule to read through our Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association Cattle Trails publication. The committee chairs that write these articles all do a good job for our beef producers at the state level.

During my WCA Presidency, I have been very fortunate to meet some incredible producers and overall good people throughout Wisconsin. We have a very unique state when it comes to agriculture and being able to see this firsthand is something that will stick with me long after my time with WCA. As my time leading the organization comes to an end, I know the association is in good hands with Brady Zuck taking over as President.

In closing, I wish nothing but the best to you, your family, and your operation. And as always, thank you for being a member of the Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association.



-Matt Ludlow

2021 WCA President

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upcoming events:

- **North Central Wisconsin Cattlemen's Winter Event**
Jan 15, 2022, Rib River Ballroom, Marathon City, WI
This event will address the status of beef production in Wisconsin, direct marketing, managing risk with LRP, and more. RSVP by Jan. 7 by calling 715-507-2400, or email northcentralwicattlemens@gmail.com
- **Driftless Region Beef Conference**
Jan. 27-28, Grand River Convention Center, Dubuque, IA
The 2022 conference will focus on efficient and economic forage and beef production.
- **Cattle Industry Convention**
Feb. 1-3, 2022, Houston, TX
Cattlemen and women from across the country gather for education, fellowship and networking.

CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR THE LATEST EVENTS AND INFORMATION



wisconsincattlemen.com

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Membership Update: Meet Tressa



First off, I want to thank Joe Scott for his dedication and time served as Membership Committee Chair. For those who don't know me, my name is Tressa Alderson. I was raised on a backgrounding operation in Missouri and found myself in Wisconsin five years ago due to relocation by my employer. I decided to join WCA in 2018 and started off serving as Publications Committee Chair, a position I still hold. I also co-chaired Winter Conference with Amy Radunz, and upon becoming a board member this June, decided to further my involvement in the organization by taking over the role of Membership Committee Chair.

A major goal of our organization in 2022 is to attend affiliate annual meetings and similar events. My ask of WCA members is to please pass along any known dates of upcoming events. I also encourage you to voice the value you see in your WCA membership to peers. As a member-driven organization, you are the ones who recruit others

to our cause. Contemplate who on your holiday gift list benefits from the work of WCA and sign them up for a membership. They'll receive the quarterly editions of Cattle Trails, as well as time-sensitive information (i.e relief funds, policy updates) via email. This is a great way to open the door to getting others involved.

If you have any questions or ideas that you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to reach out. I look forward to growing our organization with you.

- Tressa Alderson
WCA Membership Chair
(417) 712-1755
tressaalderson27@gmail.com

Cattle Trails Advertising Opportunities

CONTACT THE WCA OFFICE FOR DETAILS

Half-page advertisements are available for placement in an upcoming issue of the Cattle Trails newsletter for \$50 per issue. Ad spaces for the March issue must be claimed by February 15, 2022.

Contact the WCA office for full informational sheet of advertising details.

Phone: (608) 228-1457 | Email: kaitlyn@wisconsincattlemen.com

Steak Trailer Update

Brady Zuck, WCA Steak Trailer Co-Chair



The WCA Steak Trailer wrapped up the 2021 season with two very successful events at World Beef Expo and World Dairy Expo. Beautiful fall weather helped draw a large crowd at Harvest Fair, which greatly benefited sales at World Beef Expo. Although attendance was down overall at World Dairy Expo, the WCA Steak Trailer continues to be the main destination for the lunch crowd. With the rising price of beef, we have also made adjustments to our menu pricing.

We would like to recognize Craig and Vickie Dunnum for their three years of service as Steak Trailer Managers. Under the Dunnum's leadership, we have made improvements to our equipment and sales tracking software, built a team of excellent staff and group labor, and generated a positive reputation for WCA at each event we attend. Their leadership and service are greatly appreciated. Craig and Vickie have made the decision to step down at the end of the 2021 season. As a result, we are currently seeking applicants for a new Steak Trailer Manager.

If you know an interested individual or group, please have them reach out to either Matt Ludlow (mlludlow@gmail.com, 608-632-1607) or Brady Zuck (brady_zuck@diamondev.com, 715-415-9131). We ask that anyone interested please reach out prior to December 31, 2021.

In early 2022, we will plan to set up interviews with interested individuals to determine who will be the new Steak Trailer Manager for 2022 season.

We want to thank you all for the support in 2021, and look forward to another successful year in 2022!

-Brady Zuck

WCA Steak Trailer Co-chair

715-415-9131

brady_zuck@diamondev.com

2022 Event Schedule

WPS Farm Show- Oshkosh - March 29 - 31

Midwest Horse Fair- Madison - April 22-24

Wisconsin State Fair- Milwaukee - August 4 - 14

World Beef Expo – September 22 - 24

World Dairy Expo – October 2 – 7

Interested in becoming a Steak Trailer Manager?

Contact Matt Ludlow

mlludlow@gmail.com | (608) 632-1607

Contact Brady Zuck

brady_zuck@diamondev.com | (715) 415-9131

Winter Conference Canceled

After much discussion and careful consideration, WCA has decided to not host a Winter Conference in 2022. Although we will not be gathering as a group in February, we will continue to host our annual Summer Tour, and are already planning to expand the event for 2022. An increased focus on education will be part of the planning process. Through the winter months, the WCA Executive Team will be traveling to attend as many affiliate meetings as possible, with an update on WCA legislative work and other activities.

Board Member Spotlight:

Michael Mueller

Michael Mueller and his wife, Sharon, are part of Double M Cattle Company LLC near Rewey, Wisc. (in Iowa County.) The other members of their LLC are Matthew and Beth Mueller (son and daughter-in-law). Mike and Sharon have three children and 10 grandchildren. Mike is a fourth-generation farmer with his son Matthew coming up as the fifth-generation. Mike graduated from UW-Madison with a degree in Dairy Science, and he milked registered Holsteins until 1995 when they began their transition to beef production. Matt and Beth are graduates from UW-River Falls with degrees in Animal Science and Equine Science.

The Mueller's currently have a 400-cow beef herd consisting of 80 registered Shorthorns, 80 registered Normandes, and 240 commercial crossbred cows. Each year, they keep 80-90 replacement females for their herd or to sell as breeding stock. They also sell a number of bulls every year. What calves they do not select for breeding purposes are placed in the 400-head feedlot they lease to be finished for the fat market. Believing performance data is important, the Mueller's collect birth, weaning, yearling, and mature cow weights as they run their cattle through their bud box/chute and head gate facility. They market most of their fat cattle through Tyson on the grade and yield grid which allows them to obtain carcass data for their registered herds.

Their farming operation includes 200 owned acres, 400 leased crop acres, and 600 acres of leased pasture. They raise alfalfa, winter rye, and sudan grass for hay. Corn is raised for silage, snaplage, and grain. The Mueller's pasture program for their cow herd includes utilizing custom grazers, rotational grazing on their owned land, and continuous grazing on some of the leased pasture land. Mike and Sharon's daughters are also involved in agriculture in varying degrees. Their oldest daughter and her family have a



Mueller shared a picture of his family at the baptism of his youngest grandchild.

40-acre farmette near Montfort, Wisc. Their youngest daughter and her husband milk over 200 cows with his parents near South Wayne, Wisc. and are in the process of adding robots to their dairy operation.

Mike is active in his local church, maintains the national office for the North American Normande Association, and helps coordinate the Wisconsin Farm Technology Days Beef Tent.

NCBA Fights for Definitive Labels on Lab-Grown Meat

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) submitted comments to the United States Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA-FSIS) related to the labeling of meat or poultry products that contain lab-grown animal cells. NCBA believes that the term "beef" should only be applicable to products derived from livestock raised by farmers and ranchers. As USDA-FSIS works to develop regulatory standards for labeling lab-grown, or cell-cultured, protein products, NCBA is committed to ensuring that product labels are fair, accurate, and will safeguard a level playing field for all protein products competing in the marketplace.

The regulations USDA develops now will play a crucial role in ensuring adequate consumer understanding, and NCBA feels strongly that the best way to accomplish this is through labeling standards that will clearly differentiate these products by way of a "lab-grown" label. "An NCBA consumer survey showed that when purchasing protein, 74 percent of consumers agree that there should be a definitive indication of whether meat being purchased is lab-grown or conventionally produced," said NCBA Senior Executive Director of Government Affairs Danielle Beck. "If one thing is clear from our research, it's that consumers want clear and

definitive labels."

The word "beef" represents a brand that has been cultivated through decades of innovation and stewardship by farmers and ranchers across the U.S. NCBA will continue to engage with both USDA and FDA to ensure that the regulations governing these products are science-based, appropriately prioritize food safety, and promote honesty and fair dealing in the interest of consumers.

Scholarship Applications Open

The Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association is accepting scholarship applications through Feb. 18 for any student enrolled or planning to enroll in any university, technical college, community college, and UW-Madison Farm and Industry Short Course Program. More details about how to apply can be found at wisconsincattlemen.com. under resources.

Set Long-Term Goals to Improve Your Herd's Reproduction



By Ryan Sterry

Agriculture Agent
UW-Madison Division of Extension

A continuous improvement mindset means always looking for opportunities to improve your farm business, no matter how large or small the improvement may be. For the beef cow-calf herd, this means keeping and evaluating herd performance records. Admittedly, recordkeeping is not everyone's favorite job, but it's one that is necessary.

Logging records for the sake of doing so is no fun; satisfaction is gained by the understanding the story they tell. The reward is earned when the data points are summarized by using various calculations. The three most common calculations from reproductive records are pregnancy percentage, calving percentage, and weaning percentage. In broad terms, they provide a framework to evaluate if cows are getting bred on time, the percent experiencing pregnancy loss, and the percent calving but losing their calf before weaning. Ultimately, they measure pounds of calf weaned and sold (think profit!) and identify points in the production cycle where there are opportunities for improvement.

Pregnancy, calving, and weaning percentages are all calculated on an annual basis. To take herd management to the next level, we challenge managers to not only look at annual results but to also set and evaluate multi-year performance goals.

For example, a University of Florida study (Lamb et al., 2015) aimed to shorten their herd's calving season. They set a goal to accomplish this change over four years' time. To do so, six breeding criteria were added to herd selection. Cows failing to meet those criteria were culled. A change from natural service to timed AI made a significant difference in year one, reducing the mean calving day (from the start of the calving season) by 21.7 days. Progress after year one varied from a reduction in mean calving day of 0.8 to 7.7 days. Modest year to year changes from setting a multiyear goal resulted in a 20.5 day calving season improvement over five years.

It's fair to ask, "so what?" at this point. Bottom line, the breeding season length was shortened from 120 to 70 days over five years. Earlier born calves were older and heavier at weaning, resulting in

an increased calf value of \$87 in year one, with gradual increases year after year for an overall improvement of \$169 in year six.

Another example of the benefits of taking a longer-term view of herd reproductive performance is breeding replacement heifers. It's long been advocated to breed heifers to calve at the beginning, not the end, of the calving season. This recommendation often focuses just on one year's results. First calf heifers, on average, wean lighter calves and have nutritional requirements that include their own growth on top of raising a calf.

A study by Cushman et al. looked at the long term impact of when in the calving season heifers first calved. They found that heifers conceiving very early in their breeding season, determined by calving in the first 21 day period, remained in the herd longer than heifers that calved later. This may not be surprising, but what may be is the effect wasn't just seen following first calving. Data from one herd in this study saw differences in longevity carry out to the fifth calving. Also not surprisingly, heifers calving the in the first 21 days weaned heavier calves. What may be surprising is this effect carried out over the first six calving seasons. The authors concluded that over the six year timeframe, the increase in weaning weight for the very earliest calving heifers equated to the production of an additional calf. This example shows how a management decision not only affects one year's analysis of pregnancy, calving, and weaning percentages, but can have a lasting effect on herd performance.

References:

Lamb, G. Cliff, Impacts of Estrous Synchronization on Cowherd Performance, Range Beef Cow Symposium, 2015, <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/rangebeefcowsymp/342>

R. A. Cushman, L. K. Kill, R. N. Funston, E. M. Mousel, G. A. Perry, Heifer calving date positively influences calf weaning weights through six parturitions, *Journal of Animal Science*, Volume 91, Issue 9, September 2013, Pages 4486–4491, <https://doi.org/10.2527/jas.2013-6465>

Reviewed by Dr. Sandy Stutgen, UW-Extension Livestock Educator

Wisconsin Legislative Update

Jordan Lamb

WCA Legislative Counsel

DeWitt, LLP

Legislature to Clarify Regulation of Aboveground Fuel Storage Tanks – Farm Tank Exemptions Preserved

In July 2019, the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection notified affected Local Program Operators that it would cease to regulate flammable and combustible liquid aboveground storage tanks that are less than 5,000 gallons on October 1, 2019.



This change resulted from a discovered conflict between language in Wis. Admin. Code s. ATCP 93 and Wis. Stat. Chapter 168, which regulates aboveground storage tanks. Specifically, DATCP discovered that the rule that allowed for the regulation of flammable and combustible liquid aboveground storage tanks greater than 110 gallons (with certain exemptions), conflicted with the statute, which only permitted regulation of aboveground storage tanks of 5,000 gallons or greater. In its report to the Legislature, DATCP recommended a statutory change to align the rule with the statute and with current practices. However, the statute and rule also contained some very specific exemptions for farm tanks.

DATCP has worked with legislative officials and affected industry members to address this conflict in our law throughout last session and this session. Legislation has been introduced (Assembly Bill 384 / Senate Bill 381) to grant DATCP regulatory authority over all aboveground storage tanks over 110 gallons.

Wisconsin commodity groups initially opposed these bills and testified at the September 2021 public hearing that the bill should be amended to preserve the exemptions for farm tanks under 5,000 gallons. The authors and the DATCP agreed. Consequently, AA1 to AB 384 (and identical SA1 to SB 381) have been introduced and will preserve the regulatory exemption for all aboveground farm fuel storage tanks under 5,000 gallons. WCA and other commodity groups now support this legislation as amended.

However, all farm tanks over 110 gallons will be required to register with DATCP. This is not a new requirement. This was required prior to 2019, as well. The notification requirement is meant to alert local fire departments that there is a fuel storage tank on the premises in the event of a fire. There is no fee or inspection requirement associated with this registration. (Note: Many local ordinances already require registration of aboveground fuel tanks with local fire districts.)

Agricultural Water Quality Legislation Introduced

Senator Rob Cowles (R-Green Bay) and Representative Joel Kitchens (R-Sturgeon Bay) have authored Senate Bill 667 / Assembly Bill 727 and Senate Bill 678 / Assembly Bill 728, which contain positive agricultural water quality initiatives for Wisconsin farmers. Wisconsin farmers want to be leaders in the development of improved water quality practices on farms. The programmatic changes and the new programs that are created in these bills will support farmer-led conservation efforts that we have seen develop across Wisconsin. WCA supports both SB 677 and 678 and urges the Legislature to pass these bills.

Senate Bill 677. This bill creates a commercial nitrogen optimization pilot program to incentivize farmers to engage in new practices to reduce nitrogen on farms and share what they learn as a part of those projects with other farmers across Wisconsin. This legislation creates

a two-year, \$1 million per year pilot program to award grants of up to \$50,000 to farmers for projects on their farm fields to optimize the use of commercial nitrogen. Similar to successful efforts in neighboring states, this legislation also creates a crop insurance premium rebate program where farmers not receiving funding from other state or federal programs may receive \$5 per acre to help offset the costs to plant cover crops. This program is funded at \$400,000 per year, beginning in the next fiscal year. The bill also funds a hydrogeologist position at UW-Extension. This position will continue to develop reliable soil depth to bedrock maps in Wisconsin so that cropping practices can be adjusted to meet the geology of particular regions and identify more areas that might be more susceptible to runoff.

Senate Bill 678. This legislation makes several important programmatic changes to the DNR's well compensation program that are necessary for increased eligibility for well compensation grants to address rural drinking water concerns. This program was funded in the 2021 biennial budget bill so that it can be utilized by rural well owners who have elevated contaminant levels in their drinking water wells. The bill also contains several programmatic changes to the producer-led watershed grant program and the county conservation grant program that are needed to further enhance the utilization of those programs.

Revision to NR 151 - Groundwater Nitrate Targeted Performance Standard - Will Not Move Forward.

On November 17, 2021, the Department of Natural Resources sent an email to the members of the NR 151 Technical Advisory Committee informing them that, "The statutory process and associated firm timelines established by the Legislature for rule-making do not allow adequate time for the department to complete this proposed rule." The proposed revision to NR 151 was authorized to create a targeted performance standard for the application of nitrates/nitrogen to agricultural land in Wisconsin. The DNR would have to put forth a new Scope Statement and initiate a new rulemaking process if they choose to continue to develop this rule.

Livestock Market Update

Jeff Swenson

DATCP Livestock and Meat Specialist.

The Market Update draws information from several sources, including trade publications, radio broadcasts, agricultural news services, individuals involved in the industry as well as USDA NASS and AMS reports.

With the beef needed to answer the holiday demand largely in the pipeline, the week of December 5 was likely the largest harvest we will see the remainder of the year and into 2022. We would typically see demand backing off when we turn the calendar to a new year, but seasonal trends have not always held since the COVID-19 pandemic. Beef remains the protein of choice for Americans, even at record high retail prices. The cutout value seems to be losing steam but is still roughly \$30.00 higher than this time last year. The most recent weekly export report showed orders for 14,600 metric tons with 10,400 metric tons of that earmarked for 2022 delivery. China has emerged as an important buyer of U.S. raised beef. Feeder cattle auctions have shown higher prices as feedlot optimism for a tightening fed cattle supply in 2022 remains the consensus.

Where's the Beef? Ads

Tammy Vaassen

Executive Director, Wisconsin Beef Council



First, I would like to take the time to wish each of you a joyous holiday season. I hope you get time to reflect on your blessings and celebrate a Merry Christmas. I am deeply grateful for the farmers across our state who work day and night to continue to provide families with delicious, nutritious beef and all of the other agricultural products we have plentiful access to. I also wish to express my

gratitude to the leaders and members of Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association – our partnership, your leadership, and support for the Beef Checkoff programs of the Wisconsin Beef Council are appreciated.

The largest line item in the Beef Council's budget each year is advertising. We use a combination of platforms to continue to reach Wisconsin consumers about the people who raise beef, the protein value (and other nutritional benefits) of beef, and the pleasure we all get when enjoying a meal with beef at the center of the plate. In 2021, our state advertising efforts made over 3 million impressions across the state. In the mix of our ads, we work to leverage both Wisconsin-created and national assets to reach consumers during larger moments (including the holidays and summer grilling) and to drive traffic to BeefTips.com.

The platforms we used this past year included YouTube, Google Search, Nativo, and our social media platforms on Facebook and Instagram. As a result of the pandemic and consumer demand for ground beef, our second most-watched video on YouTube was 'How to Thaw Ground Beef.' The most watched video, with over 233,000 views, was a summer grilling lifestyle clip. Google Search ads that performed the best were centered around consumer searches for 'quick and easy' meals, ground beef/hamburger, and chili recipes.

The Nativo platform allows for Beef Checkoff-funded content to appear as informational articles across a wide range of food/beverage, news, health, and family-related websites. This content



was used to strengthen consumer perceptions that beef is the top protein and to educate readers on the truth behind various myths.

Nationally, Beef. It's What's for Dinner has returned to television to reinforce the overall advertising campaign. 2020 marked ad placements on the Hallmark Channel, where millions tune in for the network's Countdown to Christmas. When combined with other holiday ads, your Beef Checkoff message had 128 million impressions, plus millions of other audio ad listens, video views, social media engagements, and visits to beefitswhatsfordinner.com. For 2021, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, a contractor to the Beef Checkoff, is again running more than 120 beef ads on the Hallmark Channel, paired with other strategic ad placements to reach consumers as they prepare their holiday menus.

Another opportunity arose last year to further raise beef awareness on national television – by sponsoring the Nascar Xfinity Beef. It's What's For Dinner. 300 at Daytona. Through on-air television and radio ads, a satellite media tour, social media, and other outreach, the reach of this opportunity was well over 2 billion. Beef is set to return to this racing platform again this February as the future stars of NASCAR race in Florida.

With the varied combination of these media platforms, beef will remain in front of consumers this coming year through your investment in the Beef Checkoff. If your local cattlemen's or other group would like a Beef Checkoff update during winter meetings, please reach out to our office – we'd love the chance to speak or network!

Driftless Region Beef Conference Returns

With nearly 2.5 million cattle in four Midwest states, university extension services in Illinois, Iowa and Wisconsin are teaming together to offer the Driftless Region Beef Conference. The tenth annual event will be held Jan. 27-28, 2022 at the Grand River Convention Center in Dubuque, Iowa.

The driftless region in these states contain rolling hills, streams and karst soil topography. Since soil and water conservation is best accomplished when much of this land is seeded for forage and livestock consumes those forages, the conference will focus on efficient and economic forage and beef production.

The conference will begin at 1 p.m. Jan. 27 with a program concentrating on the future of the beef industry. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Ron Gill, professor and Extension livestock specialist for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, and Associate Department Head. Dr. Terry Houser, ISU Meat Science specialist, will demonstrate various value added cuts in a meat fabrication demonstration. The final two afternoon topics include alternative meats and consumer trends. An evening discussion on value added opportunities will feature a producer panel. Friday morning will feature Matt Ludlow from Rush

Creek Ranch in Wisconsin, who recently won the National Stocker Award, and eight breakout sessions for feedlot operations and cow-calf producers followed by a market outlook.

Key speakers include Dan Loy and Denise Schwab, Iowa State University; Bill Halfman and Mark Rens, University of Wisconsin; Bailey Harsh, University of Illinois, and Mary Drewnoski and Elliott Dennis, University of Nebraska Lincoln.

The early registration fee is \$85 per person and must be received prior to midnight, Jan. 14. The price increases to \$115 after that date. More information on topics, speakers and lodging is available at www.aep.iastate.edu/beef/. Online and mail registration forms are available on the conference website.

The Driftless Region Beef Conference is sponsored by ISU Extension and Outreach, University of Illinois Extension, and University of Wisconsin Extension. For more information or to receive a brochure, contact Denise Schwab, beef specialist with ISU Extension and Outreach, at 319-472-4739.



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