FEEDOUT FINALE
The results of the 2016-17 Missouri Steer Feedout will be made public on June 26, 7 pm at the University of Missouri Southwest Research Center, Mt. Vernon. The center is two miles southwest on H highway at exit 44, from I-44.

The 146 steers were sent to southwest Iowa last November 1. The last group was slaughtered in late May. The “Finale” is for the owners who sent five or more steers to Iowa on a retained ownership basis. This feedout most of the steers came from southwest Missouri. There was several from the northeast part of the state and a small consignment from Maryville in the northwest corner.

I’ve invited Eric Bailey, our new state extension beef nutrition specialist to attend and share his hopes and aspirations for his new career in Missouri.

The “Finale’ is open to anyone who is interested in learning more about their cattle’s life after leaving the Ozarks. We always have a variety of breeds and feeder cattle grades which allows those attending to see feedlot and carcass data they may relate to in their own herd. There is no registration or charge. Please attend and learn.

Here’s a bit of a tease, this group of steers averaged making almost $300 per head and some even made twice that much. This is a record for our feedout. Come see how it happened.

ANOTHER CHANCE TO LEARN
Here’s another chance to learn, up close and personal on June 29, 6 pm at Cloud’s Meats, Carthage. That evening we’ll see the ins and outs of beef carcass evaluation courtesy of Bryon Wiegand from the University of Missouri.

The six carcasses Bryon will grade and evaluate are from the 4-H-FFA beef project from Lawrence county. They were put on test in early February and shown at the county junior livestock show earlier this month. Now, the real evaluation comes after the hide and hair comes off. All the steers were bred and raised in Lawrence county.

MONEY FOR LIGHTNING STRIKE
A local farmer had the misfortune of losing eleven head of cattle to a lightning strike in May. He didn’t have insurance to cover the loss. Like many farmers, he considered it just part of being in the business.

His wife called to see if I knew of a program that covers this type of catastrophe. I called the Farm Service Agency and they told me about the Livestock Indemnity Program. It was authorized in the 2014 Farm Bill. It is designed to provide benefits to livestock producers who have losses in excess of normal mortality. The cause of the deaths could be weather, eligible disease or eligible attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government.

There are hoops to go through to receive compensation, but it’s worth a try, certainly on 11 cows. I believe the normal annual mortality mentioned was over 1.5% for adult cattle. You must have a third party verify the loss such as a veterinarian or maybe an extension person. It can’t be a family member. Pictures will work. Check with your tax person to see if it’s a taxable payment.

In the eleven cow loss, the farmer will use the backhoe operator as his witness that they were in fact killed. The FSA folks said the payment can be received even if there was insurance on the loss. Check with your county FSA office if you have a significant death loss.

BLACK VULTURES???
Also this week a cattle owner called to see if he could shoot black vultures that killed two baby calves on his farm. I hedged on this one and encouraged him to check with the county sheriff and/or the local conversation agent.

The previous article on eligible attacks mentioned protected wolves and avian predators. Black vultures create problems especially around the calving pastures as they love eating the afterbirth. Then they go for the newborn calf. The caller said he counted 20 vultures after a calf. The cow tried to fight them off but just wore out.
**HAY SHOW DEADLINE JULY 10**

So far I’ve not had any entries for the Ozark Empire Fair Hay Show. This isn’t surprising given the wet May we experienced. Remember we are altering our rules this year and will use Relative Forage Quality (RFQ) as the determining factor in placings. We’re able now to accept large hay packages and haylage entries at OEF.

Prize money is limited but the show gives you excellent advertising if you are a seller of hay. It helps extension promote good haymaking and storing techniques. The big prizes are offered at the Missouri State Fair so why not enter both and prove Missourians can produce quality hay.

**ALFALFA TOUR**

Tim Schnakenberg, extension agronomy specialist and Andy McCorkill, extension livestock specialist teamed up with Tri-County Farms near Ash Grove for an alfalfa event in late April. Tri-County raises 350 acres of alfalfa and are experimenting this season with irrigation.

Justin Williams, partner in Tri-County spoke and led off by saying alfalfa is good feed! His buyers may be skeptical at first, since it costs more than mature fescue. He said once they try it they keep coming back. His hay is finding a good market in the south and south eastern part of the U.S.

Craig’s List is a good marketing tool for him. He stressed that his 65 pound bales sell for $6 each. To get that price you must test it. His hay runs it he 180 to 225 RFV range.

His goal is to harvest at 30-day intervals at one-quarter bloom. He does not use a tedder as it causes the loss of too many leaves which is where the quality nutrients are. He prices his big bales based on the RFV number.

Tim offered this wisdom in his talk, “there’s a place for alfalfa in the Ozarks.” He said, those attending today fall into these categories.

- Some may grow and feed it.
- Some may grow and sell it.
- Some may buy it to feed.
- Some will decide it’s not for them.

I’m a big booster for alfalfa as a supplement for cattle consuming fescue. We’ve had two trials at the Southwest Center using alfalfa haylage as a fall-born calf creep feed. Try it, you’ll like it as the calves really go after it and have gained around 0.75 lb. over the non-creeped calves.

**HEIFER SALE RESULTS**

I imagine you’ve heard that our Show-Me-Select bred heifers at Joplin Regional averaged $1714 on 339 head on May 19. I felt that was a respectable average and we had a wide range from $1150 to $3200. The practical top was a little over $2000. Buyers were willing to pay if the numbers and seller reputation was to their liking.

 Buyers like uniform, gentle, heifers over 1000 lbs., that were AI-bred and come from veteran consignors. We’re getting a few genomic-tested heifers now which seems to be a trend that pays under a proper management strategy. It probably is still early to say exactly the best way to market heifers that don’t rate too high on DNA evaluation.

Our sale continues to support the black baldy heifers with the reds increasing in popularity. There is still an opportunity to get into producing SMS heifers but it takes dedication and attention to details. Check with your extension livestock specialist about ways to become involved. It’s one of the best added-value opportunities in the beef business.

**SELECTING CATTLE AGAINST PINKEYE**

Glenn Selk, retired extension livestock specialist, Oklahoma State wrote in a recent news item about the heritability of resistance to pinkeye.

Pinkeye possibly causes more dollar loss than you imagine. Weight loss in nursing calves is usually estimated in studies from 25 to 50 lbs. The group we feed the feedout steers with has data that indicates bad eyed calves fall 34 pounds behind the normal calves during the finishing phase. Glenn referred to an Iowa State trial that gave an estimate of 0.11 for heritability of resistance to pinkeye.

The 0.11 is a low heritability and progress in developing pinkeye resistance in your cattle would be very slow. The study concluded that properly fed and immunized cattle, with a strong immune system will be more resistant to pinkeye. The various vaccines on the market seem to be getting more effective. Some find even better results from autogenous bacterins made from your own herd.

In case you have weepy, squinty eyes showing in your calves take action quickly rather than waiting a few days. Prompt treatment and separation of the affected animals from the others usually pays off with a quicker recovery.