FINALLY FEEDOUT PROFITS
After four feedouts in a row with red ink all over them we had a very profitable feedout in 2016-17. In fact, the 139 steers that finished the feedout that started last November 1 made the largest profit since the program began in 1981. The average profit was $299.74 with a few individuals beating $600 per head. Only one group among the nineteen had negative returns due to three head dying during the feedout.

The average daily gain was 3.41 lbs. The range was 1.73 to 4.69 lbs. The carcass quality scores ranged from Standard plus to Prime minus. There were 13 Yield Grade 1’s and no YG 4’s. Sixty-five percent of the carcasses were 1’s and 2’s. Overall the percent Choice or better was 77%. That’s one of the best quality grade percentages we’ve ever had.

Profits were due to an unusually low set in value of $118.41 per cwt last November. Add to that a nice upturn in the fed market in April and May. The average carcass price for our steers was $209.67 with some getting premiums for yield and quality grade up to $230.78. On a live weight basis, that translates to around $130 per hundred. You can also give some credit to the relatively low feed costs of $54.36 per cwt.

No prize money, ribbons, plaques, etc. are given to participants who have top performing cattle. It seems profit per head is a big item that we’ve focused on over the years. Here are the top 5 profit groups out of the 19 entered.

Gerald Eggerman, South Greenfield $403.38
Kunkel Connection, Neosho $394.76
Top Notch Farms Production, Carthage $389.99
Cris Wilmes, Maryville $385.52
Steve Jones, Mt. Vernon $381.25

Individually, the highest, profit steer was from Top Notch and he made $626.13 profit. Among his 9 herd mates the low profit steer made $234.16. Both were sired by a Simental bull but I’m not sure if it was the same bull. They were both early February calves.

One bit of data I like refer to is the retail value per days on feed and days of age. The latter of course covers the calf’s performance from the day he’s born until he dies. The steer that claimed both of those honors this feedout was a purebred Angus from Norman Garten, Nevada. One thing that gave him a boost was his carcass graded Prime minus which was good for a $20.63 per cwt bonus on his 873 lb. carcass. His daily gain was 3.80 lbs.

A complete review of the 2016-17 steer feedout is available on the internet in power point format at: http://extension.missouri.edu/lawrence/livestock.aspx Many of the steers are pictured along with their performance, breed makeup, owners and other pertinent information.

The next feedout is for this spring’s calves. Submit your application by October 10. The pickup date is the first Tuesday in November. I always say, “I won’t guarantee you’ll make any money during the feedout period but I will guarantee you’ll learn something about your genetics and management.” Let me know if you’d like an entry form.

LONG TERM PROFITS & LOSSES
Steer Feedout participants seem to like to do it year after year. Someone asked recently if they made money all the time. I selected two long-time participants and they have seen highs and lows in the feedout profit and loss column. Herd A carries a very respectable daily gain average of 3.48 lbs. Their % Choice is 64% and has ranged from only 30% to 100%. Their overall average for 11 feedouts in Yield Grade is 67%. Death loss is 0.99% and on 100 head the P/L column averages a loss per head of $22.48.

Herd B has completed 14 feedouts with 130 head that has averaged gaining 3.20 lbs. per day with a 63% Choice, 70%
Yield Grade 1’s and 2’s. Death loss is 0.76% and their P/L is an average profit of $21.09 per head.

These two herds have been in the same feedouts 6 times and they trade off profits and losses. The take home message is, cattle profits come and go. The recent feedout was exceptional on the positive side. Do keep in mind, if you’re investing in a good genetic package that features growth and outstanding carcasses you should retain ownership to realize that sire investment.

Herd that excel in feedout profits and performance should figure out a way to use that when they market their feeder cattle or breeding stock.

WHERE THE COWS ARE
The Progressive Cattleman magazine published a fold-out section with a lot of interesting statistics about cattle production in the United States. Here are some facts based on USDA NASS 2017.

- Missouri ranks 3 in beef cows.
- Missouri ranks 2 in cattle and calves operations.
- Missouri ranks 6 in cattle and calves inventory.
- Missouri ranks 2 in growth of beef cow expansion in the last 5 years.
- Lawrence county is the top county in Missouri with 53,000 beef cows. Polk is second with 48,500. Barry is third with 45,500, Newton is sixth with 39,500 and Dade is ninth.
- Lawrence county is tied for 24th in the U.S. in beef cow numbers, Polk is 39th and Barry is 47th.
- Lawrence county is third in the nation for beef cow density per square mile at 86.6, Polk has 76.3, Newton 63 and Barry has 57.5. My searching shows Highlands county in Florida is the most densely populated county in the U.S. with 91 beef cows per square mile.