



The Quarterly Beef News

Fall Edition Newsletter



McDowell County Center

October 2023

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November Cattlemen's Meeting

I hope everyone is looking forward to the next cattlemen's meeting. It will be held, **November 2nd at 6 PM at the Senior Center**. The speaker at the next meeting will be from MIX 30 and they will be talking about liquid feed for cattle. Please **RSVP** for the cattlemen's meeting by **October 31st**, you can call the office at (828) 652-8104.

Have you listened to any of the reports about cattle lately? If not, then I will share a shocking statistic with you. The beef cow herd is at the lowest level it has been since 1962. With that being said, I have included an article written by the University of Kentucky that dives deeper into the statistics and why the big drop in cattle production.

With the cool air starting to get more of a nip to it, it is time to start thinking about your winter pasture and feed plans. Start asking yourself if the body condition of your cattle are suitable for winter and if you have enough grass to last this winter? These are things we as producers need to start asking ourselves, while we still have a little time before the very cold weather starts to hit. In farming we are always planning ahead, so why wouldn't you do that with your pastures? I have included another article written by the University of Kentucky that discusses ways to plan ahead for your pasture in the coming seasons.

Contact Us!

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Do You Have Pasture Plans?

In farming we are always having to plan ahead, with that we ask ourselves many questions such as: “What’s next?” ,“What should I do now?” ,“When should I plant this crop?” , “When do I need to put the bull in to have fall calves?”. All of these questions can be overwhelming and weigh us down. Not only are we asking ourselves these questions now, but we are also dealing with the stress of the present day. Whether it is dealing with cows getting out or dealing with a lack of grass in the pasture due to overgrazing. While no one answer fits all problems, there are still some things to do that may help take some of the stress out.

Have you ever sat down and actually wrote out a plan for your operation? I know this sounds like a daunting task but this can help you have a clearer picture for your overall end goal. Something important that you want to write is a pasture plan. While this is time consuming it will help you in the long run. Pasture planning is something that can be very useful to you. If you catch yourself running behind you can look at your plan and see what you had envisioned from the beginning. With that, in your pasture plan you should think about things such as grass health, whether your pasture was over or undergrazed and if you have done a soil test recently. All of these things should go into your pasture plan. The good thing about it is that you can change this plan yearly to help improve the quality.

If you have not started writing your pasture plan no matter what stage of farming you are in, I highly recommend sitting down and coming up with that. While it is daunting it will help you in the long run. In this newsletter I have attached an article from the University of Kentucky that goes more in depth of what you should think about for planning ahead on your pasture plans.



Assess Past Grazing Season and Plan Ahead

University of Kentucky

As the grazing season comes to an end, take time to reflect on and assess the past grazing season. It is important to continually make an effort to improve and advance a managed grazing system. When planning for the upcoming grazing season, decide on a purposed budget and time limitation. If you have little or no budget to make improvements to your grazing system, simple changes to management practices can make significant improvements.

With a constant stream of new information and ideas, farming is often a trial and error operation. The majority of producers utilizing a functional rotational grazing system will tell others that they have tried many different options to see what works best for them. When reflecting on the past season, consider what has worked well and what made little or no noticeable improvements. Self-assessment can be useful to prioritize potential additions or alterations. Assess your water system and fencing system, pasture quality and conditions, utilization of resources, environmental impact, and animal health.

Areas to Assess:

- Forage quality and stand health
- Weed type and quantity- How these can be controlled through management or are other control techniques needed, such as spot spraying.
- Soil fertility program
- Utilization of pastures (overgrazed or under-utilized)
- Water availability and water quality
- Number of livestock- Are you utilizing your resources?
- Environmental impact (Consider manure and nutrient management, runoff, erosion, soil compaction)

Potential changes to consider:

- Adding an additional forage type or reseeding old stands to extend the grazing season and increase production (legumes, warm-season annuals, small grains)
- Changing management practices to extend grazing season (strip grazing, increasing rotation, stockpiling tall fescue, grazing crop residues- always check pesticide restrictions)
- Dividing one or more pasture with use of temporary fence
- Adding permanent perimeter fence
- Adding one or more water locations (frost-free waterers, temporary tanks, burying water lines, increase water quality)
- Soil test and apply lime and fertilizer accordingly

- Control weeds by altering or changing chemical or management practices
- Allow limited access to ponds and streams (talk to a local NRCS representative or your county agent)
- Decrease erosion and soil compaction with the addition of filter-fabric to high-traffic areas
- Use of sacrifice paddock

As winter approaches, it is the ideal time to evaluate the past season and start to think of changes that you would like to make to your grazing system. Because many pasture changes, such as seeding and fertilizing, need to be made in early spring, preparing and planning is vital. Deciding how much money and time you have to put into your improvements is also important to do prior to the upcoming grazing season. Start assessing the past grazing season and plan desired changes now to increase the possibility of implementing these changes.



Santa Fe Beef & Corn Chili

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 pound Ground Beef
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1 can (15-1/2 ounces) red kidney beans, drained
- 1 can (15-1/4 ounces) sweet corn, drained
- 1 can (15 ounces) tomato sauce
- 1 can (14-1/2 ounces) diced tomatoes with mild green chilies, undrained
- 1 package (1-1/4 ounces) chili seasoning mix

Sauce:

- 3/4 cup dairy sour cream
- 1-1/2 teaspoons green hot pepper sauce

COOKING:

1. Heat large nonstick skillet over medium heat until hot. Add Ground Beef and garlic; cook 8 to 10 minutes, breaking into small crumbles and stirring occasionally. Pour off drippings, if necessary
2. Cook's Tip: Cooking times are for fresh or thoroughly thawed Ground Beef. Ground Beef should be cooked to an internal temperature of 160°F. Color is not a reliable indicator of Ground Beef doneness.
3. Stir in beans, corn, tomato sauce, tomatoes and chili seasoning; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, 20 minutes, stirring occasionally.
4. Meanwhile combine sour cream and pepper sauce in small bowl. Serve with chili.

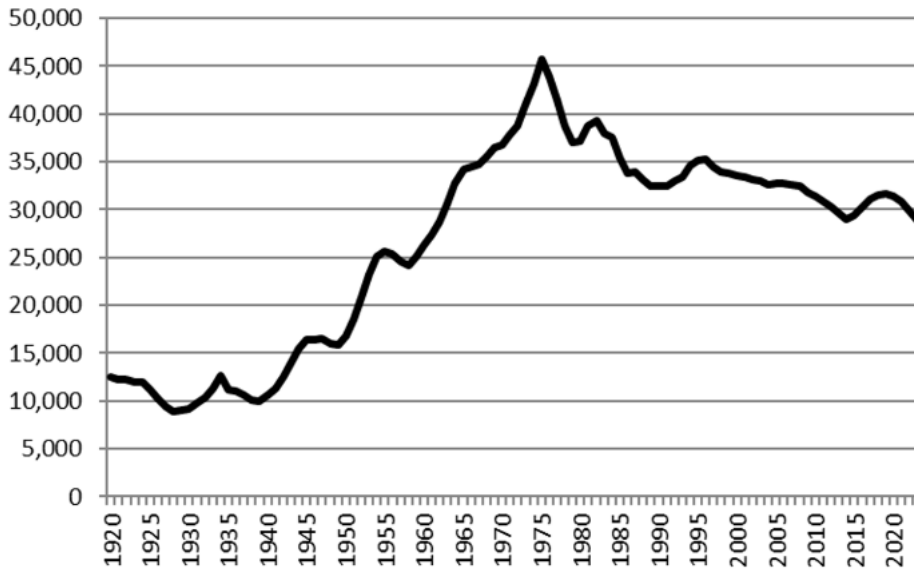
U.S. Beef Cow Herd at Lowest Level Since 1962

Written By: Kenny Burdine

University of Kentucky

USDA-NASS released their January 1, 2023, cattle inventory estimates on the afternoon of January 31st. There was really no question that the beef cattle herd had gotten smaller; it was really just a question of how much smaller it had gotten. A combination of dry weather, higher input costs, and strong cull cow prices resulted in an 11% increase in beef cow slaughter during 2022. This was combined with a decrease in heifer retention as more heifers entered the beef supply chain. USDA estimated the number of beef cows in the US to be down by more than 1 million year-over-year. This was decrease of 3.5% and that was after a downward revision of about 0.5% to the January 1, 2022 estimate. For perspective, this puts the size of the US cowherd below 2014 levels and the smallest since 1962.

Figure 1: January 1 U.S. Beef Cow Inventory (1920 to 2023) (1000 head)



Source: USDA-NASS and Livestock Marketing Information Center

While I always tend to focus on beef cow inventory, several other numbers are of particular interest. Heifers being held for beef cow replacement was down 6%, which is a larger decrease than was seen in either the January or July report from last year. This suggests continued reductions in the size of the beef cow herd for the current year. While weather will certainly play a factor here, both cow numbers and heifer retention estimates suggest that calf crops are going to keep getting smaller in the near term.

I would also point to cattle-on-feed numbers. As more females entered the beef supply chain, on-feed inventory ran above year-ago levels for much of 2022. That trend finally changed last fall and note the 4% reduction seen in the following table. This speaks to beef production in 2023, which will be down considerably. In fact, 2023 will be the first year-over-year decrease in beef production that has been seen since 2015.

The Kentucky estimates were also very much worth discussion. A large number of cull cows had moved through Kentucky markets, so a significant decrease in cow numbers was expected. USDA estimated the size of the KY beef cow herd at 895 thousand. This was a 7% decrease from 2022 and the smallest beef cow herd the state has seen since 1967. Beef heifer retention was also estimated to be down by 8% in the Commonwealth.

While the table below speaks to flat dairy cow numbers and a decrease in the number of heifers being held for dairy cow replacement at the national level, the Kentucky estimates did not follow this trend. After a long period of decreasing dairy cow numbers, USDA estimated that Kentucky dairy cow inventory increased by one thousand cows. This 2% increase is significant in that it may suggest a reversal of this trend that has been in place for a very long time.

The USDA report is summarized in the table below and the [full report](#) can be accessed through the USDA website.

Table 1: USDA January 1, 2023 Cattle Inventory Estimates

	2022 (1,000 head)	2023 (1,000 head)	2023 as % of 2022
All Cattle and Calves	92,076.6	89,274.1	97
Cows and Heifers That Have Calved	39,360.1	38,320.4	97
Beef Cows	29,983.1	28,917.9	96
Milk Cows	9,377.0	9,402.5	100
Heifers 500 Pounds and Over	19,916.0	19,172.5	96
For Beef Cow Replacement	5,481.5	5,163.7	94
For Milk Cow Replacement	4,440.6	4,337.2	98
Other Heifers	9,993.9	9,671.6	97
Steers 500 Pounds and Over	16,704.7	16,131.6	97
Bulls 500 Pounds and Over	2,109.6	2,029.0	96
Calves Under 500 Pounds	13,986.2	13,620.6	97
Cattle on Feed	14,694.6	14,157.3	96
	2021 (1,000 head)	2022 (1,000 head)	2022 as % of 2021
Calf Crop	35,165.9	34,464.5	98

Source: NASS, USDA

Cow Herd Management Calendar **October/November/December:**

- Make sure bull is in good breeding condition. Trim the hooves, conduct breeding soundness exams.
- As the weather starts to get cooler, may need to treat cattle for lice.
- Remove old insecticide ear tags as you work cows. Old tags can release low levels of insecticide that can promote development of resistant strains of flies.
- Make sure the cattle maintain a body condition score of 5 to 6, provide additional feed if necessary.
- Check your calving supplies to ensure you have the proper equipment on hand if the need arises.



Grants for diversifying farms
WNC AgOptions intent to apply deadline Oct. 13; Application deadline Nov. 17.

WNC Agricultural Options is now accepting grant applications from farmers diversifying or expanding their businesses. With funding from the N.C. Tobacco Trust Fund Commission, WNC AgOptions is distributing a total of \$229,000 to western North Carolina farmers in 2018. The application deadline is Nov. 18. WNC AgOptions helps offset farmers' risk of trying new ventures and expanding their farms with \$4,000 and \$8,000 grants.

Applicants should contact their Cooperative Extension agents by Oct. 13 to set up an appointment to discuss their projects. Applications are available at www.wncagoptions.org or at local Cooperative Extension centers.

WNC AgOptions offers grants to farmers in the following counties/units: Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Cherokee, Clay, Cleveland, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania, Watauga and Yancey counties as well as the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.



Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education
2024 Producer Grant Call for Proposals

Amount Funded: **Individual Farmers, \$20,000; Farmer Groups, \$25,000**
For a two (2) year project

Proposal submission deadline: November 10, 2023 at 12 p.m. (NOON) EST

Online submission link: SARE Grant Management System

Read more about the requirements for Producer Grants before applying. Questions should be directed to the grant manager, Candace Pollock-Moore at cpollock@uga.edu or call 770-412-4786.

Producer Grant Schedule

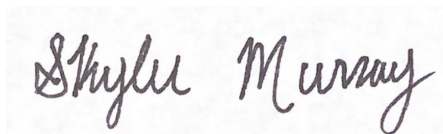
September 2023: Calls for Proposals Released

November 10, 2023: Proposals Due

February 2024: Selected Proposals Funded and Announced

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Upcoming Events:



- **Cattlemen's Meeting-** *November 2*
- **Southern Partners in Performance Sale, Union Grove, NC-** *November 18*
- **Southeast Bull Expo & Sale-** *November 18*
- **Knoll Crest Farm Total Performance Bull Sale, Red House, Va.-** *December 1*
- **48th Annual Union County Performance Tested Bull Sale, Monroe, NC-** *December 2*