

NewsWatch

Kansas Clippings

Three earn K-State Agricultural Alumni awards

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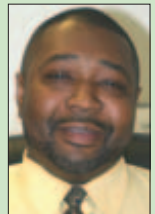
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NRCS hires new state conservationist

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worked most recently in Arizona as assistant state conservationist for financial assistance programs; prior to that he worked for NRCS in Missouri, Indiana, Nebraska and South Carolina.



ERIC BANKS

Movers and shakers

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... Goodland farmer **Jessica Davis Cole** was named by Gov. Kathleen Sebelius to the Kansas Film Services Commission, which gives the Kansas Department of Commerce guidance in attracting film companies to the state.

Beachner Grain purchases Garnett cooperative

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KARL elects 2008-09 board

Jim Bassett, Dover, is the new chairman of the Kansas Agriculture and Rural Leadership program for 2008-09. Officers and new board members were elected in April. Lance Woodbury, Garden City, is vice chairman; Clark Boyer, Kingman, serves as treasurer, and Carolyn Harms, Derby, is secretary. Three new board members were elected. They are Raymond Flickner, Wichita; Terry Nelson, Long Island; and Irwin Porter, Quinter. Daniel Snyder, Lyons, leaves the board after six years of service.



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NewsWatch

Ugliest recall can teach us lessons

Analysis

By HAROLD HARPSTER

BEEF producers must not forget the aftereffects of February's massive beef recall by USDA. That 143 million pounds of beef harvested by a California meatpacking company — and recalled — was the largest in history.

What triggered the recall was disgusting, you have to wonder what condition these animals were in when they left the farm. The problem animals in this case, as are most downer cattle, were cull breeding animals.

While their inhumane actions were indefensible, you have to wonder what condition these animals were in when they left the farm. The problem animals in this case, as are most downer cattle, were cull breeding animals.

Producers must responsibly market cattle able to withstand the rigors of transportation and handling in the harvest facility. The beef industry is increasingly able to track cattle back to their original owners.

Ensure your quality and value

Partial results of the 2007 national audit of market cow and bull beef quality were presented at the National Cattlemen's Beef Association annual meeting. It found that 64% of all cattle could be traced back to their original owner, 19% to the auction barn and 13% to the cattle dealer or trader. Only 5% could not be traced back past the packing plant.

Improving the quality and value of market cows and bulls was embraced in the 2007 audit. And the related directives touch on the following marketing and safety issues:

■ **"Max" cow and bull values.** Cull bull and cow sales generally generate 12% to 16% of a herd's gross income.

Key Points

- Good animal husbandry and timely culling pad your paycheck.
- Getting "one more season" from cull bulls and cows raises risks.
- Improved trace-back abilities bring accountability back home.

Making use of special cull cattle sales or group marketing can boost values.

■ **Consider season of sale.** The season has a huge impact on profitability. The market tends to get flooded during fall pregnancy checks. If feed is available, culls can be fed and held for January or February when markets typically improve.

■ **Be legally responsible.** It's best to proactively ensure the safety and integrity of your product. It's also your legal responsibility to ensure that withdrawal times for pharmaceuticals and other animal-health products have passed before treated cattle are slaughtered.

■ **Handle with care.** Make sure all your bull and cow handlers understand they are handling a food product that's soon to be on a consumer's plate.

The 1999 audit revealed that 88% of cow carcasses suffered from bruises. Injecting at proper injection sites is just as important in cows as it is in younger cattle. Many primal cuts from the ribs, loins and rounds find their way into steakhouses.

■ **Rethink timely culling.** For many operations, fall pregnancy testing offers an opportunity to evaluate each cow for cancer eye, advanced lesions, arthritis, structural problems, injuries, emaciation or chronic illness. Trying to get one more year out of a problem cow often means selling a poor calf next year and significantly lowering or losing the cow's salvage value.

Harpster is a Penn State animal scientist and raises Angus on his family farm.



MAKING THE GRADE: Producers, too, are responsible for quality at packing plants.

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Central Kansas Farm Credit selects 12 scholarship winners

In its 2008 scholarship competition, Farm Credit Services of Central Kansas awarded \$750 scholarships to 12 collegians in April. Recipients and their college are as follows: Kris Bolte, Jewell, Kansas State University; Kimberly Brinker, Glen Elder, K-State; Benjamin Colle, Hutchinson, K-State; Kristin Fisher, St. John, McPherson College; Katie Govert, Cunningham, K-State; Nicholas Mizner, Esbon, K-State; Benjamin Norris, Wellington, K-State; Kristi Roe, Gypsum, K-State; Kristin Sterneker, Cunningham, K-State; Monica VanCurren, Sedgwick, Wichita State; Kevin Waldschmidt, Waldron, Oklahoma State University; and Alan Youngers, Viola, Pittsburg State University. Scholarships were awarded based on academic standing, leadership and community involvement.

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