



The Future of Beef Cattle May Bring Opportunities

Historically, beef cows have grazed on a large part of the land in this country that isn't suitable for annual crops. From the desert southwest where there might only be one or two cows per square mile, to Maine forest land and Florida marshes, wherever I traveled there were small beef herds. But a lot of beef comes from Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land out west. A total of 155 million acres are leased for grazing by beef cows and sheep. That's an area almost as big as four states of Wisconsin being grazed.

In my opinion, the ability of this land to continue to support the beef industry is in doubt. There is more and more drought in important cow-calf BLM grazing areas. But more importantly there is a growing anti-grazing sentiment arising in Washington D.C. from people that mostly live in high-rise apartments with cats. Their view is that grazing with cattle is destructive and they would much rather see grazing by elk and buffalo which evidently are different in ways I can't grasp. They preach sustainability, but their agenda is to leave BLM land empty wilderness. Oh, and by the way, no hunting either. A lot of them are vegetarian and feel strongly that the rest of us need to embrace their beliefs. We have continuing droughts, and the growing threat of less BLM grazing presents a growing opportunity to the dairy industry to supply beef calves. Some dairy farmers just sell Holstein bull calves. Some are using angus on part of their herd and selling black calves, heifers, and bulls. Some producers are putting bull sexed semen in their poorest heifers and poor cows, and some producers are using bull sexed angus embryos in some cows. There are a lot of options.

I've always struggled watching producers raise Holstein beef. Very few producers keep their expenses and profit separate, meaning enterprising out their steer sales from their dairy profit center. I've always felt that the only profitable producers were the ones that pushed the Holsteins from little on up on a high energy

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Maple Knoll Vet Services Sold to Country Hills

Effective September 1, 2023, Maple Knoll Veterinary Services was sold to Country Hills Pet Hospital.

WVS farm clients who were also clients of Maple Knoll, will no longer be able to bill their small animal services through Waupun Veterinary Services but will have to pay Maple Knoll or Country Hills at the time of service.

WVS will be able to provide rabies and distemper shots ON THE FARM for dogs and cats and provide certificates for property tax and licensing purposes. This service will be available in the near future. We are also working on a system to provide reminders for vaccine boosters.

ration. Through the years I've seen a lot of 1,800 pound 30-month Holstein steers backgrounded on roughage that were truly money losers. I've implanted steers with 200-day implants three times for one producer and they were 400 pounds when we first started. Do the math.

Beef cattle background better than Holsteins, meaning they can put a frame on with roughage, like waste dairy feed, or even a lot lower quality feed. Beef cattle, once they move onto a feedlot type ration, they finish that frame rapidly. Holsteins don't. But if a dairy producer is going to spend extra money producing a high-quality beef calf, I think that dairyman might start thinking about capitalizing with a beef setup that keeps all the profits in the dairyman's pocket. If I'm correct, and there will be a continuous shortage of beef animals coming from the grazing herd, maybe this is a great opportunity. Maybe small beef backgrounding and finishing lots could be profitable. Raising beef steers is slightly different than dairy farming, but the equipment is the same, and the husbandry is similar. If you do it, enterprise the operation so you can get an accurate idea of profit and loss and then you can make management changes to improve profitability.

The Fate of Large Animal Medicine in Today's World

The last two years have seen an influx of large animal veterinary clinics selling out to corporate interests. There are several factors driving this, and there is history and precedent included.

Large corporations have been grabbing independent businesses and practices in human medicine, starting with pharmacies, then optometry offices, then dental clinics, then in various surgery specialties.

Fifteen years ago, the same business model used for dental clinics and optometry offices was used to gobble up at least half the small animal veterinary clinics in the country.

The advent of super cheap money drove business development companies (basically a hedge fund except it's shares are sold on wall street) to search for investments that they could group similar companies under a single management company and then take the stock public. The allure was to buy the practice from older veterinarians that want money now and then take a big cut out of the cash flow of the practice because the corporate owners can, and all the veterinarians become employees.

There are some economies of scale, purchases from drug companies are cheaper the larger you are, corporate can help with accounting, and corporate can run payroll. Corporate also sets up common treatment protocols with specific products to insure profitability.

My concern is that the corporate environment can set up a situation where employees don't see themselves are owners in the future, which for some is fine, but for others it might increase the tendency to move out of practice where there is already a shortage. I worry that the culture of everyone in the clinic being on the same team, and the connection between the clinic and the client will be weakened. Will corporate understand that connection? A story I was told by a veterinarian from a corporate owned practice involved onboarding a new veterinarian and the practice was struggling with the new veterinarian and DA surgeries. The corporate response was to pick a day and schedule a day full of DA surgeries for that vet for that day.

The truth is there are fewer large animal veterinarians coming through schools. Corporate markets to the large animal clinics it will do the recruiting and all the overhead work in the clinic.

The price of buyout is also a retirement enticement for older clinic owners. But ask yourself as the consumer of veterinary service, does corporate ownership of your veterinary clinic benefit you? We have no plans to sell and we invest a lot of resources in recruiting the next generation of veterinary students for our benefit and yours.

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Ireland Solution to Global Warming

Ireland wants to slaughter 200,000 cows to meet their climate goal.

Again, whether a cow, or a deer eats forage, or the forage rots, the CO2 result is the same.

However, unless Ireland culls humans, or reduces food consumption, they will just import the finished beef and dairy products, and the transportation will increase CO2 release.

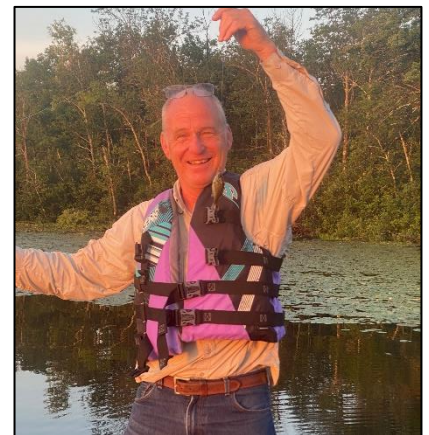
It's good for American farmers.

Lightbulbs for Sale at WVS

WVS has a box of T12 4-foot florescent light bulbs for sale that was purchased accidentally and can't be returned. The bulbs are brand new. They are \$100 OBO.

In the News

There is a shocking and unexplained increase in testicular injuries in women's sports in the last 5 years...



Dr. Al's big catch at a recent vet conference in the early morning hours before the conference started. He out-caught Ralph.