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Bred Cow & Cull Cow Market

Bred heifer and bred cow markets are relatively strong. Recent market quotes for bred heifers have generally ranged from \$900-1000 per head. Higher prices have been paid for “fancy” types. Young bred cows have ranged from \$1,000-1,150 and middle-aged bred cows have been \$900-1000 per head. These values are down somewhat from market levels in October-November, but still represent optimistic price levels. Calf prices would likely need to remain above \$100/cwt for 5-weight calves for the next few years to pay for these cows. Given the recent USDA cattle inventory report, which showed no expansion in beef cattle numbers, these price levels are likely attainable.

The cull cow market is also very strong at the present time. Cull cow prices in Nebraska this last week were above \$50 per cwt. for most lots sold. That is an increase of approximately 40% from last fall levels. One of the reasons that the cull market is so strong, is that in addition to our tight supply of cattle, there are no cull cows from Canada coming into our market place. Traditionally, we have used culls from Canada to meet our demand for cow beef. With the recent BSE events, it may be a considerable time before any cull cows from Canada are imported into the U.S. Therefore, I would expect that the U.S. cull cow market will continue to be strong.

The Markets

Slaughter cattle prices were firm to a few dollars higher later in the week in the southern plains, with prices up to \$78.50. Prices were also stronger later in the week in the north with dressed prices ranging from \$119-127 dressed. The fed market was encouraged by boxed beef prices remaining steady for the week. Feeder cattle prices were generally higher in Kansas and while Nebraska prices were steady to lower. There was good volume for 700 lb and heavier cattle but only limited volume on 5-weight calves.

	Last Week	Previous Week	Last Year
Kansas Fed Steer Price, live weight (35-65% Choice)	\$77.58	\$75.07	\$78.60
Neb. Fed Steer Price, dressed weight (35-65% Choice)	\$123.54	\$123.72	\$122.19
700-800 lb. Feeder Steer Price, Kansas 4 market average	\$87.71	\$83.34	\$76.39
500-600 lb. Feeder Steer Price, Kansas 4 market average	\$106.30	\$99.32	\$92.80
700-800 lb. Feeder Steer Price, Neb. 7 market average	\$86.97	\$88.65	\$78.07
500-600 lb. Feeder Steer Price, Neb. 7 market average	\$112.91	\$114.43	\$95.58
Choice Boxed Beef Price, 600-750 lb. carcass	126.57	\$131.26	\$129.07
Choice-Select Spread, 600-750 lb. carcass	\$8.54	\$7.60	\$6.72