

Dillon Feuz, Ph.D.
Professor, Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Nebraska

Fall Calf & Yearling Prices

With the exception of Missouri and parts of Texas, most of the pastures in major cow-calf states are in good condition for this time of year. Therefore, there are not many early sales of calves or yearlings, and may not be many forced early sales in the next month. That implies a fairly normal marketing scenario for later this summer and into fall for calves and yearlings. Over the last 5 years, yearling prices have remained steady or increased slightly from early July into September. Calf prices have typically declined by about 8% into October and November. Prices in July in Nebraska have averaged \$115 per cwt. for 850 pound steers and 550 pound steer prices have averaged \$150 per cwt. If this year's prices follow similar patterns to the past, then prices for 850 pound yearling steers should remain at \$115 per cwt. into September. Calf prices would be expected to decline to \$138 per cwt. for 550 pound steers in October-November.

This past week Superior Livestock Auction sold over 275,000 head of cattle, many of them were calves and yearlings for fall delivery. Prices for 850 pound yearling steers, with delivery for August-September, averaged just over \$111 per cwt. for the north central and south central states. Steer calves from the same states, weighing 550 pounds, with delivery in October-November, averaged just under \$130 per cwt. Those price levels should be profitable for cow-calf producers and should cover most costs for a summer grazing program for yearlings. However, as Dr. Mintert pointed out in last week's article, the fed market will have to strengthen above current price expectations for feedlots to make any money at those prices.

The Markets

Slaughter cattle prices were steady to \$0.50 higher in the south with trade occurring on Friday and \$1 higher in the north with active trade on Thursday and Friday this last week. Trade volume was adequate to clear most showlists. Prices ranged from \$82-82.50 in the south and were mostly \$129 in the north. Choice boxed beef prices were steady to a little lower for the week. The Choice-Select spread increased but is still below the historical level. Feeder cattle prices were not reported in Kansas and were generally steady to higher in Nebraska on very limited feeder cattle trade.

	Last Week	Previous Week	Last Year
Kansas Fed Steer Price, live weight	\$82.15	\$81.99	\$85.22
Neb. Fed Steer Price, dressed weight	\$128.92	\$127.90	\$135.23
700-800 lb. Feeder Steer Price, Kansas 4 market average		\$116.00	\$121.77
500-600 lb. Feeder Steer Price, Kansas 4 market average		--	\$134.80
700-800 lb. Feeder Steer Price, Neb. 7 market average	\$120.75	\$119.68	\$129.84
500-600 lb. Feeder Steer Price, Neb. 7 market average	\$150.80	\$148.45	\$147.65
Choice Boxed Beef Price, 600-900 lb. carcass	\$135.61	\$135.73	\$140.43
Choice-Select Spread, 600-900 lb. carcass	\$3.41	\$2.87	\$1.33