



M I S S I S S I P P I  
**BCIA**  
BEEF CATTLE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

**Upcoming events:**

- October 15—Gain on Forage Bull Test Nomination Deadline
- October 25- Prairie Research Unit Field Day
- November 12—MBCIA Educational Meeting and Supper, Raymond, MS
- November 13—MBCIA Fall Bull and Heifer Sale, Raymond, MS
- November 14- Beginning of Gain on Forage Bull Test
- January 20—MBCIA Spring Bull and Heifer Sale Nomination Deadline
- March 4- MBCIA Annual Membership and Educational Meeting and Supper, Raymond, MS
- March 5- Hinds Bull Test and MBCIA Spring Bull and Heifer Sale, Raymond, MS
- March 12-14- MSU-ES Cattle Artificial Insemination School, Mississippi State, MS

**MBCIA Fall Bull and Heifer Sale—November 13**  
*Catalogs to be available in mid October*

**Sale  
Offering:**

17 Angus bulls  
3 Charolais bulls  
2 Hereford bulls  
1 SimAngus bull  
40 commercial bred  
heifers

**Fall 2014 Consignors**

Barry Farms  
Gaines Angus Farm  
J & A Farm  
Longview Farms  
M & M Farms  
Monogram Farm  
Mississippi State University Beef Unit  
Phil Slay Farm  
Ryals Bros  
Sloan Farm  
Woods Angus

**Contemporary Grouping for Beef Cattle Genetic Evaluation**

Contemporary grouping in beef cattle genetic evaluations is an attempt to account for environmental effects so that remaining differences among animals more closely reflect heritable differences among them. A contemporary group is defined as a group of cattle that are of the same breed composition and sex, are similar in age, and have been raised under the same management conditions. More simply put, a contemporary group is a group of animals that have had an equal opportunity to perform.

Breeders may be tempted to economize by recording and registering only the better performing calves within their herd. They might also worry that recording data on poorer performing calves will reflect unfavorably on their herd. Both of these conclusions are incorrect. Unless inventory and performance data are submitted on every calf born in a herd, subsequent genetic evaluations will be based on less information and consequently will be less accurate than would otherwise have been possible.

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Breed registries generally define rules for effective contemporary grouping according to breed composition, herd, sex, season, and the age range between the oldest and youngest calf within the group. After Reporting data from all eligible animals is an important aspect of contemporary grouping that deserves special attention.

More information on BIF Guidelines for contemporary groups may be found: <http://beefimprovement.org/content/uploads/2013/07/Master-Edition-of-BIF-Guidelines-Updated-12-17-2010.pdf>

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*“Feeder cattle prices today are nearly double (up over 90 percent) ...”*

## **Cattle Prices: How high is high...revisited?**

By: Derrell S. Peel, Oklahoma State University Extension  
 “Feeder and fed cattle prices are at or near all time highs and are poised to keep moving higher. Both Feeder and Live cattle futures suggest that higher prices are yet to come. In several recent meetings and conversations with producers, I am seeing a couple of reactions to the current situation. There seems to be an overall feeling of disbelief or a sense that there is another shoe to fall. The basic question seems to be one of “Is this for real?”. Given everything we have been through in recent years and the amount of volatility in most input and output markets, such hesitancy is understandable. It is easy to remember corn and wheat markets in 2008 which soared to astronomical heights for a brief period of time. Are cattle markets in the same situation: set for a wild but short-lived ride into the stratosphere?”

The preceding paragraph was taken from an article that I wrote in January of 2011. I stumbled across it recently and realized that it applies to an even greater extent today with a market situation that is significantly different than when the original article was written. Feeder cattle prices today are nearly double (up over 90 percent) the level when the question was posed in 2011. Fed cattle prices are up over 50 percent from early 2011. No one knew in January, 2011 that the beef industry would suffer tremendously with drought impacts into 2014 that would take an already tight supply situation to extreme levels and provoke the current

unimaginable production and market situation.

It appeared in early 2011 that the beef cattle industry was poised for herd expansion with cattle inventories already lower than intended by the industry. Instead, we find ourselves in 2014 with the beef cow herd down another 6 percent from the 2011 level. Though herd expansion has likely started in 2014, it will take another three years to recover the 1.87 million head of beef cows lost since 2011. Additional expansion beyond that level is likely but will depend on domestic and international market conditions towards the end of the decade. The prospects for herd expansion for much of the rest of the decade suggest that cattle prices are likely to grind higher yet from current record levels before peaking and working lower towards the end of the decade. I’m hearing many producers and others repeating the adage that “high prices cure high prices” and they do; but in the case of the beef industry it will likely take most of the rest of the decade for that to happen. The beef industry does not work like crop production in which major production adjustments can occur in a matter of one crop year. Heifer retention will make tight cattle supplies tighter for a couple of years before any resulting production increase hits the market. The current situation pretty much ensures a four to six year recovery process with supply driven price strength for much of that process.

## **Field day planned for forages, beef**

Beef and forage producers will receive current recommendations on a variety of topics influencing production success at a field day on Oct. 25. The 2014 Fall Beef Cattle and Forage Field Day will begin at 9 a.m on that Saturday at the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station’s Prairie Research Unit in Monroe County. A sponsored lunch will conclude the event. MAFES researchers and Mississippi State University Extension Service agents and specialists will provide information on nutrition, marketing and other issues related to beef production. Topics on the schedule include updates on research at Prairie addressing native grasses, cattle teeth as age indicators, and salt and

mineral supplements. Speakers will provide an overview of the Mississippi cattle auction market price study. Visitors will be able to tour the feeding behavior facilities and see demonstrations on the use of global positioning systems for forage seeding. Additional topics include cattle growth implant studies and renovating pastures with row crops. The MAFES Prairie Research Unit is located at 10223 Highway 382 just east of Prairie. Activities will take place at the main cattle handling facility on south side of the highway. The Monroe County Co-Op and Clay County Co-Op are sponsoring the field day. Reserve a meal by contacting Joyce Pace or Jane Parish at 662-369-4426 or jparish@ext.msstate.edu.

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*“...at the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station’s Prairie Research Unit in Monroe County during the Oct. 25 in Prairie, Mississippi.”*

## State 2014 hay production may not satisfy demand

By Bonnie Coblentz  
MSU Ag Communications

High demand for hay last winter, a wet spring and heavy insect pressure have all challenged the state's pastureland, which means hay may be scarce this winter. Rocky Lemus, forage specialist with the Mississippi State University Extension Service, said these factors pushed the state's hay inventories 20 percent lower than the three-year average. "The state had about a 10 percent loss in forage stands from a combination of cold weather and low soil nutrients, especially potassium, to help plants and root systems cope with cold weather," Lemus said. "Hay stocks were low coming into the summer, and we have only had three hay harvests this year."

The first cutting of the year was delayed by two weeks because of cold, wet weather. More recently, hot, dry weather limited pasture growth. "There will be hay available to sustain on-farm feeding, but the hay inventory for commercial sale is very low at this point," Lemus said. "Extreme cold temperatures during the last few winters have decreased the grazing potential of annual ryegrass or small grains, leaving producers scrambling for extra hay to meet the daily feeding requirements of their cattle."

John Michael Riley, Extension agricultural economist, said hay stocks remain limited, and poor 2014 production will keep supplies tight moving into winter. "Rains and insect pressure from armyworms have current hay production estimates for Mississippi at 1.38 million tons, their lowest since 2000," he said. Riley said he expects demand for hay this winter will be above average because of the limited supplies coming into the growing season and less-than-ideal summer production. In 2013, hay production was valued at \$157 million, which was 25 percent higher than the five-year average value. Hay is mostly sold locally, and prices vary widely. "Hit-or-miss rains can make supply in one spot very different from another," Riley said. "In general, recent hay prices have ranged from \$40 to \$120 per ton."

As the weather starts to turn cooler, summer perennial grasses decrease forage production and producers start to plant annual ryegrass for winter grazing. "Although stockpiled forages could be an alternative to close the gap until ryegrass is ready for grazing, producers rely heavily on hay to accomplish this task,"

Tracy Robertson, Carroll County Extension coordinator, said "Pasture conditions have become dry and dusty as grass continues to become brittle and slow-growing without rain," Robertson said. "We're hoping for some rain soon to help the grass green up and grow a little more for the cattle and livestock that we have."

The U.S. Department of Agriculture reported on Sept. 14 that 92 percent of the state's hay crop had been harvested. Of this, they projected that 10 percent was in excellent condition and 83 percent in fair or good condition.

Blake Layton, Extension entomologist, said armyworm populations have been high in Mississippi since early June and caused significant losses in bermudagrass hay fields. Central and south Mississippi were the hardest hit. "We're to the point now where it's so late in the year that it's not a huge issue in bermudagrass hayfields," Layton said. "The key caution is for those who are planting winter grazing to watch closely. Sometimes when there have been heavy populations of armyworms on hay fields, they can hang around, and if it's warm enough, they can damage the seedling winter grazing grass that people are planting right now." Layton urged producers to address fall armyworm problems as soon as they appear. "A heavy infestation can defoliate a field just before it is time to cut," he said. "They are less of a threat to pastures, but they can sometimes cause problems. Per acre cost of control is less than the value of one or two square bales of hay, but losses to heavy infestations that go untreated can approach 100 percent."

*"...Rains and insect pressure from armyworms have current hay production estimates for Mississippi at 1.38 million tons, their lowest since 2000"*



Mississippi hay supplies are expected to be low going into winter. Factors that contributed to low production include a very cold winter, a wet spring and an abundance of armyworms. (Photo by MSU Ag Communications/Scott Corey)

*Mississippi Beef Cattle Improvement Association—Productivity and Quality*

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Send questions or comments to Brandi Karisch, Extension Beef Cattle Specialist, Mississippi State University Extension Service

*Brandi Karisch*



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Visit MBCIA online at <http://msucares.com/livestock/beef/mbcia/>

MISSISSIPPI  
**BCIA** Membership Application  
BEEF CATTLE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

County: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

(Check one) Seedstock:  Commercial:

Cattle breed(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Completed applications and \$5 annual dues or \$100 life-time dues payable to Mississippi BCIA should be mailed to:  
Mississippi Beef Cattle Improvement Association  
Box 9815, Mississippi State, MS 39762

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Cattle and calves ranks as the top valued commodity for beginning farmers (those with 10 years or less experience on their current farm) at \$15.6 billion. Poultry and poultry products is second at \$9.7 billion.

[http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Online\\_Resources/Highlights/Beginning\\_Farmers/](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Online_Resources/Highlights/Beginning_Farmers/)

Save the date!

**BEEF**

**20 IMPROVEMENT FEDERATION 15**

JUNE 9-12 • BILOXI, MS

*Annual Convention*

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION SERVICE