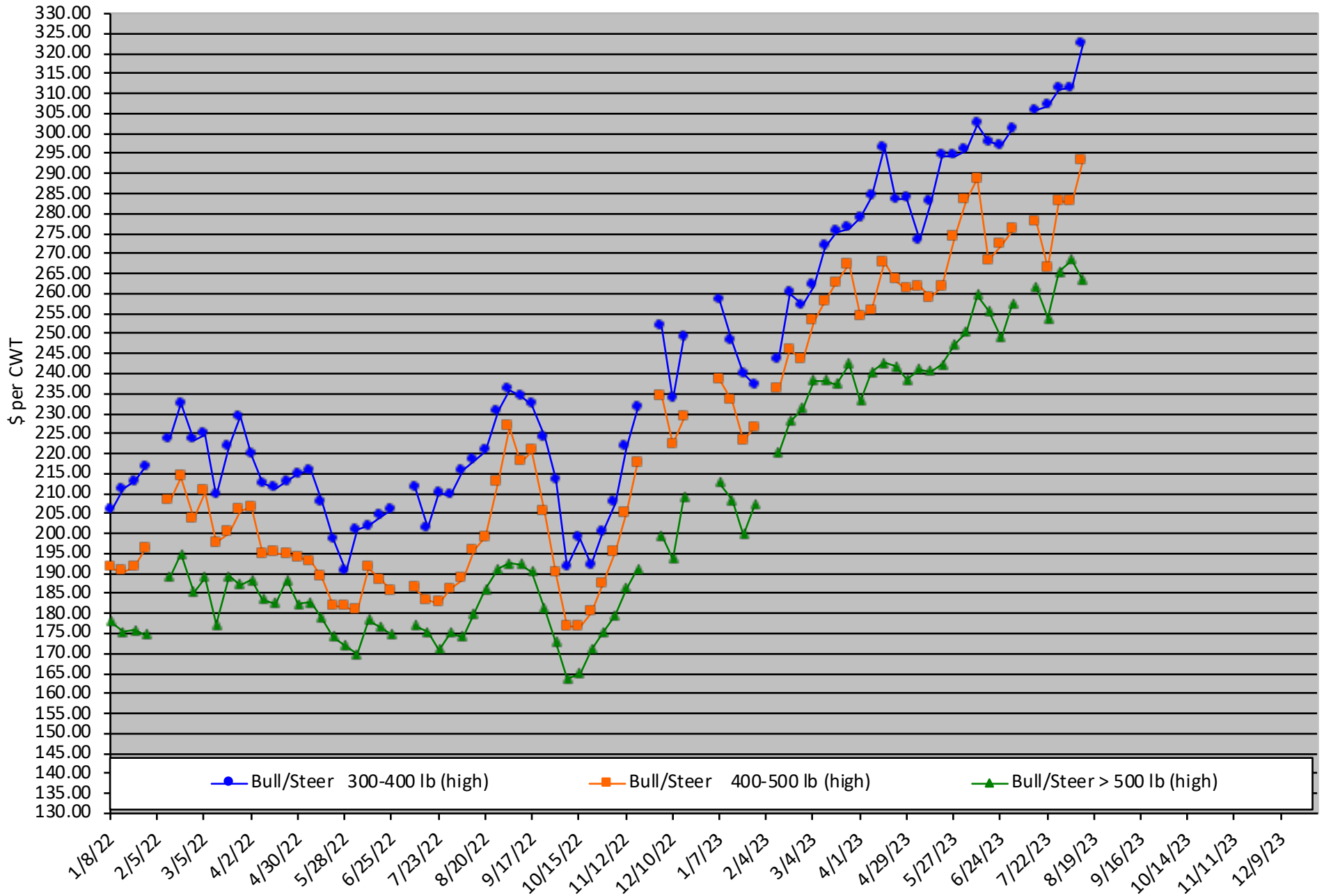


Calf Price Trends

Trend of the Highest Price Reported for Various Weight Calves, Average of 6 East & Central Texas Livestock Auctions

Chart created by Dr. Jason Banta, Extension Beef Cattle Specialist

For a weekly email copy of this chart please email amsensing@ag.tamu.edu or contact a Texas A&M AgriLife County Extension Agent

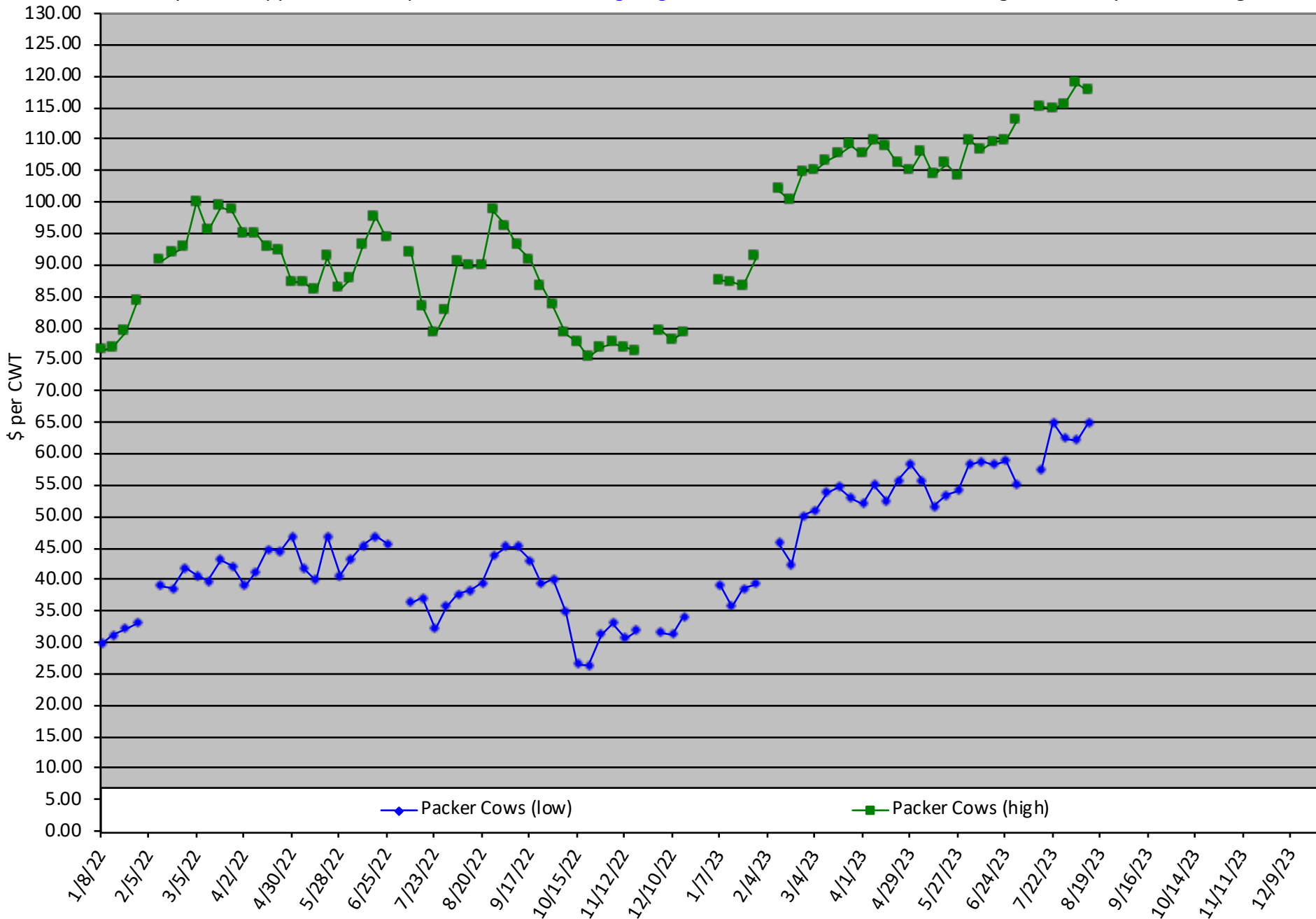


Packer Cow PriceTrends

Trend of High and Low Prices Reported for Packer Cows, Average of 6 East & Central Texas Livestock Auctions

Chart created by Dr. Jason Banta, Extension Beef Cattle Specialist

For a weekly email copy of this chart please email amsensing@ag.tamu.edu or contact a Texas A&M AgriLife County Extension Agent



Reduce Winter Feeding with Stockpiled Forage and Winter Pasture

Friday, August 25, 2023

Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center
1710 N. Hwy 3053, Overton, TX 75684

Would you prefer to feed hay for 60 days? 100 days? or 150 days?
Here's an opportunity to learn how to significantly reduce your hay feeding needs.

Nitrogen fertilizer prices have decreased from recent highs and continue to trend lower.
Winter pasture can be a good option to greatly reduce winter feeding costs.

Program presented by:

Drs. Vanessa Corriher-Olson and Jason Banta

Topics include:

- Stockpiled forage: management and utilization
- Acres needed per cow for stockpiled forage and winter pasture
- Cool-season forages and variety selection
- Establishment and fertilization
- Monthly and seasonal forage production potential
- Appropriate mineral supplementation
- Estimated costs



Register by August 15th at 1:00 PM: \$60/person
Register before August 23 at 1:00 PM: \$75/person

- Includes lunch and program materials

9:30 Program starts
12:00 Lunch served
4:30 Adjourn

Register online at: <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/ansc-ev-028>
or go agriliferegister.tamu.edu and search by location "Overton"

For more information on this program please contact Michelle Sensing @ 903-847-0611.



ALTERNATIVE HAY AND WINTER FEEDING OPTIONS

by Associate Professor & Extension Beef Cattle Specialist Jason Banta, PhD., PAS

Fortunately, drought and soil moisture conditions are improving for much of the U.S. However, due to a cool spring in some areas and dry conditions during much of the growing season, hay supplies are low in many areas. Additionally, recent outbreaks of armyworms have also contributed to tight hay conditions.

If enough grass hay cannot be obtained, other roughage sources can be used in developing a winter feeding program for cow-calf operations. Roughage is a collective term used for forage, hay, and other fiber based feedstuffs that cause cattle to chew their cud and help maintain rumen health. Alternative hay sources include corn stalks, grain sorghum stubble, straw from small grains, and hay purchased from areas of the country that have had better growing conditions. Cotton gin trash can also serve as a roughage source.

Alternative roughage sources can vary tremendously in feeding value, palatability, and cost. These alternative sources should be carefully evaluated before purchase and use in a winter feeding program. They should be tested to determine actual nutrient content. Additionally, corn stalks, corn hay, and grain sorghum stubble should be tested for nitrate levels. Below are some considerations for a handful of the more common alternative roughage sources.

Corn Stalks

Corn stalk hay actually consist of leaves, husk, stalks, and some cobs. Experience and testing results from 2011 show a wide range in quality of corn stalks. Total digestible nutrients (TDN) averaged 46.5 percent but ranged from 32 – 63 percent ; crude protein averaged 5.7 percent and ranged from 5.0 – 6.4 percent. The tremendous range in TDN content is due to a very large range in ash content from 5.6 – 32 percent; as ash content increases TDN content goes down. Ash does not contain any energy and would include minerals and soil contamination.

When the chaff spreader is removed from the combine and the corn stalks are dropped in a windrow and baled without the use of a hay cutter or rake, ash content should be lower leading to higher quality hay.

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However, after combining when a shredder or hay cutter is used to cut all stalks and then everything is raked the bales will have more soil contamination, higher ash content, and less TDN. This is especially true if the person raking gets really aggressive trying to get every leaf, stem, and husk. Looking at the field after baling can be a good indicator of how much soil contamination the hay may have.

As long as soil contamination is not too high, corn stalks can provide a palatable cost-effective roughage source. They can be fed in a hay ring or a pile with limited waste. Corn stalks won't unroll like grass hay, but a front-end loader can be used to spread out the bale. They are generally one of the more available options when hay supplies are short.

Corn Hay

Corn hay consists of the entire corn plant including the ear with kernels. Because of the corn kernels aflatoxins can be a concern; aflatoxins are not a concern with corn stalks. Additionally, if the kernel moisture content is not below 16 percent aflatoxin levels can continue to increase in the bale.

Nitrates are a greater concern with corn hay than corn stalks. This is because the plant didn't grow well enough to produce a grain crop worth harvesting.



Grain Sorghum Stubble

Grain sorghum stubble is cut and raked like sorghum x sudangrass hybrids which are routinely planted for hay. Results from 2011 showed that grain sorghum stubble was similar in TDN content to corn stalks, but protein content was a little lower than corn stalks. There is generally more waste with sorghum stubble than corn stalks. Grain sorghum stubble can be unrolled or fed in a hay ring.

Straw from Small Grain Crops

Wheat straw is the most common, but straw can also be baled from oats, rye, barley, or triticale. Crude protein and TDN content of straw is low. Book values indicate that wheat straw will contain about 3 percent crude protein and 40 percent TDN. Straw is not very palatable and is best used when ground and mixed with other feeds.

Cotton gin trash

This product is also known as cotton gin by-product or cotton burrs and is the result of cotton ginning. It consists of cotton leaves, stems, burrs, lint, and immature seeds along with soil and anything else brought into the gin with the cotton. On average it will contain about 7-9 percent crude protein and 38-42 percent TDN, but nutrient content can vary greatly. Because of its loose bulky nature, it can be difficult to handle and is best when mixed with other feeds. Storage conditions prior to and after purchase can greatly effect if value and usefulness. Additionally, there may be residue concerns depending on what pesticides were applied to the cotton.

When developing a feeding program for this fall and winter it is important to determine how much hay a cow will consumed. If non-lactating cows are allowed

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to eat moderate quality hay free choice they will generally consume 1.8 – 2.0 percent of their body weight on a dry matter basis each day. A lactating cow will consume about 2.3 – 2.5 percent of her body weight. Remember to account for any storage or feeding losses and dry matter content when comparing needs to available supplies.

If you do not have enough hay, there are ways to stretch limited supplies. Selling cows is one option that should be considered. Keep in mind what it will cost to feed cows compared with how much profit they can generate in the future.

Another option is to limit the amount of hay that is fed. For example, a 1,350 lb Brangus cow in late gestation could be fed 15 lbs of corn stalks, 8 lbs of whole corn, and 2 lbs of cottonseed meal to maintain her current body condition. If she was allowed to eat hay free choice she would consume about 27 lbs per day plus 1-3 lbs of a supplement. It is critical to work with a nutritionist to determine what and how much feed will be needed to meet the nutrient requirements of your cows and to ensure that no potential mineral problems exist in the diet. Feed costs will vary but will likely be from \$1.80 - \$2.50 per day for each cow when limiting hay and providing 8-12 lbs of additional feed.

As a rule I like to supply at least 10 lbs of roughage to a cow each day to help maintain rumen health. This amount may be a little conservative compared to some recommendations, but I would prefer to be

on the safe side when dealing with breeding stock that we hope will be in the herd for a long time. Additionally, it is important to gradually increase supplementation of grains and other carbohydrate feedstuffs to allow rumen microbial populations to adjust. Cottonseed meal, soybean meal, and other similar high protein supplements don't have to be gradually increased.

Planting ryegrass and small grains can also help stretch limited hay supplies. While seed costs may be higher this year these winter annual grasses still provide high quality forage at extremely low prices (\$20 – \$60/ton of dry forage). The best approach is the plant them and then wait to apply fertilizer until after germination. Limit grazing of these winter annual grasses could also be used to replace energy and protein supplements like those used in the example above.

The key to successfully deal with limited hay supplies will be to evaluate the costs and logistical considerations for each available option and determine which one is best for your operation.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Dr. Jason Banta has worked as an Extension Beef Cattle Specialist since 2005. He is stationed at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center in Overton, where he works with county Extension agents and allied industry personal to develop educational programming for cow-calf and stocker producers. Banta also works with other AgriLife and A&M faculty to conduct beef cattle research in the areas of ruminant nutrition, cow-calf and stocker management, and animal health. Additionally, he teaches a Special Topics in Applied Beef Cattle Nutrition course in the College of Veterinary Medicine at Texas A&M.