

# Texas Drought Causing Ripples In Cattle Outlook

## Herd Reductions Spearhead A Drop In National Inventory

BY BETSY BLANEY  
Associated Press

LUBBOCK, Texas — The worst drought in Texas' history has led to the largest-ever one-year decline in the leading cattle-state's cow herd, raising the likelihood of increased beef prices as the number of animals decline and demand remains strong.

Since Jan. 1, the number of cows in Texas has dropped by about 600,000, a 12 percent decline from the roughly 5 million cows the state had at the beginning of the year, said David Anderson, who monitors beef markets for the Texas AgriLife Extension Service. That's likely the largest drop in the number of cows any state has ever seen, though Texas had a larger percentage decline from 1934 to 1935, when ranchers were reeling from the Great Depression and Dust Bowl, Anderson said.

Anderson said many cows were moved "somewhere there's grass," but lots of others were slaughtered. He said that in Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Louisiana and Arkansas, about 200,000 more cattle were slaughtered this year, a 20 percent increase over last year.

That extra supply could help meet increased demand from China and other countries, but the loss of cows likely will mean fewer cattle in future years.

"Consumers are going to pay more because we're going to have less beef," Anderson said. "Fewer cows, calves, less beef production and increasing exports."

The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that beef prices will increase up to 5.5 in 2012, in part because the number of cattle has declined. That follows a 9 percent increase in beef prices in the past year.

Oklahoma, the nation's second-largest cattle producer, also saw about a 12 percent drop in

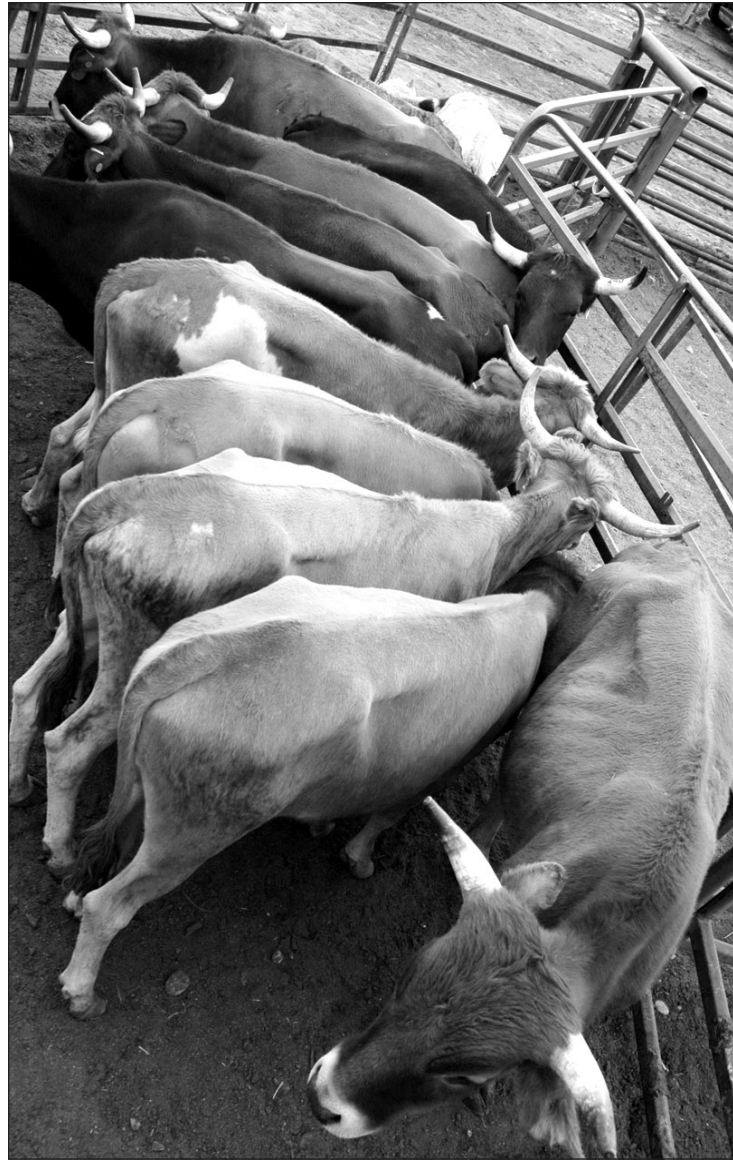


PHOTO: METRO GRAPHICS

cows, Oklahoma State University agriculture economist Derrell Peel said.

Anderson said beef production nationally will be down 4 percent next year.

In Texas, the problem is primarily due to the worst single-year drought in the state's history. From January through November the state got just 46

percent of its normal rainfall of about 26 inches.

The drought was the result of a La Nina weather pattern, which brings drier than normal conditions to the southwestern states. Forecasters have said La Nina is back, meaning another dry year for Texas, Oklahoma and other nearby states.

The lack of rain coupled with

blistering summer heat caused pastures to wither, leaving ranchers with the choice of buying feed for the cattle or selling them.

Betsy Ross, a 75-year-old rancher from the small central Texas community of Granger, said she sold all but 80 of the 225 grass-fed animals she had in January. With feed costs up 40 percent and her pasture parched, Ross said she didn't have any other option.

"It's not a profitable year, heavens no," she said. "If you can't keep them on grass when they're grass fed you're not going to make any money."

About 200 miles north in Sulphur Springs, Texas, part-time rancher Dwyatt Bell said producers in his part of the state sold off up to half their herds. Bell said high prices for cattle have helped offset increases expenses, but many ranchers still are struggling to stay afloat.

"It's been a rough year," he said.

Across Texas, the drought has caused an estimated \$5.2 billion in losses to farmers and livestock producers, and that figure is expected to rise.

Nationally, the number of cows has dropped by an estimated 617,000 this year, a 2 percent decline from the 30.9 million animals on Jan. 1. That number would be larger, but states in northern plains such as North Dakota, South Dakota and Nebraska, increased their cow herd.

Anderson said it's unclear whether high beef prices would hurt U.S. sales or limit exports. The U.S. is the world third largest consumer of beef per capita at 85.5 pounds per year. Uruguay is first at 137 pounds per capita.

"Exports have been the strongest part of beef demand all year and they're expected to remain so but higher prices should constrain their growth," he said.

### SDSU Extension Offers Radio Tool For Farmers

BROOKINGS (AP) — The South Dakota State University Extension Service has a new way to get information to farmers.

Field specialist Lynn Gordon says iGrow radio is a daily, three-minute report being carried by a dozen radio stations. It's an offshoot of the iGrow website.

Gordon tells KELO-TV that farmers are getting more of their information through technology including computers and cellphones, but they also still spend a lot of time in their pickup trucks and tractors with the radio on. He says iGrow radio topics will deal with soybean, corn, wheat and beef production.

The Extension Service eventually will have podcasts and video podcasts on the website to go along with the radio broadcasts.

### Beef Skill-A-Thon Set For Davison Co. Show

BROOKINGS — 4-H youth exhibiting, or interested in 4-H beef projects are encouraged to participate in the new Beef Skill-A-Thon during the Davison County Winter Calf Show, Dec. 29 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. The contest will be held at the Davison County 4-H Fairgrounds, 3200 West Havens Ave. Mitchell. No pre-entry is required. This is a free event for youth.

The Beef Skill-A-Thon is a great way to test youth's knowledge and skill of basic beef herd management. Youth will complete four stations of hands on exercises ranging from (but not limited to) nutrition, quality assurance, breeding & selection, and carcass evaluation. Age divisions will follow 4H rules for beginners, juniors, and seniors.

Top Beef Skill-A-Thon scores from each age division will be recognized during the No Fit Showmanship Jackpot Contest Thursday night.

To help prepare for the Beef Skill-A-Thon, here are some suggested resources that are available at your county or regional center:

- Beef Resource Handbook - The Ohio State University
- Bite Into Beef, Leading the Charge, Here's the Beef - National 4-H Curriculum
- Youth PQA Plus Youth Manual - National Pork Board
- iGrow Beef Page (<http://igrow.org/livestock/beef/>)

For more information about the Beef Skill-a-thon contact Megan Nielson [megan.nielson@sdsstate.edu](mailto:megan.nielson@sdsstate.edu) or the Davison County Extension Office for Davison County Winter Beef Show information ([davison@sdsstate.edu](mailto:davison@sdsstate.edu)).

### SDSU Extension Offers Trip To Conference

BROOKINGS — SDSU Extension is organizing a charter bus for people who want to travel to the Great Plains Growers' Conference set for Jan. 4-7, 2012 in St. Joseph, Mo. To reserve spot on bus, mail a deposit of \$35 with name, phone number, address and email information to the SDSU Sioux Falls Regional Center, 2001 E. 8th St., Sioux Falls, SD 57103. Make checks payable to the "SDSU Extension." Contact Community Development Field Specialist, Chris Zdorovtsov at 605-782-3290 with questions.

The bus will leave the SDSU Sioux Falls Regional Center at 3:30 p.m. Jan. 4 and return to Sioux Falls at approximately 11:30 p.m. Jan. 7. In addition, attendees can take part in the trip and join the bus at the Vermillion exit on Interstate 29. Call Zdorovtsov to get more information about this option. Participants must register themselves for the conference and their hotel room.

The pre-day conference on Jan. 5 includes five day-long sessions on topics including high tunnel production, community supported agriculture (CSA), GAPs and Food Safety, fruit production and honey bees. Jan. 6-7 include 5 tracks of breakout sessions.

"Top-notch speakers will present on many topic areas including, farmer's market, small fruits, tree fruits, agritourism and marketing, irrigation practices, organic production, cut flowers, vegetable production and urban horticulture gardens," said Zdorovtsov. "Fruit, vegetable, and specialty growers as well those working with urban garden programs will find useful information at this event."

Sessions range from information for beginner growers to those who have been growing for years. Contact Zdorovtsov at 605-782-3290 or email or e-mail her at this address: [Christina.Zdorovtsov@sdsstate.edu](mailto:Christina.Zdorovtsov@sdsstate.edu) for more information. A complete agenda for the conference is available online at this link: <http://www.greatplains-growers.org/>.

## Locals Among SDSA Contest Winners

The South Dakota Soybean Association (SDSA) announced the winners of the second annual South Dakota Soybean Yield & Quality Contest. Top soybean yields ranged from 50 to more than 75 bushels per acre. In 2010, the average soybean yield in South Dakota was 38 bushels per acre.

The contest was divided into nine different categories, based on soybean maturity levels from Group 0 to Group 3, as well as by farming methods, such as irrigated, non-irrigated and no-till.

"South Dakota is a top soybean growing state, and we wanted to give our farmers a chance to highlight their exceptional soybean yields," said Paul Casper, SDSA president and farmer from Lake Preston. "I would like to congratulate all of the winners, and compliment them on their hard work and innovative methods."

According to Casper, the yield contest also provides valuable information about technology and farming practices.

"The South Dakota Soybean Yield & Quality Contest offers an excellent opportunity to gather agronomic information to share with farmers throughout South Dakota. With this information, we can all help farmers produce higher yields and grow better soybeans across the state," Casper said.

The soybean yield contest received more than 230 entries.

First place winners received a \$1,000 cash prize, and up to \$1,500 paid expenses to attend the annual American Soybean Association and National Corn Growers Association Commodity Classic event in Nashville, Tenn. Second and third place winners received \$500 and \$300 respectively. For a complete list of winners, see the attached "2011 South Dakota Soybean Yield Contest Results" document.

First place winners of the annual yield contest were: John Horter, Andover; Mathew Wollman, Castlewood; Robert Rogen, Jasper, Minn.; Paul Fischbach, Mansfield; Craig Converse, Brookings; Dick Nissen, Vermillion; Frank Kralicek, Yankton; and Doug Koenig, Fairfax.

New to the contest this year was the addition of the Soybean Quality Contest. The soybean quality contest analyzed protein

and oil content, and the two highest quality entries in each maturity group received a \$200 cash prize.

Winners of the quality contest were: John Horter, Andover; Wayne Knutson, Toronto; Stan Hesby, Volga; Hillcrest Colony, Garden City; Roger Baumfalk; Dick Nissen, Vermillion; and Frank Kralicek, Yankton.

SDSA has scheduled a number of regional agronomic meetings in January and February to share yield contest results, agronomic information, best growing practices and marketing information with farmers across the state.

A meeting will be held at the Best Western Hotel in Yankton on Feb. 1, running from 10 a.m.-noon.

Find more information about the South Dakota Soybean Yield Contest and regional meetings online at [www.sdssoybean.org](http://www.sdssoybean.org).

## Comments On EPA CAFO Reporting Rule Sought

PIERRE — During the South Dakota Cattlemen's Association's (SDCA) annual convention last week, attendees learned about a proposed rule from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that would require Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) to report information about their operation to the EPA.

As proposed, the "National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation Reporting Rule" (also referred to as the "CAFO Reporting Rule" or "308 Rule"), would require the submission of a lengthy list of information from all CAFOs, including the operation's location and contact information as well as nutrient management details.

The rule was proposed as part of a lawsuit settlement agreement EPA conducted behind closed doors with environmental groups, excluding representatives from agricultural industries that will be impacted by the rule.

SDCA urges producers to submit comments opposing the proposed rule, particularly EPA's plan to publish the information it collects on its website.

Producers are encouraged to comment on the rule before the deadline on Tuesday, Dec. 20. Comments can be submitted via the federal eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov> — docket ID No. EPA\_HQ-OW-2011-0188.

To learn more log on to [www.sd cattlemen.org](http://www.sd cattlemen.org).

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*Thank You*

**THE FAMILY OF VERLIN LARSEN**—would like to extend our heartfelt thanks for the beautiful cards, memorials, food and all the thoughts and prayers sent our way during this difficult time. Thank you to Tammy Keller and the staff at Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home for their compassion and help. Thank you to Mike McDonald, Shirley Jennewein and the choir at Sacred Heart Catholic Church for the beautiful music during the funeral service and to the ladies from the church who brought salads and desserts and assisted with the luncheon.

Thank you to Verlin's friends and co-workers from the City of Yankton who served as Honorary Pallbearers and to his six best friends who have stood by him throughout his illness and carried him to his final resting place. Your friendships meant the world to Verlin.

Thank you to Patty's friends and co-workers from Baldwin Filters who have been so supportive and understanding over the past years. All the help you have shown our family is very much appreciated.

Thank you to Colleen and Bill Chase for all the visits, prayers and support you have graciously extended to our family. We especially appreciate Colleen bringing communion to Verlin at home and being a shoulder to cry on when needed. Your kindness will never be forgotten.

Thank you to Father Dan from Sacred Heart Parish, who also brought communion to Verlin when he was unable to attend mass, and to his church family for remembering him in their prayers.

Very special thanks to Father Mark Lichter who has been such a wonderful source of strength and faith during Verlin's illness. It is difficult to express in words our gratitude for the countless hours you spent with Verlin and the family offering comfort and prayers. Verlin thought of you as a friend as well as his priest and that message was reflected by the beautiful words you spoke at the funeral service. We will forever be grateful for your compassion and friendship during this journey.

May God bless you all.

*Patricia Larsen, Tyler & Alexa  
Mary Ann Larsen  
Steve and Kim Larsen & family  
Kevin Larsen  
Brian Larsen  
Jerome and Dorothy Sylliaasen  
Pam and Ray Epp & family*

*Remembrance*

You can shed tears that I am gone,  
or you can  
*smile because I lived.*

You can close your eyes and  
pray that I come back,  
or you can  
*open your eyes and  
see all I have left.*

Your heart can be empty because  
you can't see me,  
or you can  
*be full of the love we shared.*

You can turn your back on  
tomorrow and live yesterday,  
or you can  
*be happy for tomorrow  
because of yesterday.*

You can remember me and only  
that I am gone,  
or you can  
*cherish my memory,  
and let it live on.*

You can cry and be empty,  
or you can *do what I'd want:*

*Smile, open your eyes,  
love and go on.*