

Treasurer's office to close first hour of day to training

The County Treasurer's Office will be closed to vehicle business from May 1 through 7 while the state converts to a new system for titling and registering vehicles. The office will also be unable to renew driver licenses and identification cards from May 1 through 6.

Dolores Jenik, county treasurer, said the Kansas Department of Revenue is putting into place a new DMV system that replaces three aging mainframe systems used for driver licensing, motor vehicle titling and registration, and inventory management with a single, modern system that is easier to use, maintain and enhance.

The change will take place in two phases. Phase one involves launching the part of the system that affects vehicles. Phase two, which involves driver licensing and other state-issued identification cards and permits, will occur later, possibly as early as August.

"This change to modern technology will help us serve the people of Kansas more efficiently and effectively, both now and in the future," she said. "We encourage our customers to plan ahead in support of us as we work through this important change."

Vehicle services unavailable

Customers who need to renew a vehicle registration need to be aware that web-based applications that interact with the vehicle titling and registration system will also be offline during conversion.

Kansas Web-Tags will shut down at midnight, April 26, and will not be back online until May 7. The website already warns customers that online renewals must be made at least 10 days prior to a registration's expiration date, the last day of the month, for the customer to be guaranteed a timely renewal.

Vehicle owners whose registrations expire in April, and who want to renew online, need to do it by midnight on April 26. Otherwise, they are encouraged to renew in person at the county treasurer's

office to be sure their renewal is processed by end of day April 30.

Registration renewals due in May, which are printed to be compatible with the new system, will be mailed later than usual. Typically, registration renewals are mailed within the first two weeks of the month prior to their expiration. This cycle, May renewals will mail the fourth week of April.

May registrations can't be renewed online until after May 7. However, they can be renewed by mail and in person, but not during conversion between May 1 and 7.

Driver license, identification card services unavailable

Even though driver licensing comes under phase two of the modernization project, phase one conversion will interrupt driver licensing services when data are being moved.

The county treasurer's office will be closed to driver license and identification card business from May 1 through May 6.

Drivers and identification card holders whose credentials expire during this time are being notified that services will be unavailable, so they have the opportunity to renew before conversion starts.

Three-year project supported by county treasurers

County treasurers were pivotal in securing funding for the \$40 million DMV modernization project. Because of their support, the 2008 Kansas Legislature passed statutes that provide the mechanism and authority to collect a \$4 fee at the time vehicles are registered.

"The Kansas Department of Revenue and county treasurers view the new DMV system as a much-needed behind-the-counter change that will improve how services are delivered to drivers and vehicle owners throughout Kansas," said Donna Shelite, director of vehicles for the Kansas Department of Revenue. "We value their commitment and steadfast support bringing this change to fruition."

Work began in 2009 to customize the DMV system, a 3M product, to make it compatible with Kansas' laws, regulations and business processes. While the system was being developed, the department sent a team of trainers into the field to teach state and county workers how to use it. After phase two launches, there will be more than 900 workers statewide using the system.



VALERIE WURM works on her pole vault jump during practice. Herald staff photo by Nathan Fiala

Idalia News

By Chuck Wright



April 24, 6 p.m., Idalia School. Idalia community members are invited to a public meeting at the school to hear an update and ask questions concerning the Best Grant new school building project.

Health fair

April 23 and 24, 7-9 a.m. The Community Health Fair will be held at the Idalia Visions building.

Movie

April 25, 7 p.m., Cornerstone Center. There will be a free showing of the American classic movie, "The Anatomy of a Murder," starring James Stewart. Bring your favorite movie snack and enjoy the movie and discussion afterwards.

Idalia Days

Idalia Days, June 8-10. "Celebrating Our Yesteryears." The planning committee is looking for men to participate in the annual "Mr. Idalia" contest. If you have a good sense of humor and a willingness to help a worthy cause, please contact Sherri Ramseier.

St. John news

April 22, 10:30 a.m. Faith Carpenter will complete her confirmation project by planning and leading worship on this day.

April 29, 10:30 a.m. As part of the yearlong 125th anniversary celebration, St. John will hold a "History Sunday." Attendees are invited to come in historic dress, drive or ride historic vehicles, and bring family photographs relating to St. John's history. There will be church history displays and instruction on how to prepare pages for the St. John Family Directory.

Idalia School News

April 30-May 4 Scholastic Book Fair in the school library.

Beecher Island News

By Bessie Dent



There were 52 at Sunday School. Ron Moyer will be the speaker next Sunday.

The Beecher Island helping hand club met with Bonnie and Doris Osmus Wednesday. The next meeting will be April 18.

Amanda and Jeff Fisher of Fort Knox, Ky. visited Violet Brown Friday.

Monte Mansfield and Mr. and Mrs. Gary Mansfield were visitors of Mr. and Mrs. Bill Mansfield this past week.

Riley Brown spent Friday with Bessie Dent.

Alan and JoLynn Fisher spent the weekend with Walt and Janet

Smith. Matt and Linda Johnson and family joined them for Easter.

Easter dinners

Guests of John and Laurie Willard were Kris and Larry Jones and family Keith Jones, Ken and Judy Willard and Jacque Ekberg.

Mr. and Mrs. Rowe Shively's guests were Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Shively, Randi and Todd, Tyler and Jessie Bond, Devin, Caelie and Talia.

Mr. and Mrs. Kenny Rose, Mallory and Chynna hosted dinner for Sylvia Madsen, Mr. and Mrs. Dillon Rose and family.

Guests of Mr. and Mrs. John

Osmus and Jacob were Mr. and Mrs. Phil Osmus, Mr. and Mrs. Gary Beverlin, Nettie Jane Sheldon and Gracie Trast.

Lee and Diana Bowker, Tyson and Roxanne Brown and Violet Brown were guest of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Brown.

Grant Brown and Bessie Dent were guests of Ron and Joyce Brown and Riley.

Carolyn Homm and Helen Meek visited Bessie Dent Monday morning.

Across the County

By Marty Fear



County Extension Agent

Cattle price pullback was likely even before Lean Finely Textured Beef

Given recent historic highs in cattle prices, it shouldn't have been surprising to see values dip somewhat during March, but consumer response to news of lean, finely textured beef in the nation's meat supply hit cattle and beef values harder than many could have anticipated, according to a Kansas State University agricultural economist.

"I think we were due in early March for a pause. The fact that we've had a pullback from historic highs is not really a surprise," said Glynn Tonsor, livestock marketing specialist with K-State Research and Extension.

He noted that CME April fed cattle futures closed at \$118 per hundredweight (cwt) on April 6, down about \$12 from a month earlier. Similarly, April feeder cattle futures closed at \$148, down from \$161 in early March. Cash cattle prices softened similarly, with Kansas fed cattle prices off about \$3 at \$123 to \$124 on April 6.

"But the fed cattle basis is quite strong - stronger than normal," Tonsor noted, with cash cattle trading \$5 to \$6 over futures.

Part of the concern right now, he said, is overall demand for beef. Beef exports have been generally flat compared to last year, as has the dollar index.

"I'm still fundamentally bullish on (beef) exports, but when we look at individual weeks, that's part of the pullback. I'm not going to say we've burst the bubble, but we've pulled back a bit on that bullishness," he said.

The economist noted that oil and gas prices and their forecasts have also played a role in consumer demand, but added: "I tend to think that's a little bit overhyped."

Gas still makes up a portion of our individual decision making, but it's mainly an indirect effect in how it's embedded in the prices of many things we buy. Add all that up with the lean, finely textured beef stuff then we have more concern about demand than we did a month ago."

Consumer reaction to news in recent weeks that lean, finely textured beef is sometimes added to ground beef shocked the

trade, Tonsor said.

"Perception is reality. The consumer dollar drives the vast majority of what goes on and people make decisions based on perception. These decisions may or may not be consistent with scientific reality," he said.

"To say 'it's beef, stupid' or 'it's always been beef' may be accurate - and I personally believe that - but I'm not sure it's sufficient to change perception. You can't trump perception immediately with science."

"One of the things I've found in other studies such as the impact of media attention to animal welfare issues and meat recalls is that total (aggregate) beef demand is typically affected for one to two quarters. That's still multiple weeks or months, but it doesn't persist for five years," he said. "I tend to think consumer demand reaction to this story in this context will also be relatively short lived."

He noted that labeling changes and other ramifications could come from the lean, finely textured beef discussion.

"The part that is less known and what may be a little more costly is what's going to change on the supply side - the cost of doing business," he said. "At the extreme, if we quit using lean, finely textured beef, and I don't expect that will happen, but if we take that away from the toolbox, the cost of business goes up. If we add labeling, that's an added cost, but not as expensive as removing it, and there are a lot of things in between."

"I think the net impact is, the cost of producing ground beef and the cost of beef overall is going up from this, and that probably will have some staying power that goes beyond the negative demand aspects that lasts one or two quarters."

He noted that in March, prices for fresh 90 percent lean boneless beef trimmings dipped about 0.7 percent, but prices for fresh 50 percent lean trimmings (less lean) had fallen 17.6 percent (\$83 per cwt) by March 31 compared to \$101 on March 3. Fresh 50 percent lean prices fell even further the week before Easter, hitting \$63 per cwt.

"The reason I mention this is

that fresh 90-percent lean trimmings held up and stayed relatively flat during March. The less lean product which is typically blended with or subject to lean, finely textured beef, has been hammered," Tonsor said.

"Estimates are that roughly 10 percent of beef on a carcass would fall into the fresh 50 percent lean category and if you use that 10 percent assumption and basically a \$40 per cwt falloff in the value of that product during March, that amounts to essentially a \$4 per cwt value pullback on fed cattle. That explains a decent portion of the pullback on fed cattle prices during March," he said.

"If you go further and recognize there was discussion even before the lean, finely textured beef about heavy cattle weights - we've had better growth than we expected - when we have heavier animals, we tend to have even more than usual fall into that fresh 50 percent lean category," he said. "So at the extreme, if we had 15 percent of pounds falling into that 50 percent category - and I'm probably pressing the point here - if you had that you could probably explain probably a \$6 pullback in fed cattle prices. The truth is, maybe somewhere between the \$3 and \$5 value pullback in fed cattle could be assigned narrowly to the drop in fresh 50 percent lean prices."

Tonsor said he is still analyzing beef demand data for the first quarter of 2012 (January-March), but expects it will show a negative year-over-year picture. He reminded that several analysts over the past few months, before the current discussion, were reminding that the tight supply situation was already known - kind of fixed - so the value of cattle is hinging on demand.

He expects the lean, finely textured beef issue to continue to be sorted out and that it likely will still have an effect on beef and cattle prices for the short term.

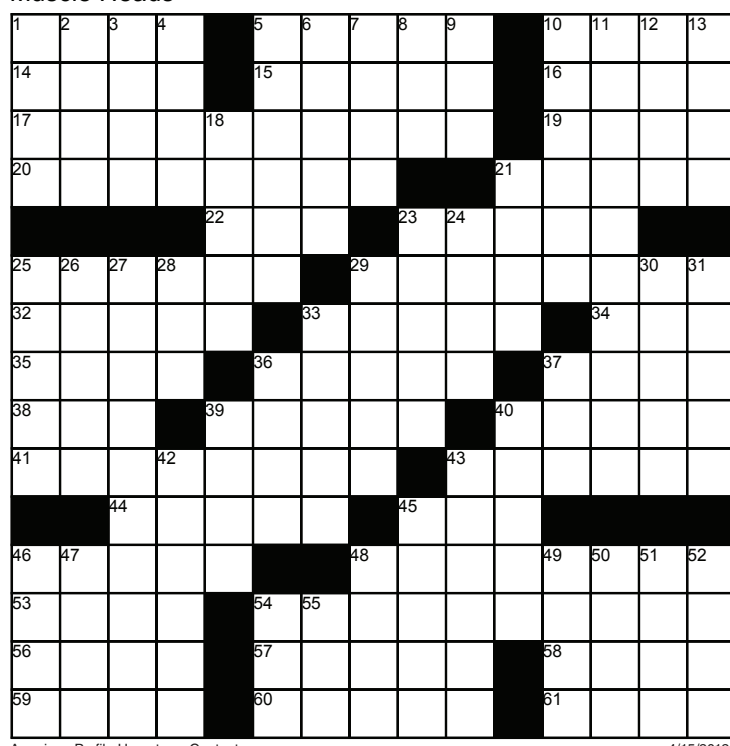
Contact the Cheyenne County Extension office at 332-3171 or cfear@ksu.edu with questions or comments.

Until next week - Marty

ACROSS

- Plod through the mud
- Ketch's pair
- Places to shape up
- "Damn Yankees" siren
- China's Zhou
- New Ager John
- Edward VIII's action of 1936
- Feel sore
- Like most new drivers
- Rainbow-shaped
- Like a boiled lobster
- "West Side Story" tune
- More steamed
- Indian nationalist Gandhi
- Thumb-turning critic
- Orange variety
- Out of sorts
- One on your side
- Tribal symbol
- Ballet bend
- Emeritus: Abbr.
- Schlepped
- Did some cobbling
- Daddy-longlegs, for one
- Blacks out
- Short and sweet
- Seashell seller, in a tongue twister
- Beantown skater
- Playing for time
- O.K. Corral name
- Passionate sort
- Take a shine to
- __-garde
- Spelunker's spot
- Some microbrews
- Round and filthy
- Had down pat

Muscle Heads



DOWN

- Jalousie part
- Stud spot
- Shoppes sign word
- Put on a spare tire?
- Piddling
- Fed the kitty
- Rode the banister
- Lao-tse's "way"
- Gluttony or sloth
- Head the cast of
- Small transgression
- 1975 Wimbledon champ
- Cast off
- Insertion mark
- Sea fed by the Amu Darya
- Pulled up stakes
- "Beg pardon ..."
- Stiller's mate
- More proficient
- "Designing Women" costar
- Like some martinis
- Whipped, à la Kasparov
- Little green man
- Mushers' vehicles
- "__ I can help it!"
- Muscular fitness
- Nanki-__ of "The Mikado"
- Like a dime
- Blow up
- "Geel!"
- Crude digs
- Scorpion attack
- Composer Bartók
- Third __ (track adjunct)
- Getz or Kenton
- Canal feature
- Dr. Pavlov
- "Scream" actress Campbell
- Shot up
- Flight from justice
- Ex of Mickey, Artie and Frank

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