

AG NOTES
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October 18, 2022

FALL

Here are some thoughts about fall and farming. Sort of a rambling but all are important. Hope this helps.

This is a time for harvest, and I see that farmers across the county are harvesting corn, soybeans, and in some cases hay. (I've got a friend that it seems every time I call him he's in the hay field, almost twelve months a year!).

The corn yield is all over the chart. Yield monitors will read from near zero to almost the 200 bu/acre mark in the same field, but the general average is in the low to mid-100 range. That's a long way from the past several years' yields.

The causes were for the large part the extreme heat that interferes with pollination and the lack of moisture needed to fill out the pollinated kernels. The later plantings seem better than the earlier ones.

Soybeans that have been combined seem to be doing some better, but they have their highs and lows as well. Again, the later planted crop seems better than the earlier planted fields.

Soil samples and hay samples are coming in pretty steady. I would advise this to help get information on plans for winter feeding and for the crops this coming year.

This is a good time to work our herds for health and reproduction. Vaccinations and pregnancy checks can help reduce respiratory issues and identify open females that might need culling. It's a good time to do other management practices, such as deworming and treating for external parasites.

Notice that I've not singled out any particular species here. Whether your animals are horses, cattle, sheep or goats, it's a good time to do health maintenance.

I would advise you to talk to a veterinarian. If you don't have a relationship with one, you'll have to have one to help you next year. It's my understanding that you will have to have a prescription in order to buy medicines that we have purchased over the counter for years. Like it or not, this is coming. I urge every livestock owner to get this in place by the end of the year.

Whatever you do, be safe and watch out for others. We had a farmer that lost his life in a grain bin accident in another county earlier in the season, and another young farmer with a young family lost his life in a farming accident in just the past couple of weeks in a county to the west of us.

Moving equipment, running equipment, unloading loads, hauling anything on the roads, it's dangerous! And pay particular attention to the youngsters that might be in the area for whatever reason.

Think about all of this.

WHAT'S THE MARKET?

Drs. Andrew Griffith and Aaron Smith, UT Extension livestock and crop economists, shared these comments. (I may have some in brackets).

Fed cattle traded \$1 higher compared to last week on a live basis. Prices on a live basis were mainly \$145 to \$148 while dressed prices were mainly \$230 to \$232. The 5-area weighted average prices through last Thursday were \$146.77 live, up \$0.80 compared to last week and \$231.61 dressed, up \$1.42 from a week ago. A year ago, prices were \$123.85 live and \$195.73 dressed.

Based on Tennessee weekly auction average prices, steer calf prices were \$4 to \$8 lower compared to last week while heifer calf prices were also \$4 to \$8 lower compared to a week ago.

Harvest cow prices were \$4 to \$6 lower compared to a week ago while bull prices were \$6 to \$8 lower compared to the previous week.

Drought and high feed costs continue to weigh heavily on cattle prices, and these conditions are simply compounding the seasonal price tendency of freshly weaned calves, which is declining prices. (Buyers discount non-weaned and light weight calves during the glutted calf market during the fall in face of higher feed costs.)

On October 14 of last year, the December corn futures contract traded at \$5.17 compared to \$6.90 this year; the November soybean contract traded at \$12.06 compared to \$13.84 this year. So, soybean and corn futures prices were \$1.78/bu and \$1.73/bu higher this year. (I left out the cotton market data, but the same trends.)

There were also substantial year-over-year differences in yields. The USDA October 12 Crop Production report estimated 2022 Tennessee yields at: corn – 126 bu/acre; soybeans – 46 bu/acre. In 2021, Tennessee yields were estimated substantially higher: corn 170 bu/acre; and soybeans 50 bu/acre. (Lower yields and/or higher demand raise prices.)

BURN PERMITS

In observance of National Fire Prevention Week last week, Tennessee Department of Agriculture's Division of Forestry reminds citizens that our state is heading into fall fire season. Dry conditions and trees that shed their leaves heighten fire danger and a debris burn permit is required for leaf and brush piles beginning Oct. 15. Call the Division of Forestry burn permit phone number at 877-350-BURN (2876) Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.