

OTHER NEWS

National Beef Month highlights the importance of the Kansas beef industry

BY LAUREN LITTON

May is recognized as National Beef Month, making it an ideal time to celebrate the importance of Kansas cattle producers and the impact the beef industry has on communities across the state — especially in southwest Kansas, where cattle production remains one of the region’s leading agricultural industries.

Kansas continues to rank among the top cattle-producing states in the nation.

According to the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, Kansas currently has approximately 5.85 million head of cattle and calves, including nearly 2.5 million cattle on feed in feedlots across the state.

Much of that cattle feeding activity is concentrated in southwest Kansas, where communities such as Dodge City, Garden City, Liberal, and surrounding areas play a major role in beef production and processing.

The beef industry is a major economic driver for Kansas agriculture. The Kansas Livestock



Litton

Association reports that cattle and calves account for nearly 58% of the state’s agricultural cash receipts, generating approximately \$13.7 billion annually. Kansas also ranks among the nation’s leaders in fed cattle markets and beef processing, helping supply beef products to consumers across the United States and around the world.

Southwest Kansas is especially important to the industry because of its large concentration of feedyards, packing plants, supporting businesses and agricultural infrastructure. Large feedlots throughout the region care for thousands of cattle daily, while beef processing facilities provide jobs and economic opportunities for many local families.

Agriculture-related businesses — including



Ribeye steaks sizzle on a grill during a past Beef Empire Days barbeque. BRAD NADING/GARDEN CITY TELEGRAM

veterinarians, nutritionists, feed suppliers, truck drivers, equipment dealers, and many others — all contribute to the success of the beef industry in the region.

Behind those numbers are generations of Kansas farm and ranch families dedicated to caring for livestock and producing a safe, high-quality food product. Raising cattle requires year-round management, including monitoring

herd health, maintaining pastures, providing balanced nutrition, and adapting to changing weather and market conditions. Producers continue working long hours to ensure cattle are cared for responsibly and efficiently.

Kansas cattle producers are also committed to stewardship of natural resources. Many ranchers use grazing management practices that help preserve grasslands, reduce soil

erosion, and support wildlife habitat. Proper pasture management benefits both livestock production and long-term conservation efforts across Kansas rangelands.

National Beef Month is also an opportunity to recognize the nutritional value beef provides. Beef is an excellent source of protein and important nutrients such as iron, zinc, and B vitamins. From backyard cookouts to family

dinners, beef remains a staple for many households across Kansas and beyond.

Youth programs like 4-H and FFA continue to help develop the next generation of agricultural leaders through livestock projects and hands-on learning experiences. These programs teach responsibility, communication, leadership and animal care while helping young people understand the importance of agriculture.

As Kansans celebrate National Beef Month this May, it is important to recognize the dedication of the producers, families, and agricultural professionals who work every day to support one of the state’s most important industries.

From pasture to plate, the Kansas beef industry continues to play a vital role in feeding communities, supporting rural economies, and carrying on a proud agricultural tradition.

Lauren Litton is the Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent with the West Plains Extension District.

Emergency personnel work to control numerous southwest Kansas wildfires

BY MORGAN CHILSON
Kansas Reflector

TOPEKA — Wildfires are burning thousands of acres in southwest Kansas, and emergency management personnel from across the state are working to gain control and keep communities safe.

Bill Waln, state fire management officer at the Kansas Forest Service, said winds shifted as crews were fighting a Clark County fire, pushing it out of containment as of Monday night.

“That’s the one that’s pushed us around a little bit,” he said. “It made a run north toward Minneola yesterday.”

Waln said firefighters were unable to contain the fire on the south end after a cold front came

through and the wind switched directions. As a result, a few rural homes west of Ashland are being evacuated as a precaution.

“Right now, we are actively engaged in a fast-moving fire that’s moving south in Clark County toward Kansas Highway 160,” he said. “If we get it right now, Ashland is not threatened. But if we get any kind of a westerly wind shift to it, then we can see some evacuations in Ashland itself.”

Waln said officials are moving resources to the area to contain the fire’s spread.

Multiple fires started in southwest Kansas after a lightning storm hit the area Thursday, he said.

“We have such continued dry fuels down there that were just very

receptive to lightning,” Waln said. “Normally we wouldn’t have to worry about it this time of the year.”

Most of the fires in Morton County were on U.S. Forest Service lands, and personnel and resources were brought out of the Colorado Forest Service and the federal government to fight them, he said.

In Meade County, small fires merged into the largest fire the state is fighting, Waln said. It was at nearly 93,000 acres about 3:45 p.m. Monday, according to the Western Fire Chiefs fire tracking map.

Although large, that fire is being managed, and Waln said he expects it to be fully contained by mid-week.

Numerous fire departments from across the



Wildfires have forced evacuations near Ashland as firefighters work to contain Meade County fires that have burned nearly 93,000 acres. KANSAS FOREST SERVICE via KANSAS REFLECTOR

state have sent help to the area, although the current tornadic weather forecast for northeast Kansas is causing some to return home to support their communities, Waln said.

Waln encouraged anyone living near the fires to stay informed; be ready to evacuate,

thinking of things like medications, personal documents and other items they might need to take with them; and not hesitate when personnel say they need to evacuate. It’s important people are prepared to leave well before the fire gets to their location, he said.

Waln also said land and homeowners can do a lot before fires start to protect their property, such as removing shrubs and plants near buildings.

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Finney County, Kansas hereby solicits sealed bids from qualified and responsible contractors to provide all labor, materials, equipment, and supervision necessary for the renovation of office space located on the second floor of the Finney County Administration Building. There is a “Mandatory” Pre-Bid Meeting on **Tuesday, May 12, 2026, at 1:30 p.m.** on the second floor of the Administration Building. The bid opening will be **Monday, June 1, 2026**, at the Administration Building where the bids will be opened and read publicly. Bids need to be mailed or emailed to Finney County, 311 North 9th Street, Garden City, KS 67846, with “Office Remodel - Administration Building” put on outside of envelope or in subject line of email and received before **12:59 p.m. Monday, June 1, 2026**. Email to nthill@finneycounty.org or call 620.272.3594 with any questions.

ASKING ERIC

Wife’s hair keeps ending up in packed lunch

BY R. ERIC THOMAS
Tribune Content Agency

Dear Eric: My wife is retired and does the majority of grocery shopping and cooking. For the past year or so she has also insisted on packing me a lunch to take to work.

I’m a teacher and bringing lunch has been part of my daily routine for years (there’s no time in the school day to go out to lunch). She packs things like soups, salads or leftovers from dinner the night before. This is very generous and I appreciate that she wants to help make my workweek a little easier.

Sometimes, she even

makes hand-held breakfasts to go!

I’ve never asked for help with meal prep but we’ve just sort of fallen into this routine. While I always express my gratitude, what I haven’t said is that I sometimes find hair in my meals. My wife’s hair is distinctive looking; it’s longish, curly and grey.

I don’t want to be critical or seem ungrateful, but it’s pretty unappetizing. What’s your advice for how to communicate about this without hurting her feelings?

—A *Hairy Predicament*

Dear Hairy: I’m curious if you find hair in the dinners she makes as well or just the lunches.

I suppose it’s moot, but you might employ a different strategy if this was related more broadly to kitchen hygiene practices.

But let’s assume it’s just about lunch. I honestly think that the easiest course of action would be to pick out the hair and move on. However, I am empathetic to the fact that we can’t always control what makes us lose our appetites, nor whether that appetite comes back. If your wife’s kind gesture isn’t having the desired impact, it’s fine to pivot.

You can do this indirectly by telling her you appreciate how much help she’s providing

with grocery shopping and cooking, and you have appreciated the lunches, but you’d like to pack them yourself again. You can assure her that this isn’t about the quality of the lunches (outside of the hair, it seems they were quite wonderful).

Or you can do this directly by expressing the same level of gratitude but also mentioning that you’ve noticed hairs on occasion. You might ask if she’s noticed it, too. If she hasn’t, a solution might be as simple as asking her to keep an eye out.

Dear Eric: My husband and I are in our