



Dalebanks Digest

fall
2026

More Than Just a Slogan, It's an Expectation

We can't wait for you to see the lineup of bulls and registered heifers that we will offer on Saturday, November 21, 2026. Our mission *Practical. Profitable. Genetics.* is more than just a slogan. It's an **expectation** for our genetics—whether here at Dalebanks or while working in your herd. We're confident that you'll appreciate the consistency, balance and overall value of the bulls and heifers this year.

Weather, markets, and other outside forces can present challenges in beef production. Our goal is to make proven Dalebanks genetics a reliable solution for the traits of economic importance. We believe that this adds both peace of mind and profitability to your farm or ranch.

This year, we will catalog the top 160 bulls from more than 275 bull calves born in the Dalebanks program in 2025. Plus, we will again offer an elite set of fall yearling registered heifers for our seedstock customers! We believe that these genetics offer as much balance of calving ease, growth, docility, marbling, maternal function and structural soundness as any in the region.

But it doesn't stop with genetics. We expect these cattle to deliver these genetics within a commonsense management scenario. That's why each of our cows spend all year on forage, calving unassisted in large pastures. It's why the older bulls were developed last winter on a moderate energy diet and spent the summer and early fall grazing native Flint Hills pasture in the hills north of the sale facility. It's why the fall bulls were weaned in late spring, grazed on native pasture through the summer, and have been on a moderate energy ration since August. Our goal is to offer the right amount of nutrition to show genetic variation, while still letting Mother Nature help us find cattle that will best fit in a forage environment.

Just like always, these bulls and heifers represent the top end of their calf crops—both phenotypically and genotypically. The bulls will be freeze-branded, fertility-tested, vaccinated and ready to turn out on cows or heifers any time after the sale. The females will also be freeze-branded, vaccinated and ready for breeding.

As we see the seedstock business become more segmented, our family is steadfast in our belief that cattle should **SIMULTANEOUSLY** offer soundness, performance and longevity...not just one or two important qualities. We realize that there are numerous choices in Angus genetics today. You may find those with higher EPDs for a given trait or two. Other programs might have higher actual weaning weights. Some might display a fancier "look." And yes, there are certainly cheaper bulls out there, as well.

But customers who have tried "Brand X" bulls and then return to buy "Open D" bulls indicate that finding bulls like ours that combine structural integrity, optimum EPDs for both maternal and end-product merit, rapid early growth, calving ease, and docility is increasingly difficult today.

We look forward to visiting with you about the breeding philosophy and disciplined culling that have helped us produce *Practical. Profitable. Genetics.* for 124 years. Make plans to join us northwest of Eureka on November 21 or sign up to bid online through cci.live.

Call, text, email or stop by anytime!
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Author's note: *This next article gets a bit lengthy. In full disclosure, I often write our newsletters—a few minutes at a time—over a couple of weeks, in between the “real work” on the ranch. On this occasion, every Friday afternoon or evening required a rewrite of the previous week’s work, due to that morning’s “news.”*

Today, though, I’m calling it. I can’t discern or discuss any more information that’s being lobbed at our industry. Like our Practically Ranching™ podcast, I do this newsletter to provide information and insight to our customers and others in our beef community. But honestly, August has flat worn me out.

Making sense of beef market forces isn’t my job. My job is to offer Practical. Profitable. Genetics. that quietly do their job and enable our customers to have a highly marketable product, thus maximizing profitability. The industry landscape may be changing, and we’ll continue to do everything in our power to provide genetics that offer options for your marketing and production decisions in this industry.

So take this article for what it’s worth. It will likely be outdated or even incorrect by the time it hits your mailbox. You might not agree with a few points, and that’s ok. Use it as you wish to best position your family’s cattle operation in this ever-changing world. And remember, it comes from a cowboy impersonating a writer. It may not be any good, but it’s better than that...it’s done!

It's Not You, It's Me

The past month has been full of announcements and market-moving news in the beef industry. Border reopenings, packing plant closures, executive orders...it seems that each Friday has another surprise for cattle and beef markets.

Responses from beef producers are usually swift and predictably passionate. Trade associations who have disagreed on imports and government intervention in the market for decades suddenly sing from similar songbooks (until the next announcement). Cowboys like me are suddenly experts on global trade and the beef supply chain. If it didn’t have such potential to wreck the cattle markets in the near term, the irony of it all would almost be entertaining.

By the time this newsletter prints, many of these announcements will be old news. Some may have even been altered or rescinded. Quite likely, there may be more that send shockwaves through the industry and its litany of keyboard cowboys.

But honestly, I’m not sure this noise affects the fundamentals of the market all that much. Yes, hundreds of thousands of metric tons of imported beef IS a lot. But much of it is already here or on its way...this just allows it to have fewer tariffs charged. And that lean trim will get mixed with our hundreds of thousands of tons of 50% fat trim that we make from 1750-pound fed steers, making our fat more valuable than it would’ve been in the rendering bin. Those in the feeding segment know well how many open pens and sparse feed alleys there are in a lot of feed yards across the United States. And look at how limited most livestock market offerings have been in recent months.

Whether it’s our president trying to get more ground beef into the U.S. supply chain, a processor trying to “right size” their business to the available fed cattle supply, or feedyards considering how best to cover their overhead with limited numbers of high-priced feeder cattle, one thing is for certain: demand has outstripped supply at nearly every level in the supply chain.

For a guy who spent the first half of his life reading articles and hearing discussions of how to grow demand to meet the excess supply of beef, I suppose I should be jumping for joy. Instead, it’s frightening.

So, now what? First off, I think we would all be wise to take a deep breath and recognize that—if we didn’t know how cattle sold last June—we are near historically high levels in all classes of cattle—even today. We cow-calf producers loved the leverage that we have held over the past couple of years. Even those who questioned years ago if price discovery and market dynamics still functioned (and/or accused other segments of market manipulation when the leverage was in their favor) have been recently shouting, “Let the market work!”

Like you, I love the position that the foundation segment of the beef industry has enjoyed recently. But as I see the red ink that several segments of the supply chain have experienced lately after buying \$2500-3000 calves and yearlings, I worry about what happens to this industry if we continue to shrink. I believe that there is a critical mass that we MUST stay above to maintain infrastructure to deliver a consistent, affordable beef supply to the consumer. I hope that we are not skating close to that threshold yet, but I don’t want to find out by shrinking more and making beef into a “luxury good.”

Personally, I would love to find a “Goldilocks” spot in market dynamics where cow-calf producers can achieve “just right” profitability, while leaving a little margin for the stocker, feeder and

processing segments to continue buying these cattle in future years. I'm in this business for the long run, so I want other segments to still find value and profit in purchasing from our cow-calf segment. In time, the market always finds this equilibrium. The ebbs and flows as it achieves this are rarely linear, nor are they pretty. But increased government intervention and knee-jerk reactions based on the most recent podcast interview or social post are—in my opinion—NOT the answer.

When a market turns down, it's human nature to place blame somewhere. Packer collusion, government intervention, corporate feeder funny business...they all have big targets on their backs. But what if it's not just Trump's fault? Or Tyson's? Or the New World Screw worm?

What if it's ours?

For centuries, cow-calf producers made money when cow numbers were tight, expanded their herds, often over-produced 5-7 years later, lost money and then contracted the cow herd. Alongside Mother Nature, it's what has driven the cattle cycle for centuries.

But the moves over the past few weeks lead me to believe that segments who analyze a lot of data from our industry aren't simply trying to gain leverage or increase control of a market. They're certainly not trying to drive beef producers out of business. I fear that they truly don't believe that the nation's cowherd—therefore available fed cattle supply—will rebuild anytime soon, if ever.

I've discussed this dwindling of the U.S. beef cowherd on our *Practically Ranching* podcast, at industry meetings, and elsewhere. Reasons given usually surround increased costs of production, labor challenges, drought, and the costs of long-term investment (land). But my wife, Amy, has likely offered the reason that makes as much sense as any I've heard: Guys (and gals) are placing a larger priority on family and no longer want to work the schedule that a cowherd requires.

The average U.S. worker today works fewer hours and has more time off (there seems to be a new three-day weekend every year, longer paid vacations, caregiver leave, etc.) than ever in history. Dads (and ranching moms) play a larger role in child rearing today. And the expectations of both parents to be at the myriad of ballgames, club tournaments, cattle shows, roping jackpots, dance recitals, and who knows what other activities is seemingly endless. And...news flash...cow herds aren't very conducive to three-day weekends, multiple family getaways and lengthy trips to tournaments all summer.

I have had multiple conversations with dads who left—or are leaving—the cow business and switching to yearling cattle, farming or other ag pursuits. They start with the laundry list of reasons, but then the real driver comes out. "I just want to be able to go see Johnny or Jane _____ (...rope, play ball, show heifers, dance, etc) whenever I want. And I couldn't do it when I ran cows."

So, what does this mean for you? If you're willing to figure out a way to care for your family AND own a cowherd, the opportunities are endless. And while there are instances when my wife might disagree, it's still possible to balance kids and cows...folks have done it for generations!

Find technologies that give you more flexibility with feed delivery and management. Hire the occasional help that enables you to occasionally have a weekend (or a week!) away from the ranch. At times, you may have to remind your family—and yourself—that the business must take priority, but everyone will be better for it. My older kids (at a weak moment) have already admitted that!

As with any decision, the answer won't be the same for everyone. But I believe the beef industry has immense room for growth, and that growth will need to come—at least in part— from a few more beef cows. We are blessed to have growing consumer demand and markets for protein today... especially beef. Let's find ways to give our consumers more of what they are willing to pay for.

Will we still see consolidation of cowherds? I believe that we might. But I hope those cowherds are owned and operated by folks like you... who see opportunities, find ways to grow their cowherd AND their kids, and keep families on the ranch.

So instead of blaming imports or other segments of the beef business, it might be time to take opportunities for **careful** growth in our cowherds. Employ business sense, risk management, evaluate market forces, innovate, and keep those cows around you to supply the world with healthy, wholesome, high-quality BEEF!



Practical. Profitable. Genetics.
Annual Sale November 21, 2026

12:30 pm at the Dalebanks Angus Sale Facility, 1030 River RD, Eureka, KS

**Selling 160 yearling and
coming 2-year-old bulls sired by:**

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