

# Osage County Agriculture Newsletter



OSAGE COUNTY  
EXTENSION

February/March 2025

## U.S. Cattle Inventories Still Looking for a Low

Derrell S. Peel, Oklahoma State University Extension Livestock Marketing Specialist

The annual Cattle report from USDA-NASS at the end of January showed that the U.S cattle industry continued to get smaller in 2024. The inventory of all cattle and calves was 86.66 million head, down 0.6 percent year over year. This total inventory was 1.8 percent lower than the recent cyclical low in 2014 and the lowest since 1951. The all cattle and calves inventory has decreased 8.0 million head (8.5 percent) from the cyclical peak in 2019.

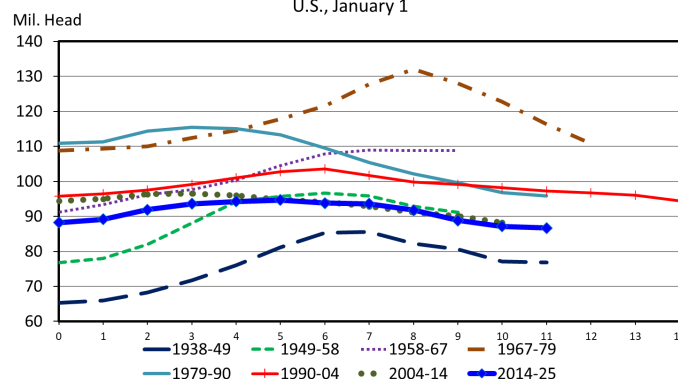
The beef cow herd on January 1 was 27.86 million head, down 0.5 percent year over year and 3.8 percent below the previous low in 2014; the lowest since 1961. The beef cow herd has declined 3.78 million head from the recent peak in 2019, a decrease of 11.9 percent in six years. The January 1 inventory of beef replacement heifers was 4.67 million head, 1.0 percent less than one year ago and the smallest inventory since 1949. The 2025 beef replacement heifer inventory is down 9.0 percent from the previous low in 2011.

The dairy cow inventory in this report was 9.35 million head, unchanged from last year. The inventory of dairy replacement heifers was 3.9 million head, down 0.9 percent year over year. The inventory of bulls was 2.01 million head, down 0.6 percent from one year ago.

Other inventory categories are used to calculate the estimated feeder supply outside of feedlots. This includes the sum of other heifers (down 1.0 percent); steers 500+ lbs., (down 0.6 percent); and calves <500 lbs. (down 0.2 percent) adjusted for January 1 feedlot inventory (down 0.9 percent) resulting in a feeder supply estimate down 0.5 percent from last year.

The cattle industry is characterized by so-called “10-year” cattle cycles. In fact, the last eight cattle cycles have varied from 9 to 14 years with only one (2004-2014) exactly ten years from low-to-low inventory (Figure 1). The 2025 inventory represents the eleventh year since the previous cyclical low. Is 2025 the cycle low? Maybe, but not necessarily. We won’t know for sure for another year.

Figure 1. Total Cattle Inventory By Cycle  
U.S., January 1



### Osage County Extension Office

1039 Old Hwy 99

Pawhuska, OK 74056

(918)287-4170; Office

### Osage County Agriculture

#### Educators

Lexi Patrick

### Osage County/Osage Nation

lexi.patrick@okstate.edu

#### Rick Clovis

### Osage/Pawnee County

rick.clovis@okstate.edu

Cont. on Pg 2

For 2025, the die is mostly cast relative to herd dynamics. The small inventory of beef heifers calving in 2025 (a part of the total beef replacement heifer inventory) suggests that little, if any, growth in the beef cow herd is likely. With bred heifers determined for the year, it will depend on cow culling. The cow culling rate in 2024 dropped to 10.2 percent (from higher levels in 2021-2023), about equal to the previous twenty-year average. Another year of sharp decrease in beef cow culling could lead to minimal herd growth but, lacking that, the cow herd could shrink a bit more this year. In the last three herd expansions, the cow culling rate has averaged below nine percent. In 2025, beef cow slaughter will have to drop more than 12 percent year over year to result in a cow culling rate below 9.0 percent.

The question of heifer retention in 2025 will determine herd dynamics in 2026 and beyond. Heifers saved for breeding (part of the 2025 beef replacement heifer inventory) and additional unplanned (or impulse) heifer breeding in 2025 may result in a modest increase in heifers calving in 2026. The supply of heifers available to do this is limited but could allow for limited herd growth in 2026. Additional retention of heifer calves in 2025 (for breeding in 2026) might set the stage for more rapid herd growth in 2027 and beyond. We shall see.

### **Free seminar in March to focus on environmental law enforcement**

Tuesday, February 11, 2025

Media Contact: Trisha Gedon | Sr. Communications Specialist | 405-744-3625 | [trisha.gedon@okstate.edu](mailto:trisha.gedon@okstate.edu)

To help combat the issue of illegal roadside dumps, Oklahoma State University Extension is partnering with the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality and the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Rural Development to host an Oklahoma Environmental Law Enforcement Training in Oklahoma City.

**Who and what:** Law enforcement professionals, city officials, tribal environmental representatives, county commissioners and anyone interested in learning about environmental law enforcement are invited to participate in the free workshop. Chad Keller and Ryan Rosser will instruct the class. Keller is senior environmental specialist and investigator with the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality and is a sergeant with the Criminal Investigation Unit. Rosser is a senior assistant special agent for the Environmental Protection Agency Criminal Investigation Division.

**When and where:** March 5, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Oklahoma County OSU Extension Center, 2500 NE 63rd St., Oklahoma City. There is a one-hour break from noon to 1 p.m. for lunch on your own.

**Why:** Roadside dumpsites are not only unsightly and illegal, but they also wreak havoc on the environment. These sites can cause contamination of soil, groundwater, drinking water wells, streams and rivers. Other side effects include possible injury to children playing in or around the site, damage to plant and wildlife habitats, and a decrease in the quality of life for nearby residents and the local community. Participants will gain expertise in environmental crime investigations involving the following topics and more:

- Dealing with hazardous waste
- Danger at environmental crime scenes
- Oklahoma and Federal Clean Air Acts
- Open burning
- Safe Drinking Water Act
- Responding to crime scenes
- Oklahoma's littering and dumping laws

Participants will also learn more about identifying resources for improving local enforcement programs and have an opportunity to network with others involved in law enforcement.

Participants will receive a certificate of participation. Those in law enforcement will earn eight hours of CLEET credit after completing the class.

For more information or to register for the free workshop, contact Keima Borsuah at 405-744-9827 or [keima.kamara@okstate.edu](mailto:keima.kamara@okstate.edu).

In general terms, the odds of a successful tree planting can be significantly increased if the planting is done in the fall. Fall planting allows the tree time to begin to develop its root system without the stress of supplying water to rapidly growing leaves. However, as in most things related to plants, there are exceptions. Bare root trees are one of those exceptions.

Bare root trees must be dug and prepared for delivery when they are dormant and kept in cold storage until delivery. This means spring planting of many trees here in Oklahoma. Consider the following suggestions when planting your bare root trees.

As soon as the trees arrive, unpack and check their condition. Cover the roots with damp cloth or paper (shredded paper works very well) and store them in a dark, cool area. Immediately prior to planting, soak the tree roots in a bucket of clean water for several hours. This will help the plant begin to wake from dormancy. Now is a good time to remove any labels or other tape/markings that might cause girdling as the tree grows. This is one of those seemingly simple little tasks that often gets overlooked causing problems later in the tree's life. I have seen trees that still have the label on a branch or trunk, several years after it was planted. These trees are usually declining in health. It would be like someone putting a bracelet on you when you're born and never taking it off. So please, think about what you are doing because you have invested time and money in this tree.

Prepare the planting hole by digging a much wider hole than the root mass but not deeper. This is an important step because it gives the roots plenty of loose soil to begin their lateral growth. Digging the hole deeper than needed is likely to cause settling, leaving you with a tree that is buried too deep. The uppermost roots should be just below the soil surface when the tree is planted, and graft unions should remain above the ground.

Staking should be done only on an "as needed" basis. If the tree is very small, it may do fine without staking, as long as it doesn't move too much in the wind. If it's a larger tree or has a well-developed branching structure, staking at planting is advised. Some upper trunk movement is fine if the base of the tree does not move around.

Finish the planting with a good watering and then apply several inches of mulch around the planting area. The larger the mulched area, the less the competition is for valuable moisture and nutrients, and a four-foot circle around a new tree would not be too extreme.

If you did a soil test prior to planting and the test indicates a need for a particular nutrient, it can be incorporated into the back fill soil or applied as a top dress. Avoid piles of fertilizer as direct contact with the roots can cause problems. Additives such as peat moss or potting soil should be avoided because it can create a "flowerpot" effect. The "flowerpot" effect is a situation where

the plant has no need to develop roots into the surrounding soil because everything it needs is readily available close by. And this is another potential cause of failure as the plant matures.

For more information on this or any other topic in horticulture, you can contact Laura Payne, the Horticulture Educator in the Payne County Extension office. Laura can be reached via email at [laura.payne@okstate.edu](mailto:laura.payne@okstate.edu), phone at 405-747-8320, or in person at the Payne County Extension office, located at 315 W. 6th in Stillwater.

## Use Cold Weather Time to Plan Spring and Summer Gardens

Friday, January 31, 2025

Minute by minute, the days are staying lighter just a bit longer. That means gardeners are that much closer to spring gardening activity. In the meantime, gardeners can use these cold winter days to plan their spring and summer gardens. Getting started planning while there's still a nip in the air will help ensure a productive growing season.

Gardeners are likely receiving various seed catalogs in the mail. This is a great time to get seeds and needed gardening tools to avoid possible shortages.

Plant selection is important, but gardeners need to match the plants to the planting site. Factors such as sun-light exposure, wind, soil type and irrigation possibilities all play a role. Choosing plants that will grow well in the conditions available will save gardeners money and frustration. Plants placed in a location that meets their needs usually grow well without much extra attention, while a poorly placed plant is more likely to be stressed and more vulnerable to pest problems.

Consider things that could be changed to improve the site. If a garden site is near a tree, does the tree provide too much shade? Thinning the tree canopy can help. However, the tree will need continual pruning over time.

Gardeners who are working with less-than-ideal soil can use this time to add compost or organic matter to enrich the soil. This will also help with possible drainage issues. Successful gardening depends on good soil. As you're planning the garden, use this time to research common pests and diseases for your selected plants. It's also a good time to prepare row covers to protect seedlings. Speaking of seedlings, start seeds indoors for warm-season plants such as tomatoes, squash and peppers. Check the label on the seed packets for timing and transplanting dates.

Another important factor to consider is the [USDA Hardiness Zone](#) in which you live. The USDA Hardiness Zone Map is used to identify the average annual minimum temperature for your area. Plants are rated based on the lowest temperatures in which they can survive the winter. Most of Oklahoma falls within Hardiness Zone 7, with the panhandle falling mostly in Zone 6 and the southern portion of the state along the Red River falling into Zone 8.

It's no secret that Oklahoma weather is unpredictable. The possibilities of more snow, freezing temperatures or even an ice storm are real; however, it won't be too long until gardeners will be getting a little dirt under their nails as a new gardening season begins.

### Introducing Your New Ag/4-H/FRTEP Educator for Osage County

Greetings, Osage County!

I am excited to announce that I have joined the team as your new **Agriculture, 4-H, and FRTEP Educator!** My name is Lexi Patrick, and I am thrilled to be working with you all to strengthen our county's agricultural programs, support youth development through 4-H, and provide resources to our Tribal communities through the Federally Recognized Tribal Extension Program (FRTEP).

I am eager to connect with everyone in the community and collaborate on initiatives that matter most to you. In the coming months, I will be hosting events, workshops, and informational sessions designed to provide practical solutions and foster community engagement.

Feel free to reach out to me with any questions, ideas, or opportunities for collaboration. I look forward to meeting many of you in person, and together, we can continue to build a thriving agricultural community here in Osage County.

Thanks,  
Lexi Patrick  
Ag/4-H/FRTEP Educator  
Osage County

# Osage County Junior Livestock Show

## Tuesday, February 25th

3:00-6:00pm

Sheep, goat, and hog weigh-in  
Ag Mechanics check-in

## Wednesday, February 26th

9:30am

Swine Show  
Swine Showmanship  
Peewee Showmanship

2:00pm

Goat Show  
Goat Showmanship  
Peewee Showmanship  
Sheep Show  
Sheep Showmanship  
Peewee Showmanship

7:00-8:00pm

Heifer & Steers in place  
Ag Mechanics check-in

## Thursday, February 27th

8:00-9:00am

Market Steer weigh-in

2:00pm

Heifer Show

4:00pm

Steer Show  
Beef Showmanship  
Peewee Showmanship

6:00pm

Super Showmanship

## Friday, February 28th

9:00am

Livestock Judging Contest

10:00am

Ag Mechanics Contest

3:00pm

Dinner Preparation

5:00-6:30pm

Dinner

6:30pm

Awards Ceremony

7:00pm

Auction

Oklahoma State University, in compliance with Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 11246 as amended, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and other federal laws and regulations, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, disability, or status as a veteran in any of its policies, practices or procedures. This includes but is not limited to admissions, employment, financial aid, and educational services. References within this publication to any specific commercial product, process, or service by trade name, trademark, service mark, manufacturer, or otherwise does not constitute or imply endorsement by Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- ♦ **Feb 25th-Feb 28th** Osage County Junior Livestock Show
- ♦ **Mar 5th** Free Seminar on Environmental law enforcement



**OSAGE COUNTY  
EXTENSION**

### **Osage County Extension Office**

(918) 287-4170 Office

1039 Old Hwy 99

Pawhuska, Ok 74056