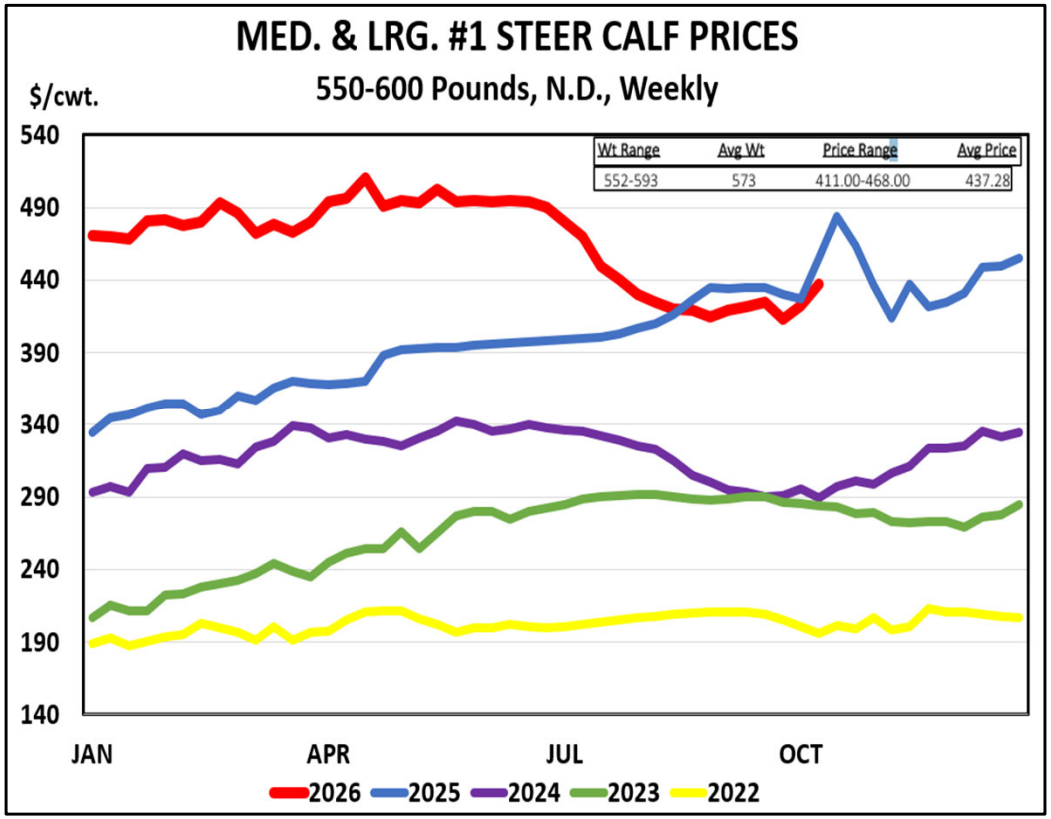
36th Annual

Outlook Conference for Agricultural Lenders



Cattle Price $ituation and Outlook

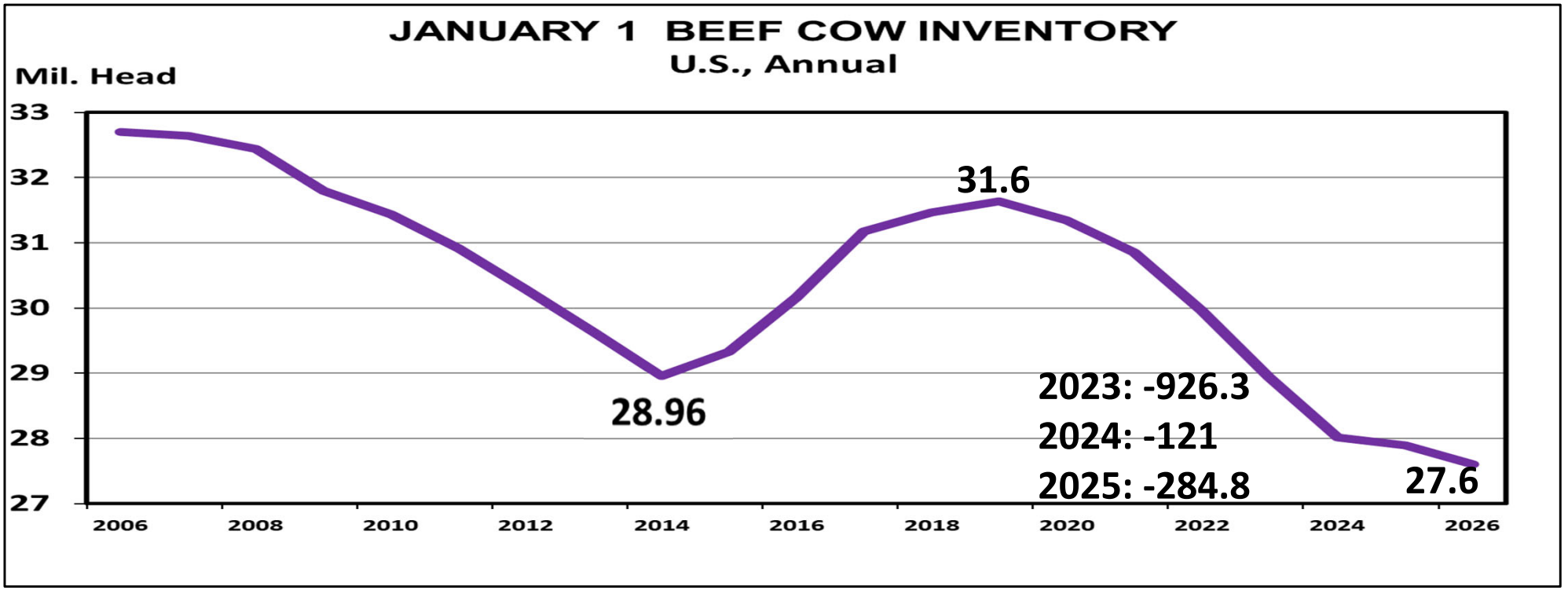


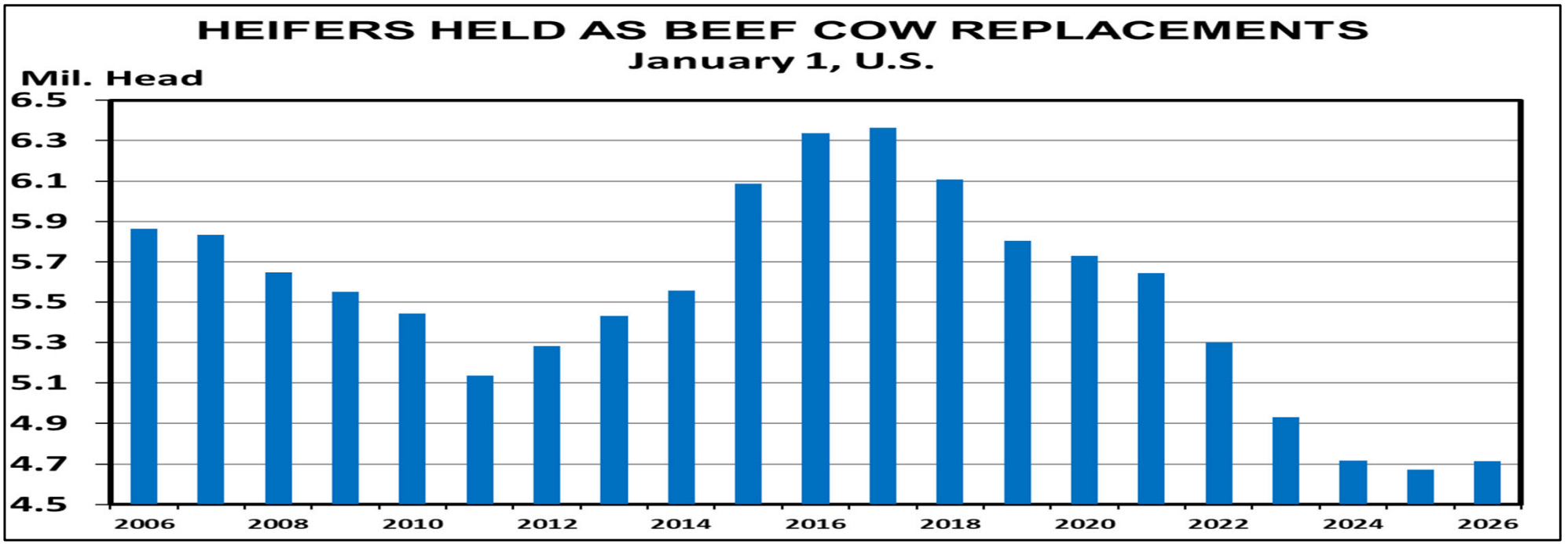
Tim Petry

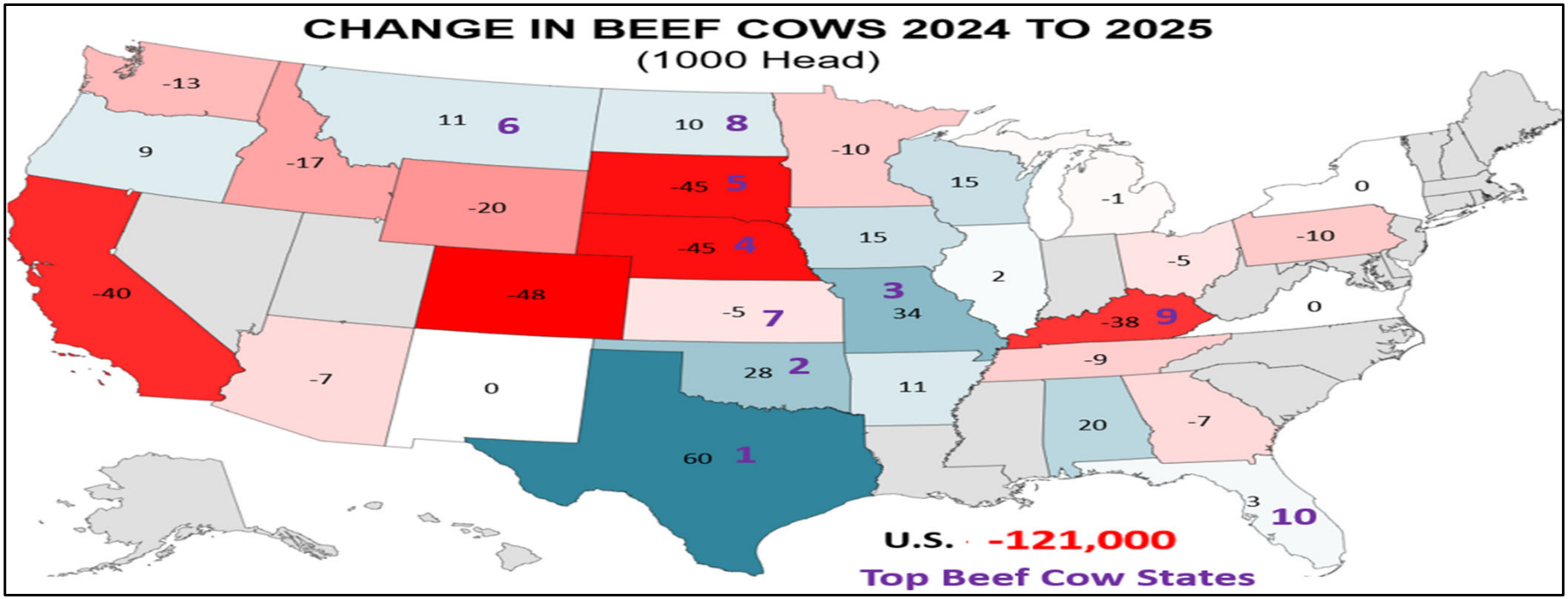
Extension Livestock Marketing Specialist

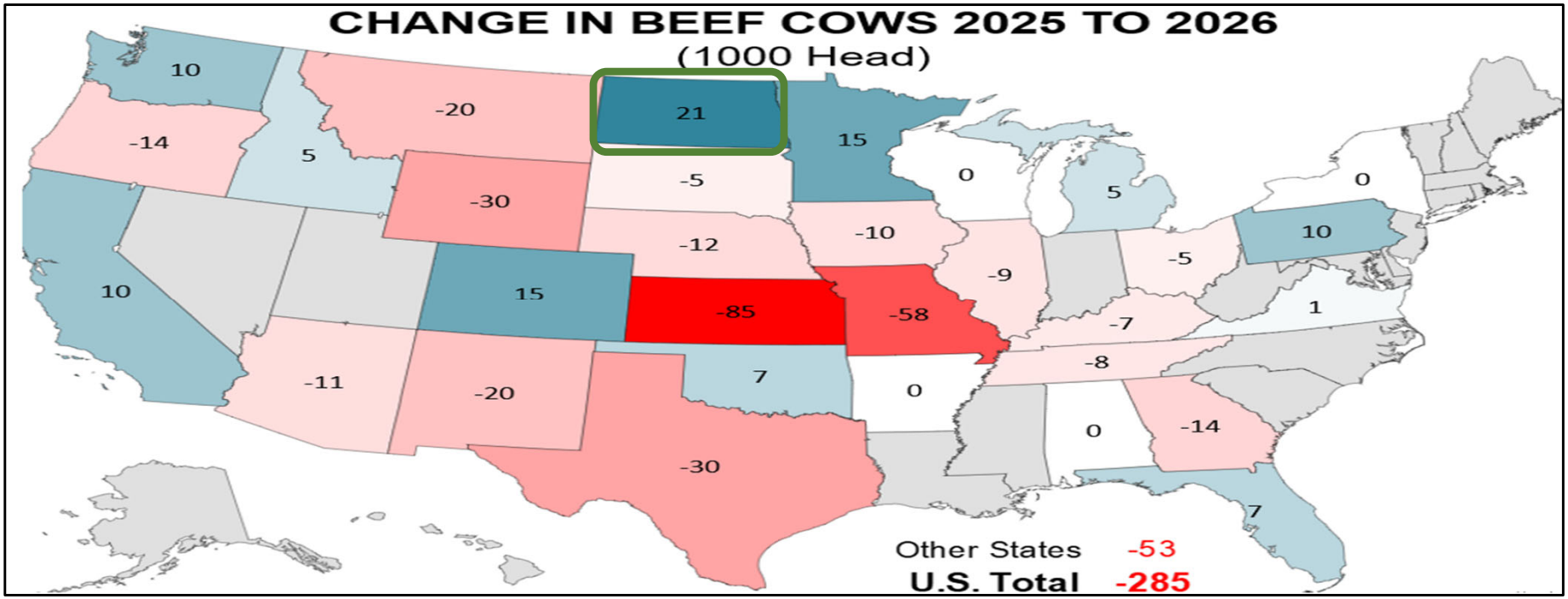
NDSU | EXTENSION AGRIBUSINESS

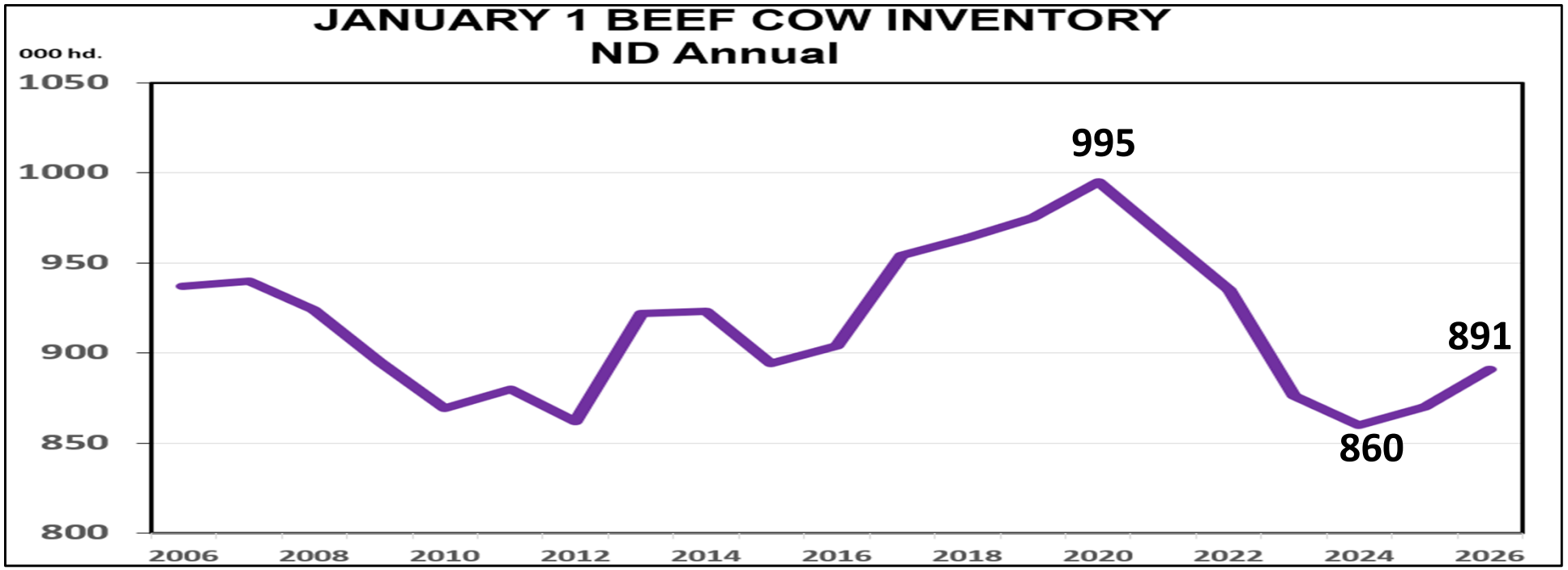
EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE ❯❯ CHANGING LIVES

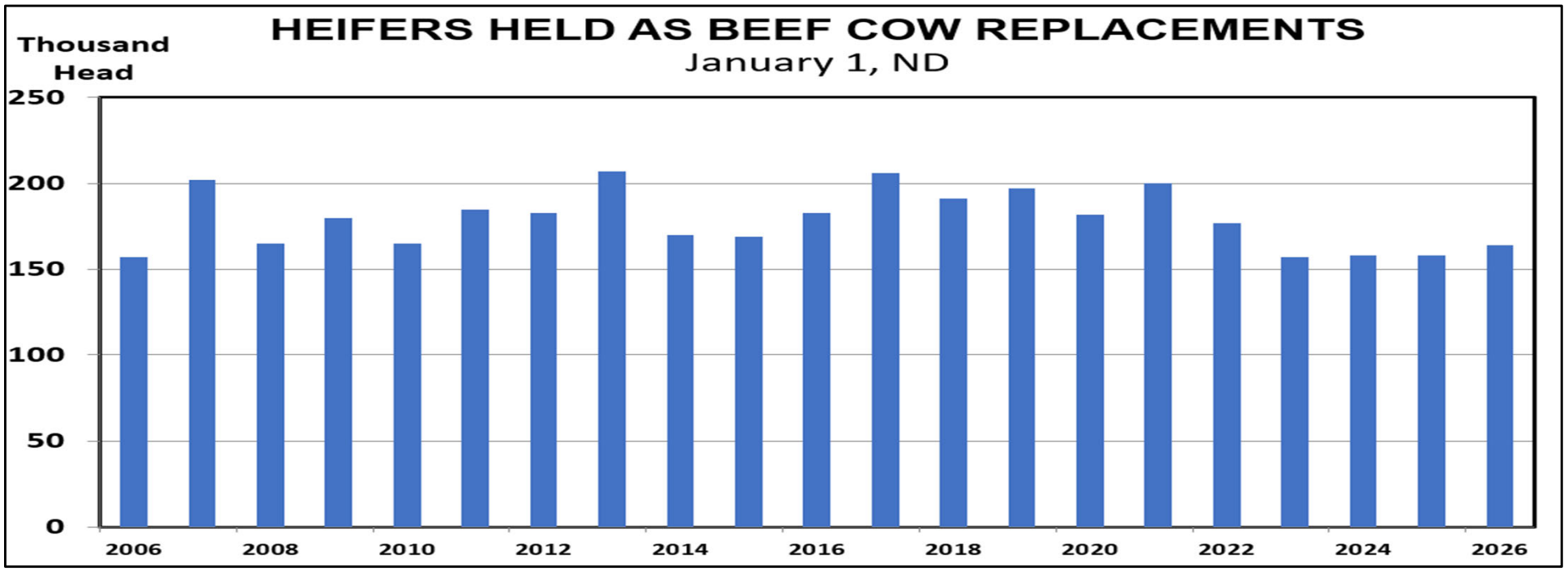

JANUARY 1 BEEF COW INVENTORY
U.S., Annual
Mil. Head
33
32
31
30
29
28
27
31.6
28.96
2023: -926.3
2024: -121
2025: -284.8
27.6
2006
2008
2010
2012
2014
2016
2018
2020
2022
2024
2026

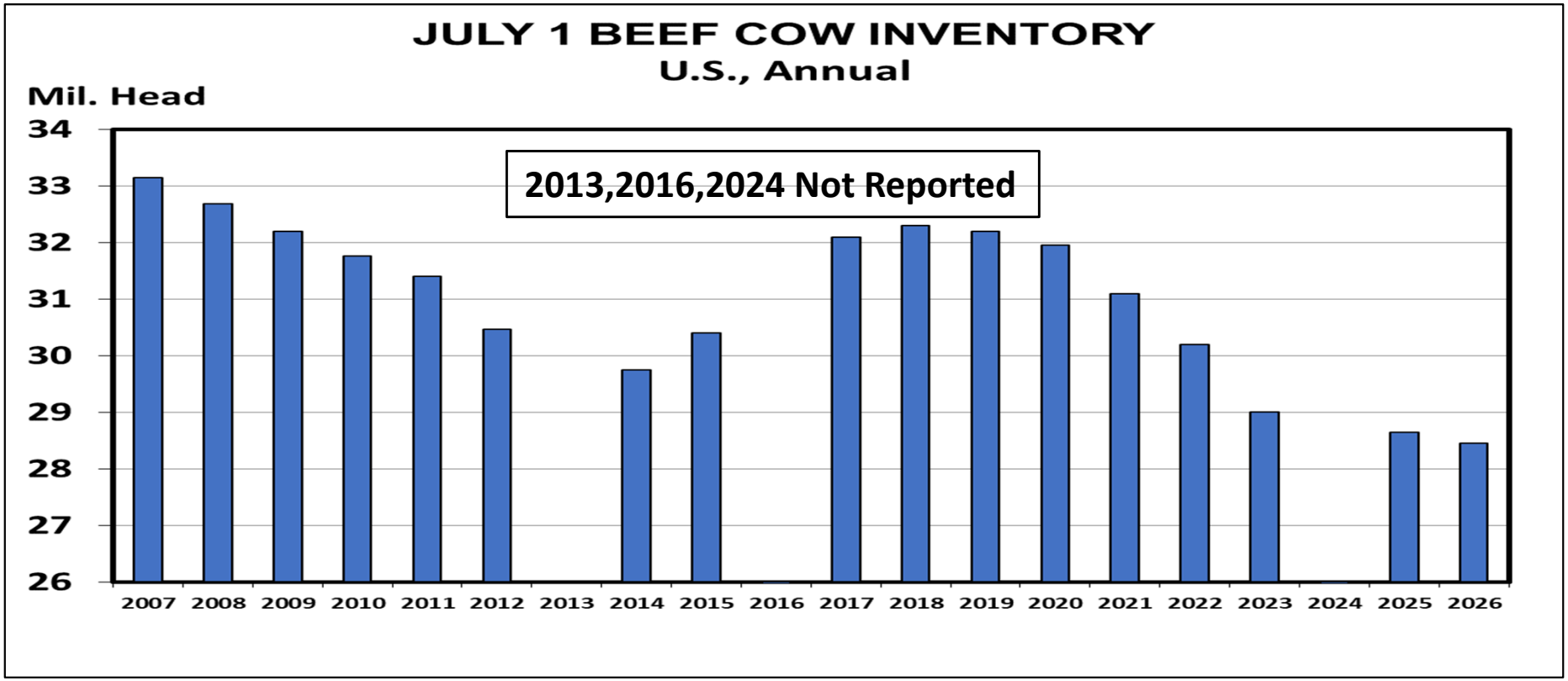

HEIFERS HELD AS BEEF COW REPLACEMENTS
January 1, U.S.
Mil. Head
6.5
6.3
6.1
5.9
5.7
5.5
5.3
5.1
4.9
4.7
4.5
2006
2008
2010
2012
2014
2016
2018
2020
2022
2024
2026

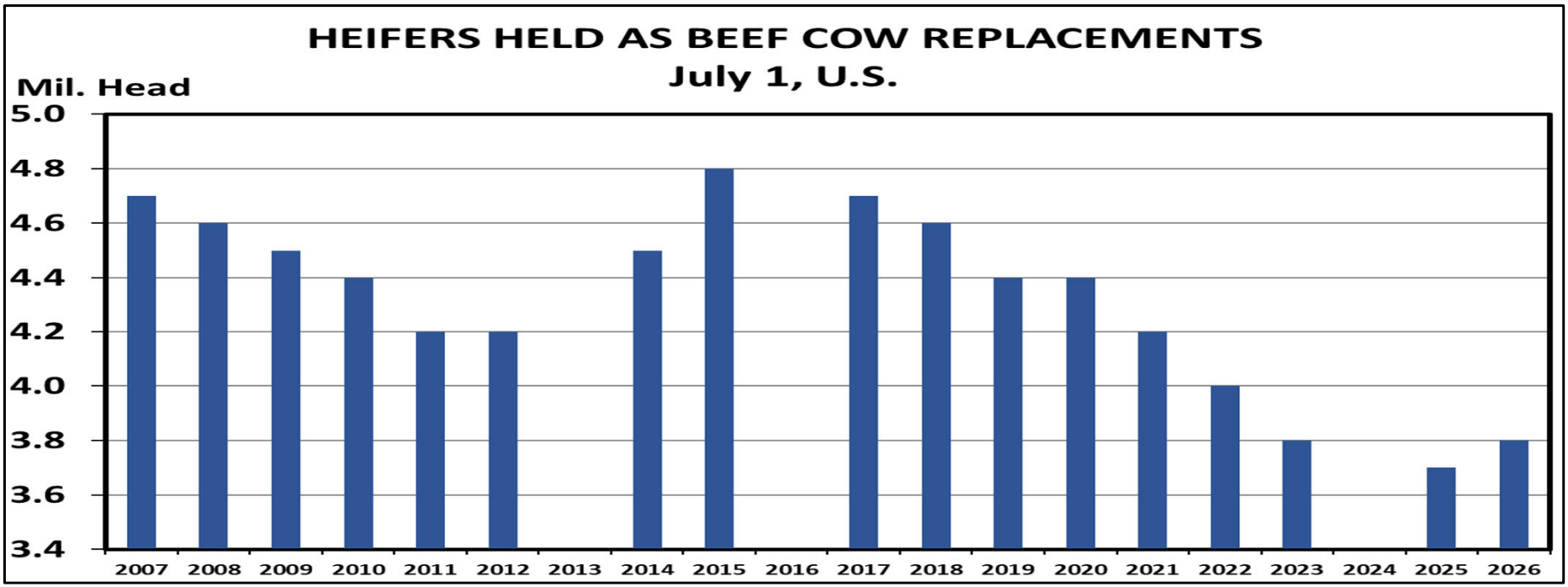

CHANGE IN BEEF COWS 2024 TO 2025
(1000 Head)
-13
9
11
6
10
8
-17
-20
-45
5
-10
15
-1
0
-45
4
15
-10
-40
-48
-5
7
3
34
2
-38
9
-7
0
28
2
11
-9
20
-7
60
1
3
10
U.S. -121,000
Top Beef Cow States

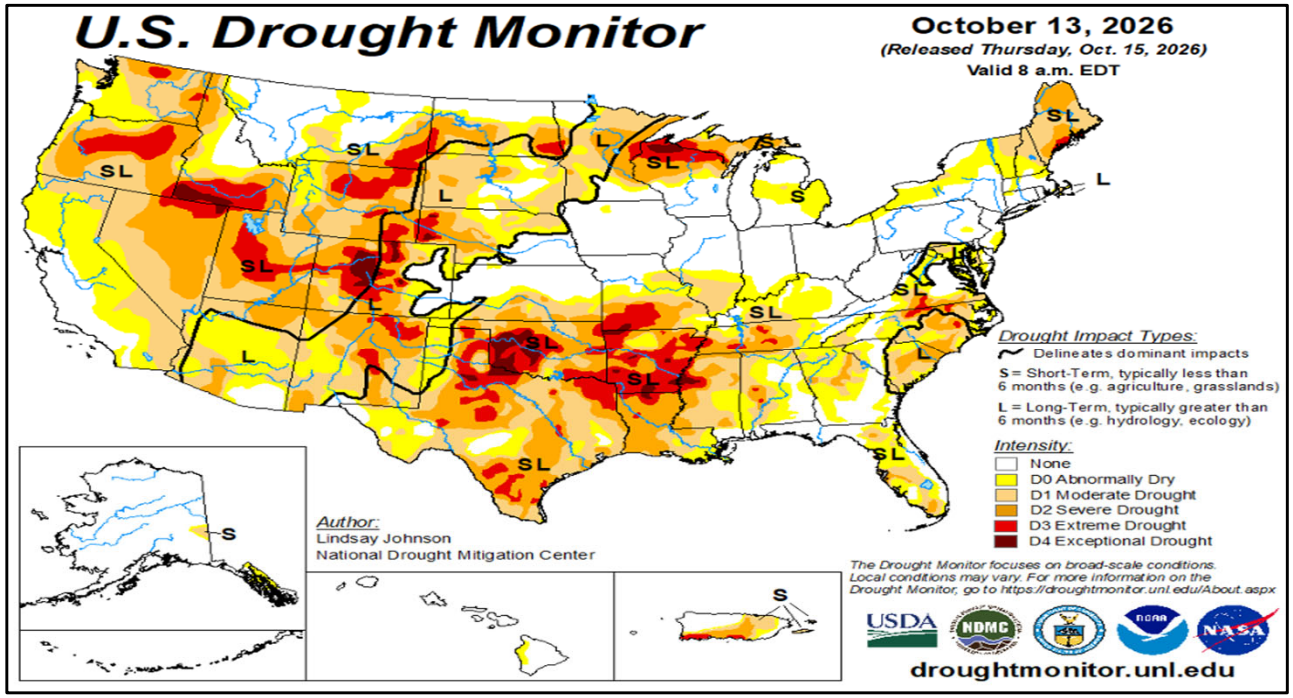

CHANGE IN BEEF COWS 2025 TO 2026
(1000 Head)
10
-14
-20
21
15
0
5
0
5
-30
-5
-10
10
-12
-9
-5
10
15
-85
-58
-7
1
-11
-20
7
0
-8
-30
0
-14
7
Other States -53
U.S. Total -285

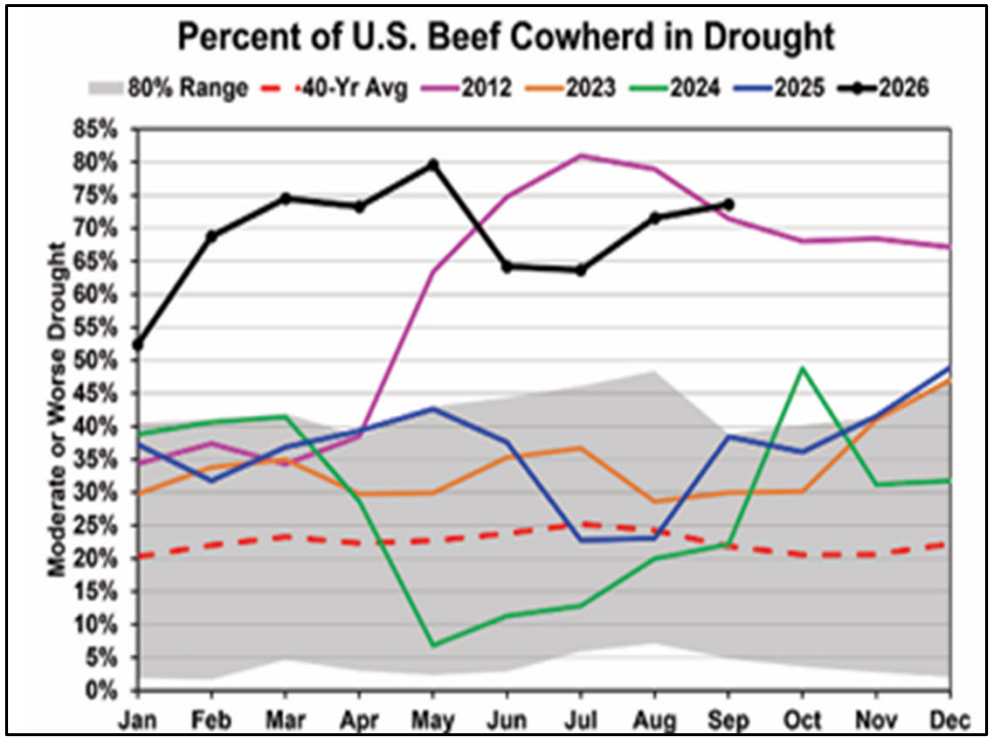

JANUARY 1 BEEF COW INVENTORY
ND Annual
000 hd.
1050
1000
950
900
850
800
995
891
860
2006
2008
2010
2012
2014
2016
2018
2020
2022
2024
2026

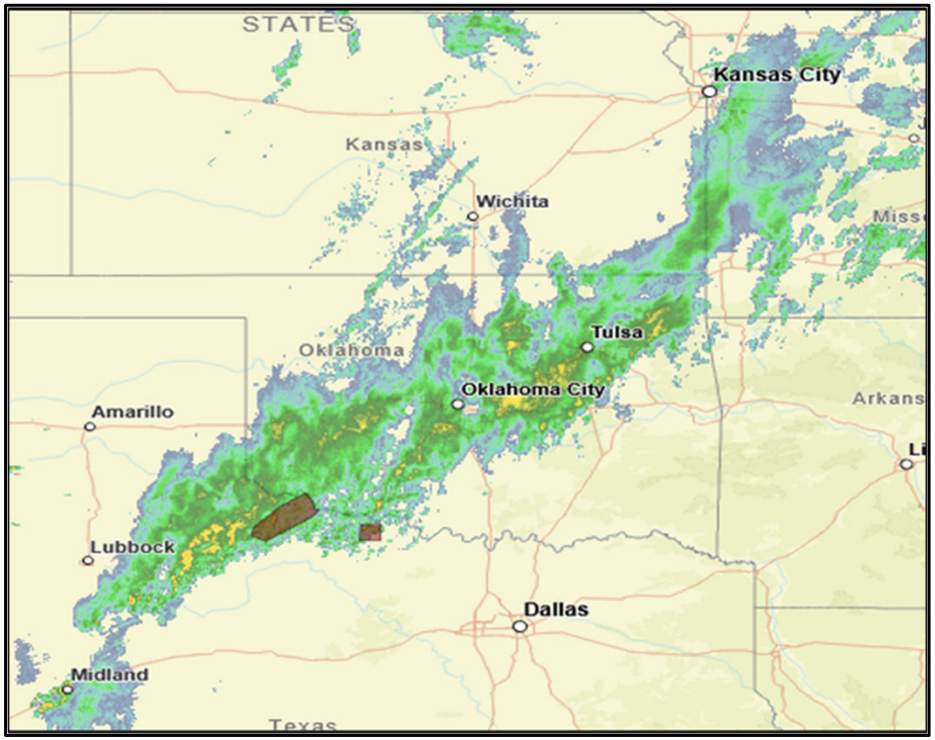

HEIFERS HELD AS BEEF COW REPLACEMENTS
January 1, ND
Thousand Head
250
200
150
100
50
0
2006
2008
2010
2012
2014
2016
2018
2020
2022
2024
2026


JULY 1 BEEF COW INVENTORY
U.S., Annual
Mil. Head
34
33
32
31
30
29
28
27
26
2013,2016,2024 Not Reported
2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024 2025 2026


HEIFERS HELD AS BEEF COW REPLACEMENTS
July 1, U.S.
Mil. Head
5.0
4.8
4.6
4.4
4.2
4.0
3.8
3.6
3.4
2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024 2025 2026

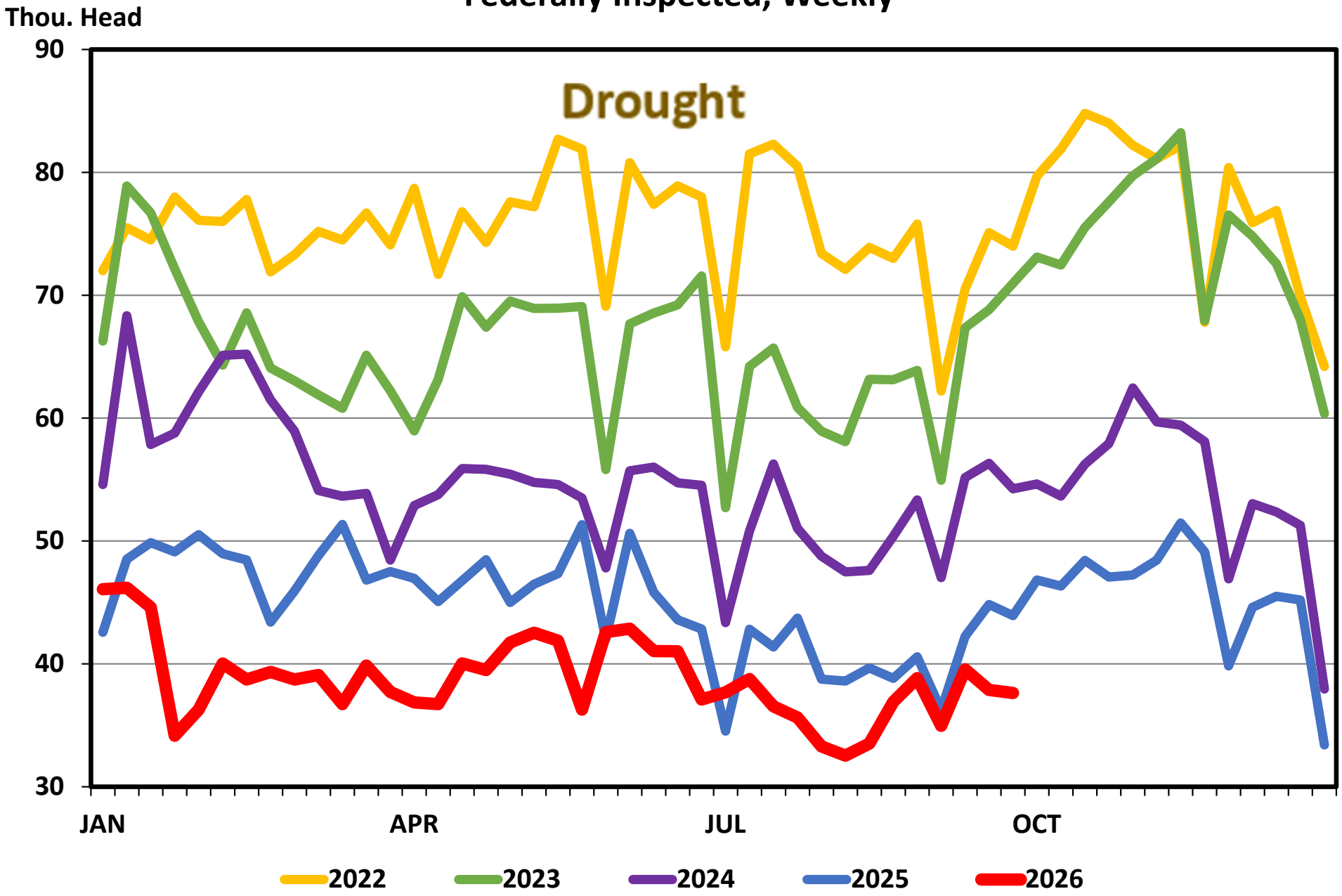

U.S. Drought Monitor
October 13, 2026
(Released Thursday, Oct. 15, 2026)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT
Drought Impact Types:
Delineates dominant impacts
S = Short-Term, typically less than 6 months (e.g. agriculture, grasslands)
L = Long-Term, typically greater than 6 months (e.g. hydrology, ecology)
Intensity:
None
D0 Abnormally Dry
D1 Moderate Drought
D2 Severe Drought
D3 Extreme Drought
D4 Exceptional Drought
Author:
Lindsay Johnson
National Drought Mitigation Center
The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx
USDA
NDMC
droughtmonitor.unl.edu


Percent of U.S. Beef Cowherd in Drought
80% Range
40-Yr Avg
2012
2023
2024
2025
2026
Moderate or Worse Drought
85%
80%
75%
70%
65%
60%
55%
50%
45%
40%
35%
30%
25%
20%
15%
10%
5%
0%
Jan
Feb
Mar
Apr
May
Jun
Jul
Aug
Sep
Oct
Nov
Dec

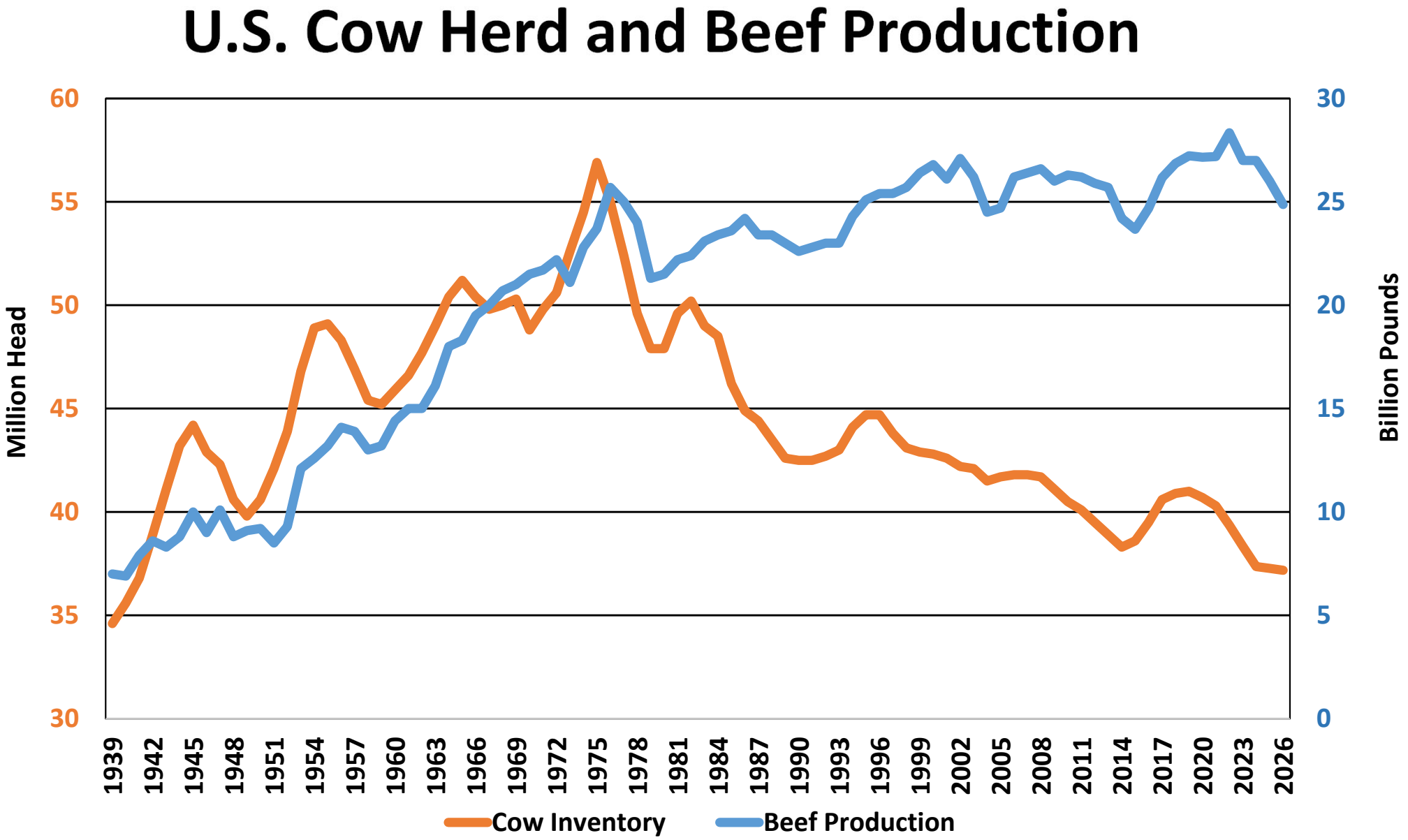

STATES
Kansas City
Kansas
Wichita
Tulsa
Oklahoma
Oklahoma City
Amarillo
Lubbock
Dallas
Midland
Texas

BEEF COW SLAUGHTER

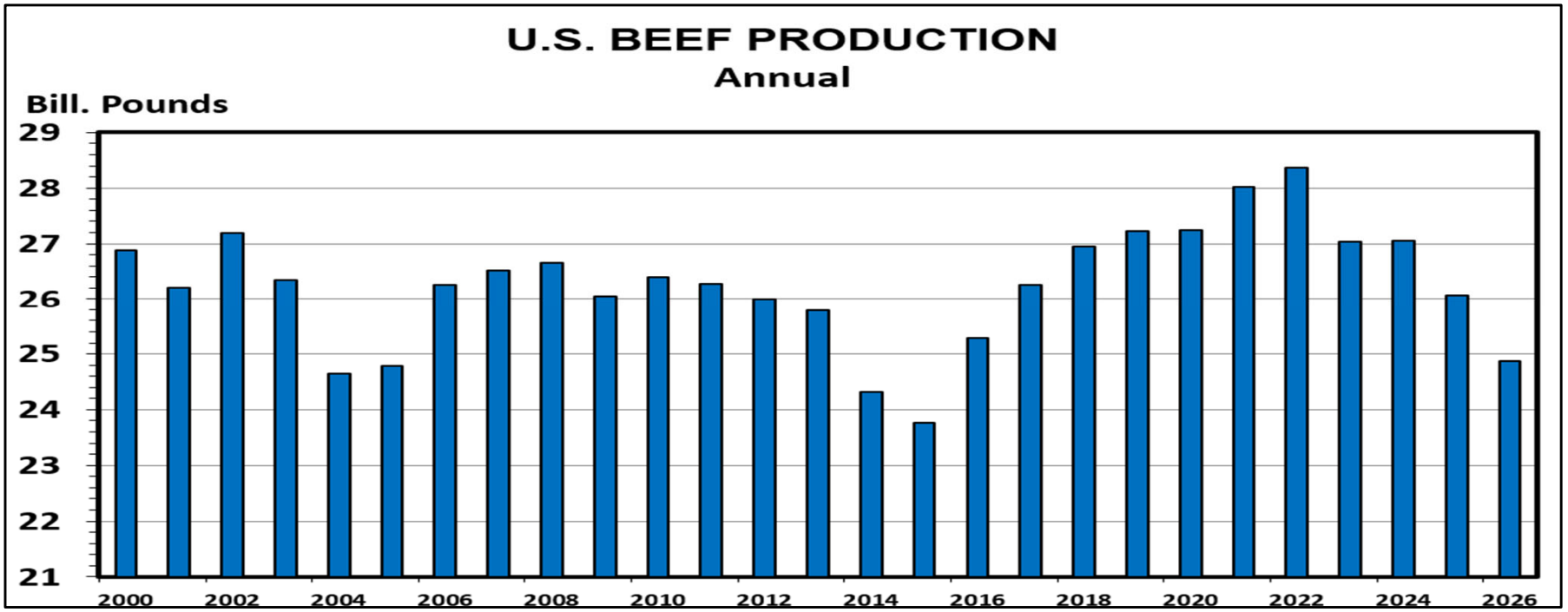
Federally Inspected, Weekly

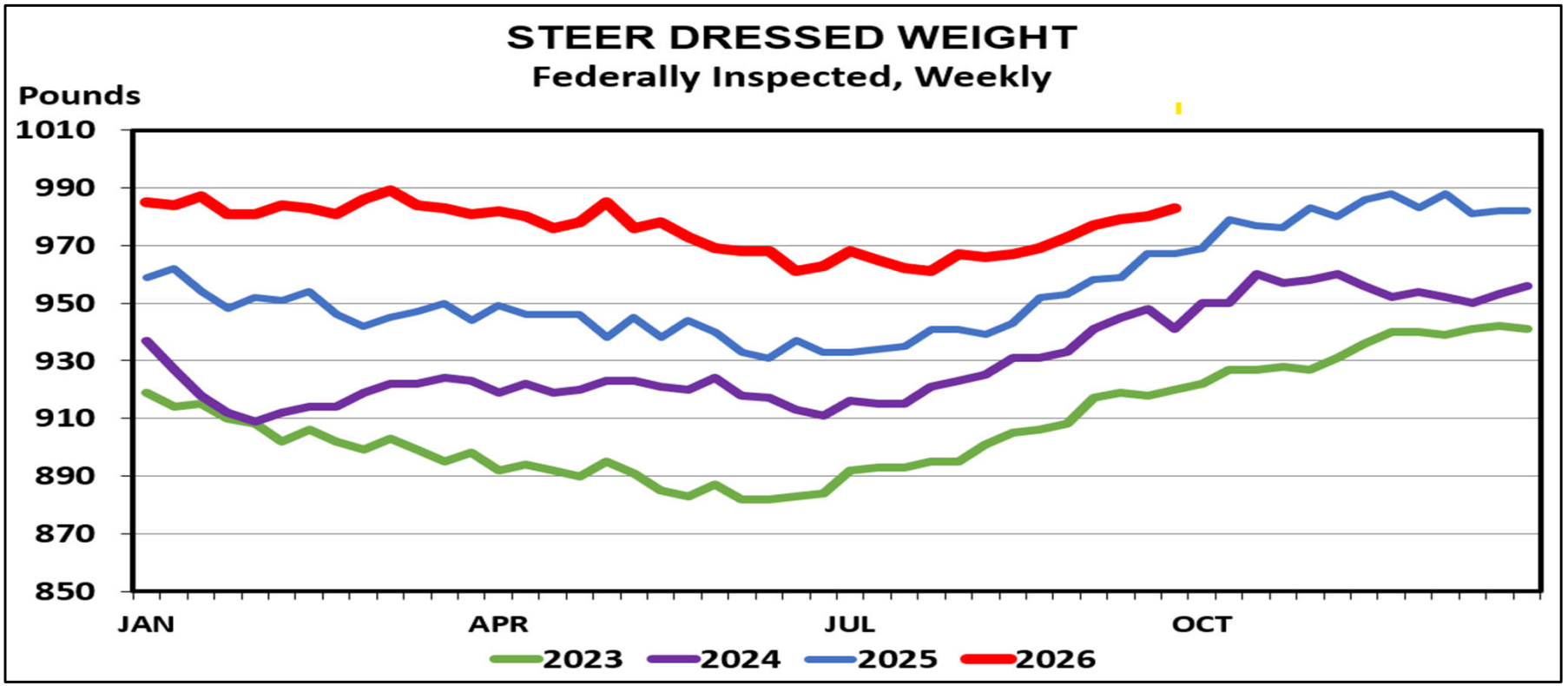


POUNDS NOT HEAD IMPORTANT FOR CATTLE PRICES

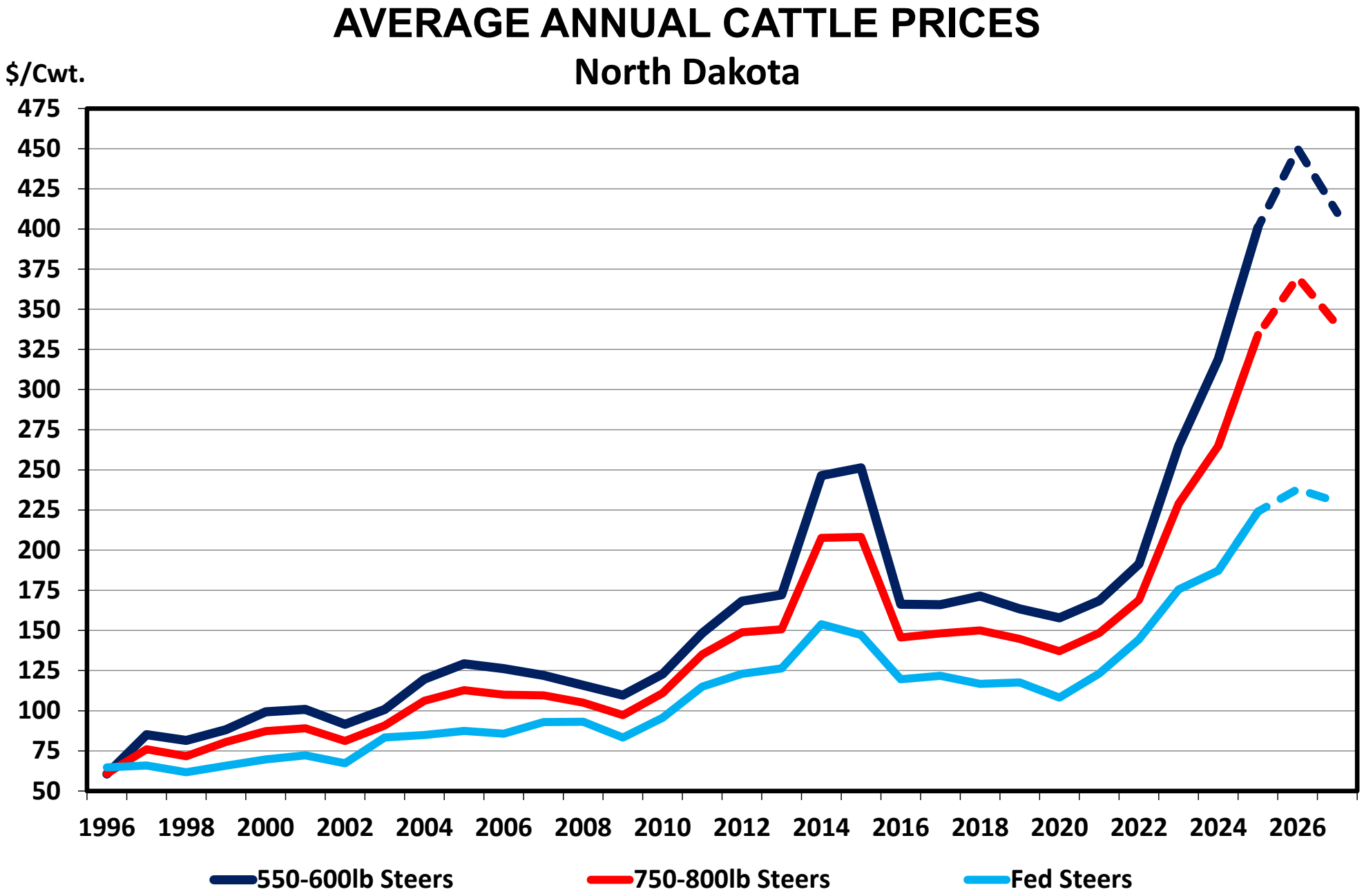


Source: USDA compiled by LMIC,NDSU


U.S. BEEF PRODUCTION
Annual
Bill. Pounds
29
28
27
26
25
24
23
22
21
2000
2002
2004
2006
2008
2010
2012
2014
2016
2018
2020
2022
2024
2026

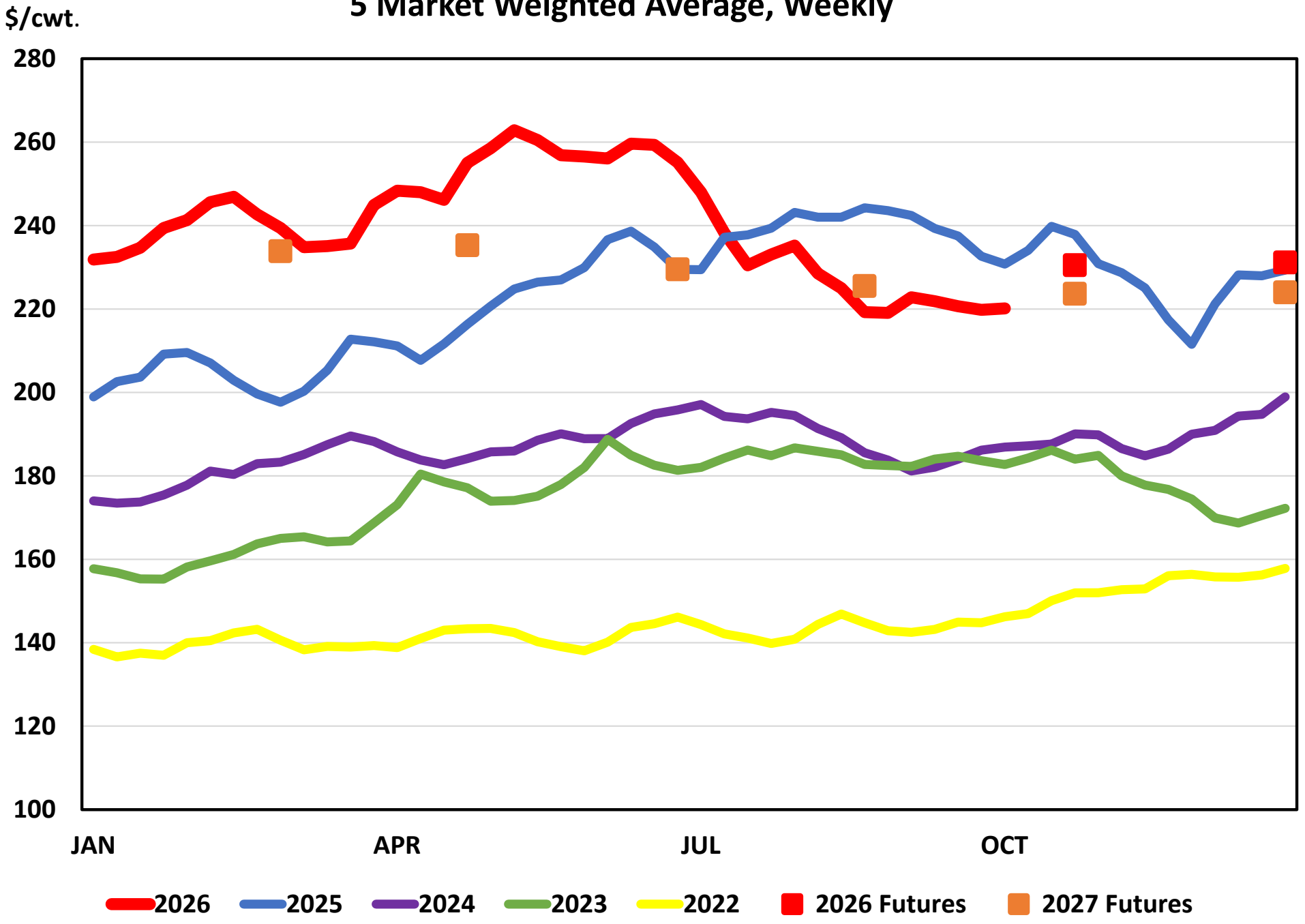

STEER DRESSED WEIGHT
Federally Inspected, Weekly
Pounds
1010
990
970
950
930
910
890
870
850
JAN
APR
JUL
OCT
2023
2024
2025
2026

CYCLICAL VS. SEASONAL CATTLE PRICES



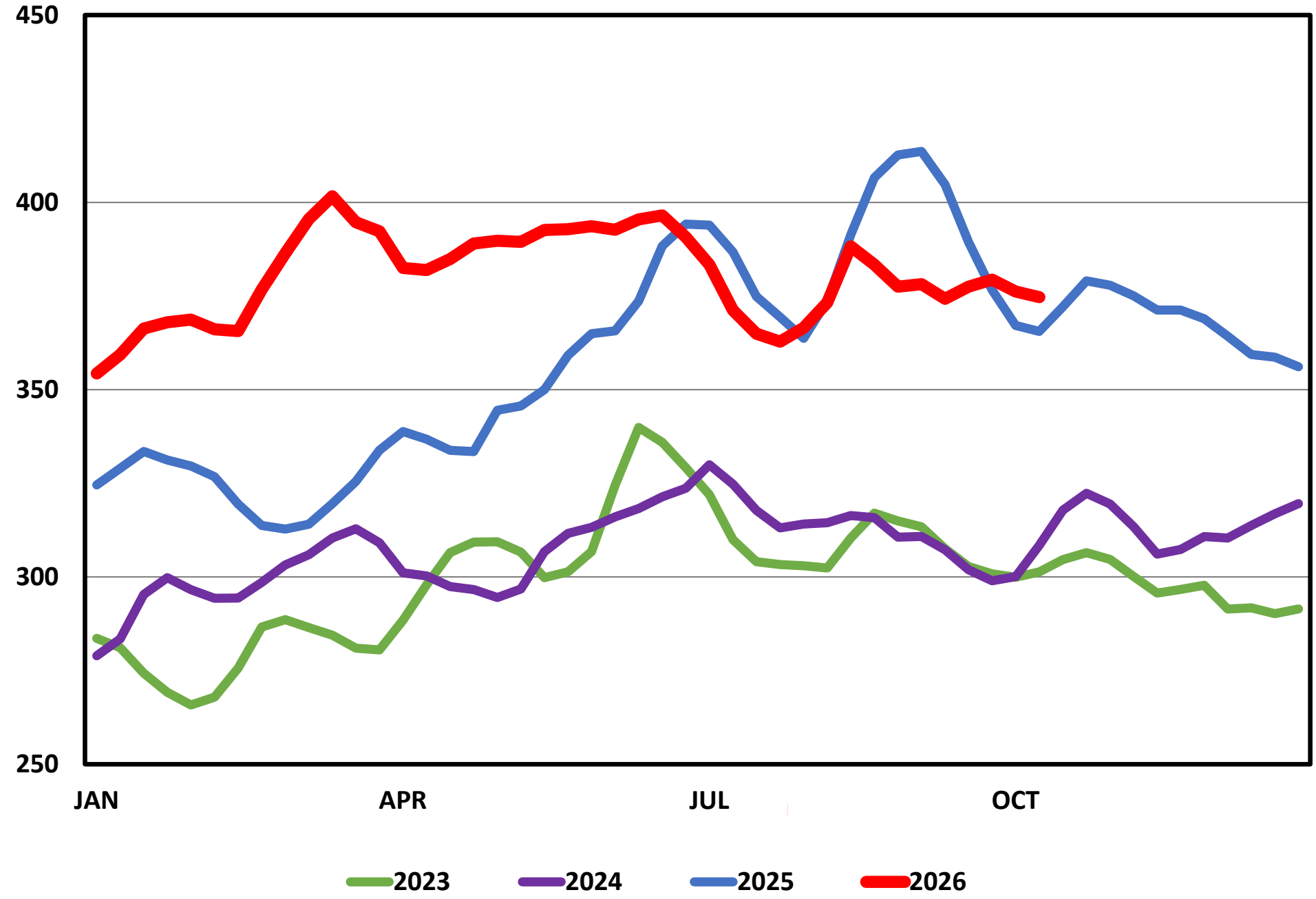
FED STEER PRICES

5 Market Weighted Average, Weekly



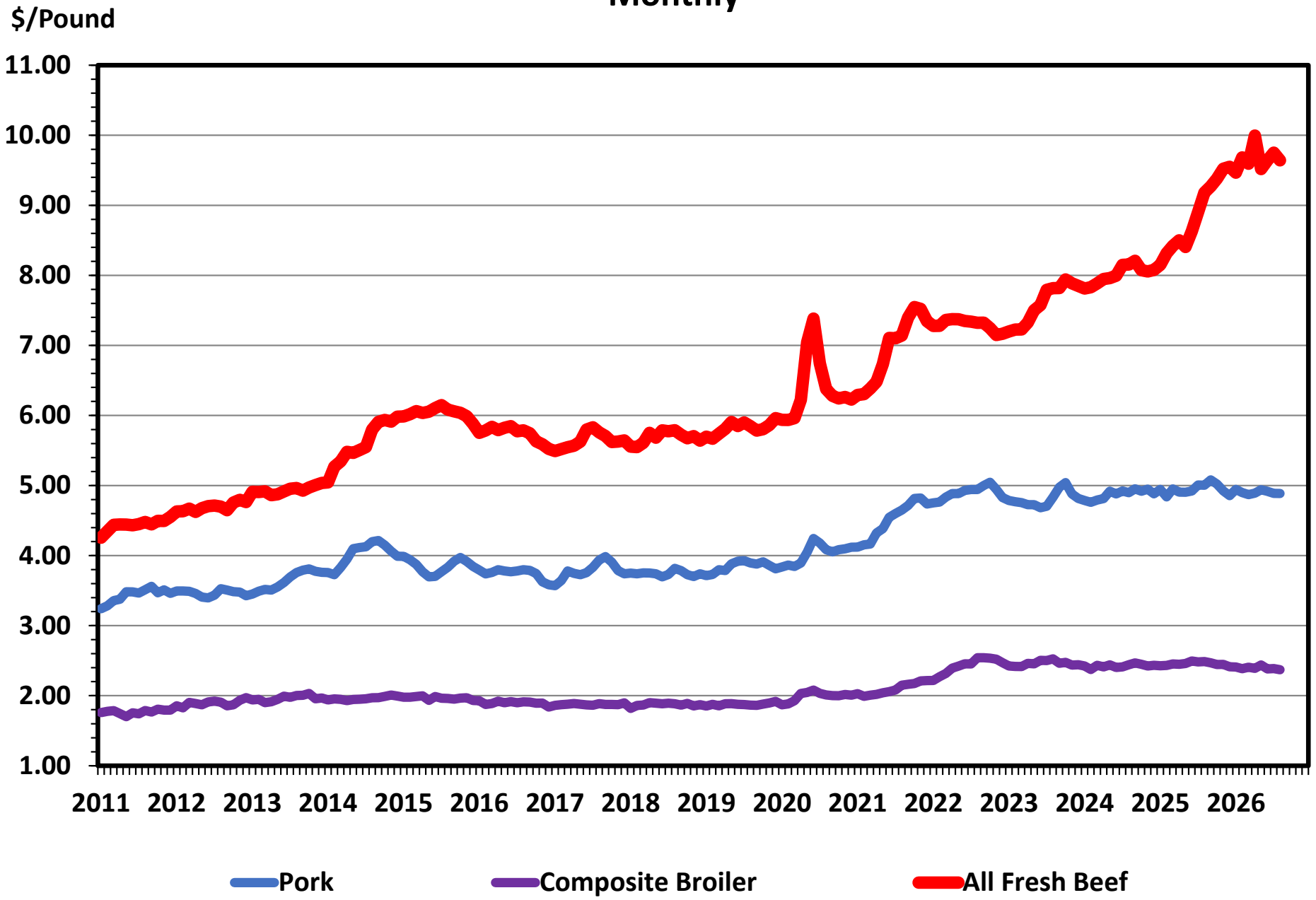
BOXED BEEF CUTOUT VALUE

Choice 600-900 Lbs., Carcass, Negotiated, Weekly



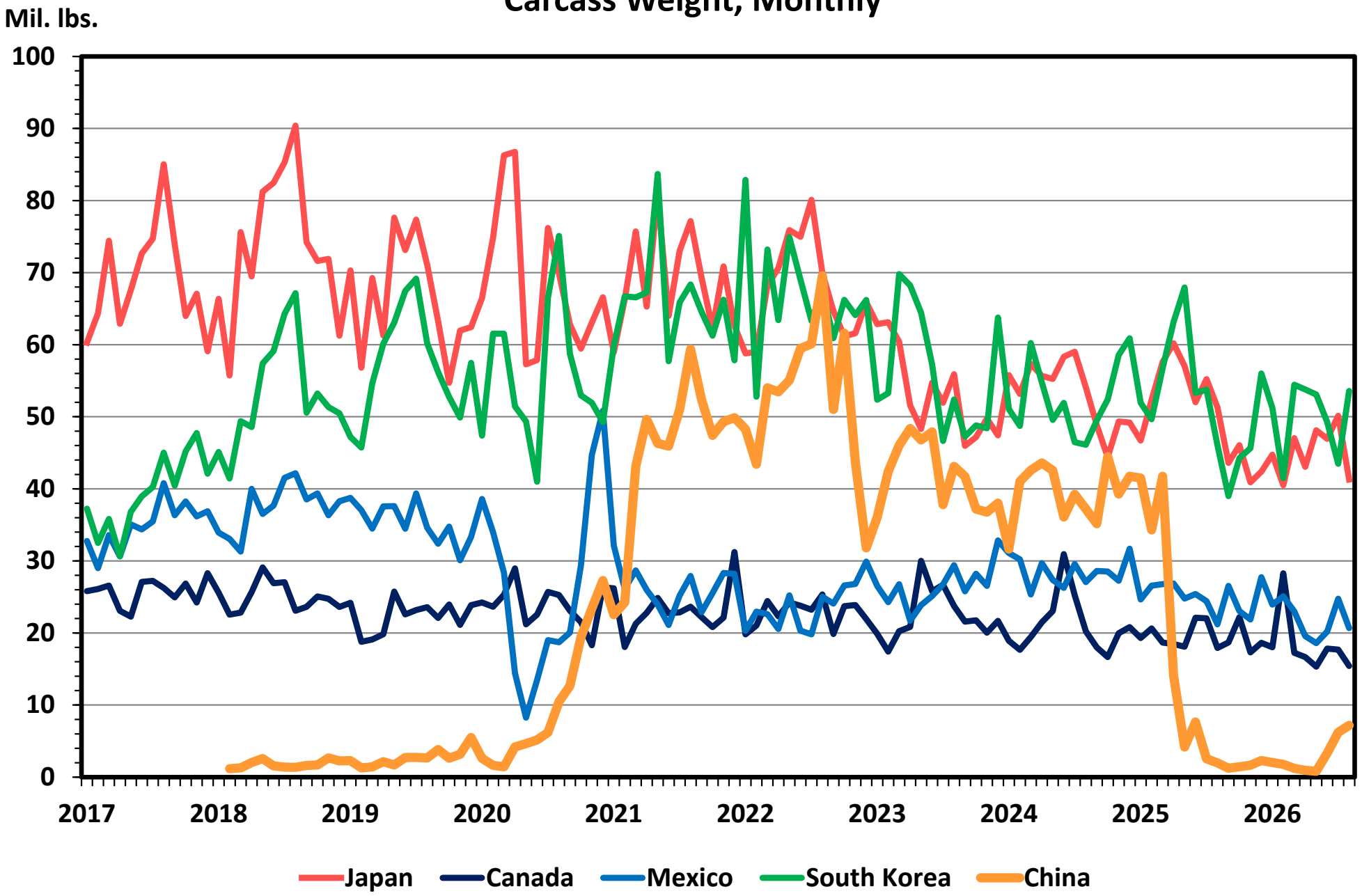
RETAIL PRICE COMPARISON

Monthly

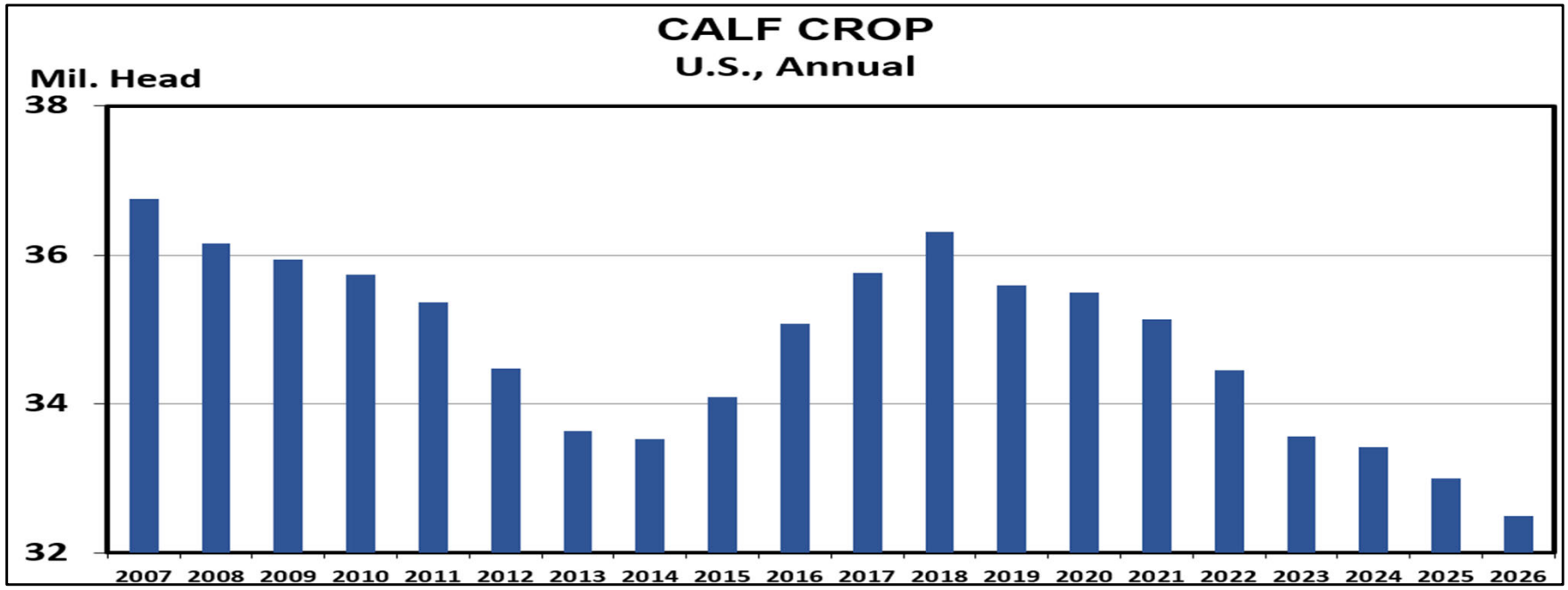


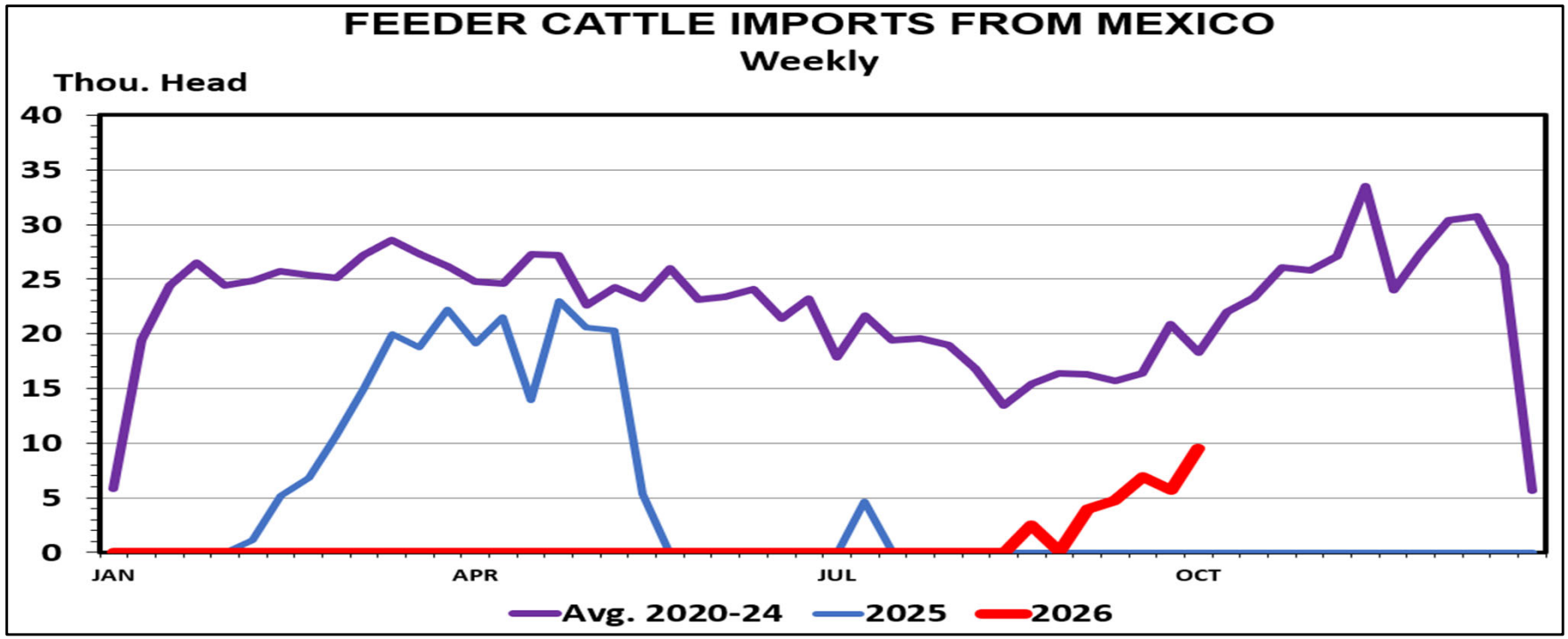
U.S. BEEF EXPORTS TO MAJOR MARKETS

Carcass Weight, Monthly

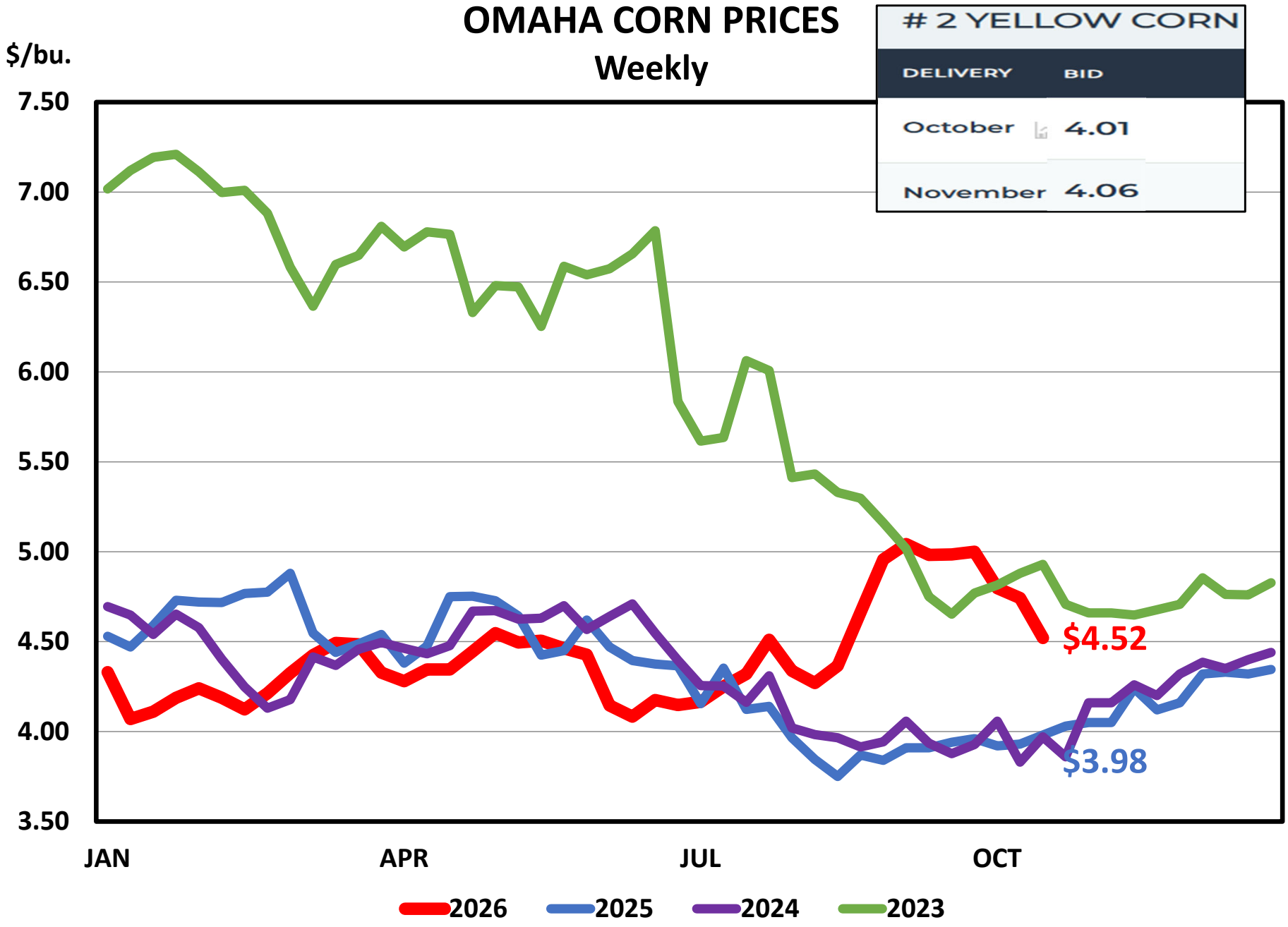


Data Source: USDA-ERS & USDA-FAS


CALF CROP
U.S., Annual
Mil. Head
38
36
34
32
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
2012
2013
2014
2015
2016
2017
2018
2019
2020
2021
2022
2023
2024
2025
2026

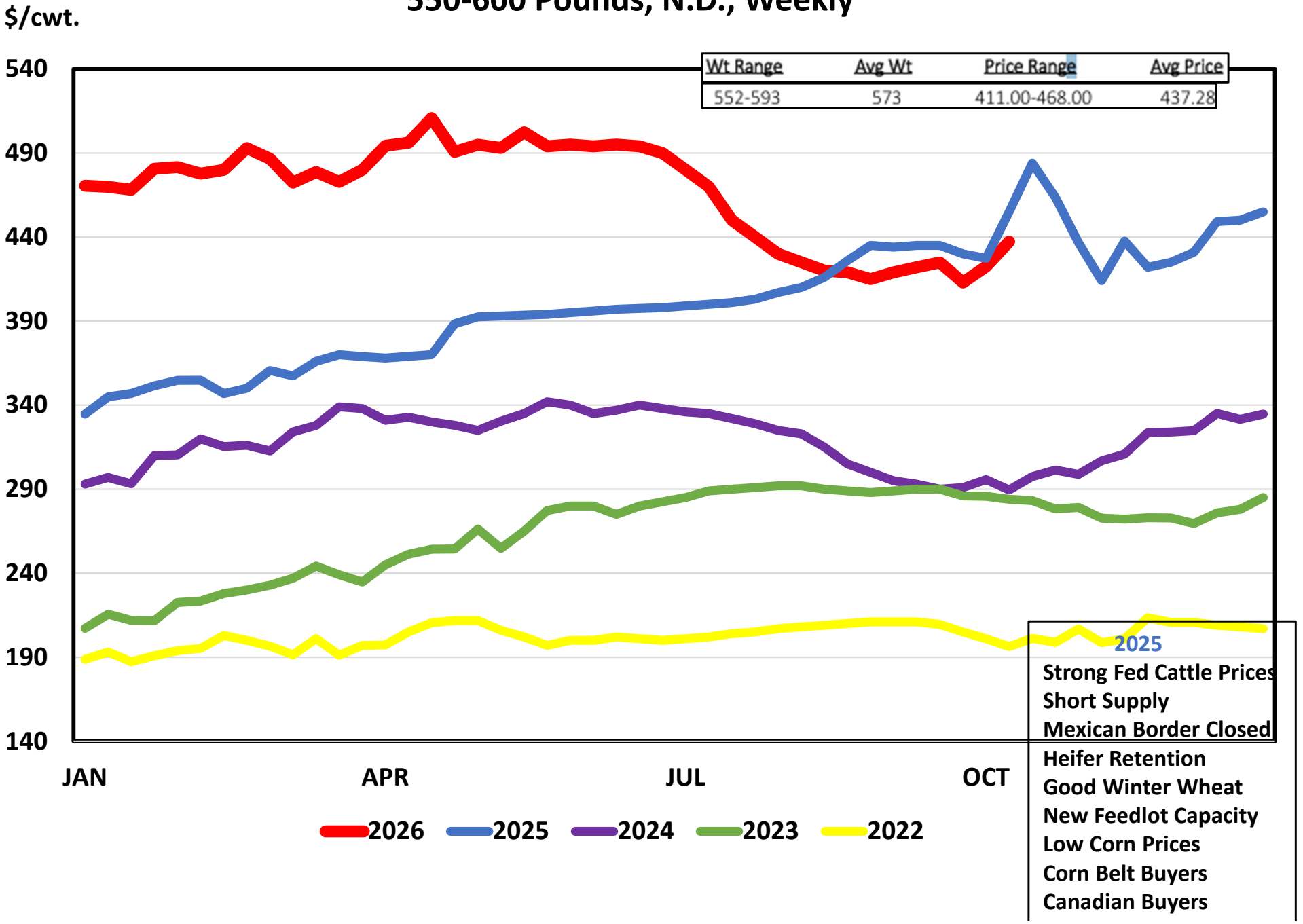

FEEDER CATTLE IMPORTS FROM MEXICO
Weekly
Thou. Head
40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
JAN
APR
JUL
OCT
Avg. 2020-24
2025
2026

“Change corn .10/bu.-Change calf prices $1/cwt. opposite”



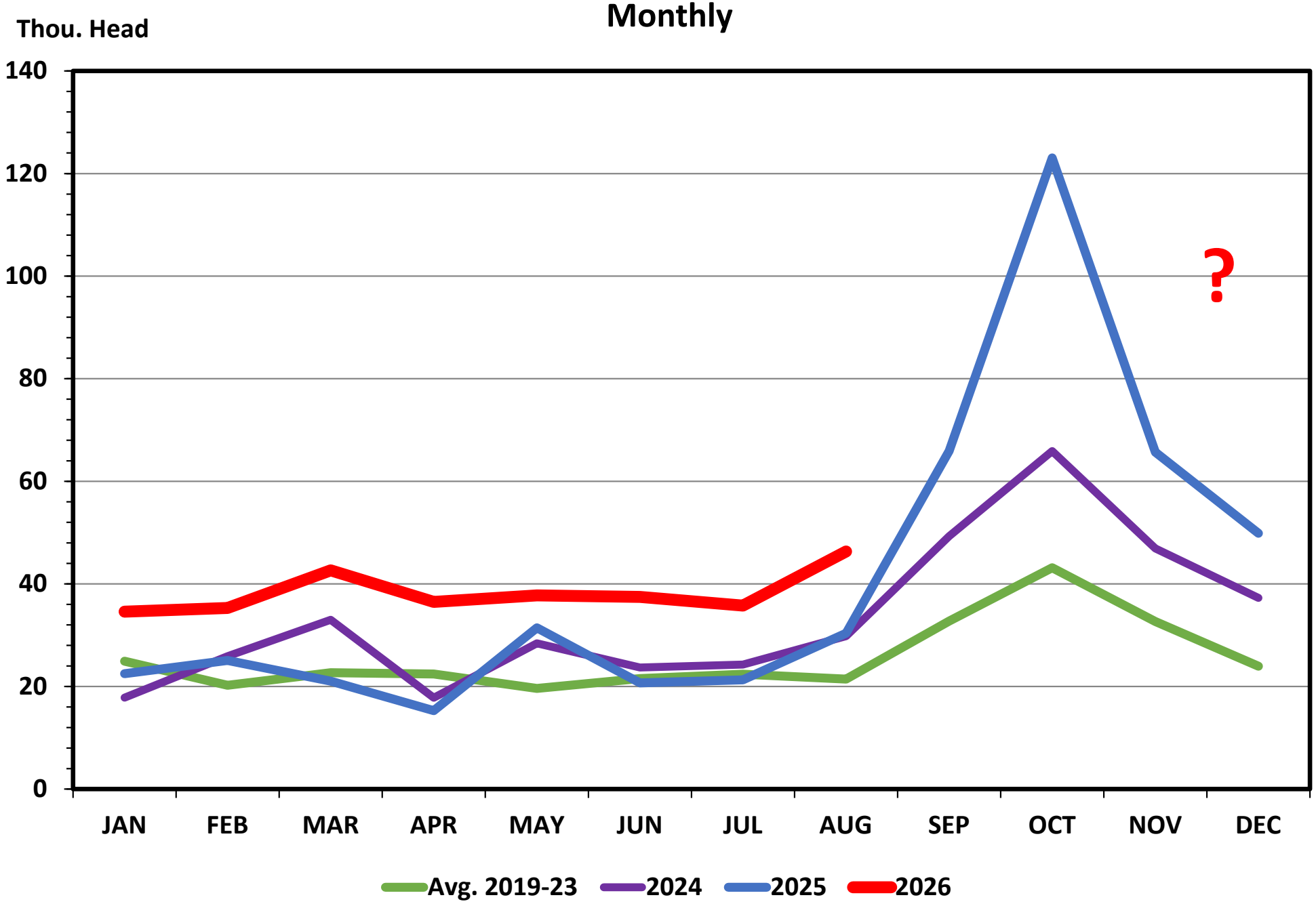
MED. & LRG. #1 STEER CALF PRICES

550-600 Pounds, N.D., Weekly



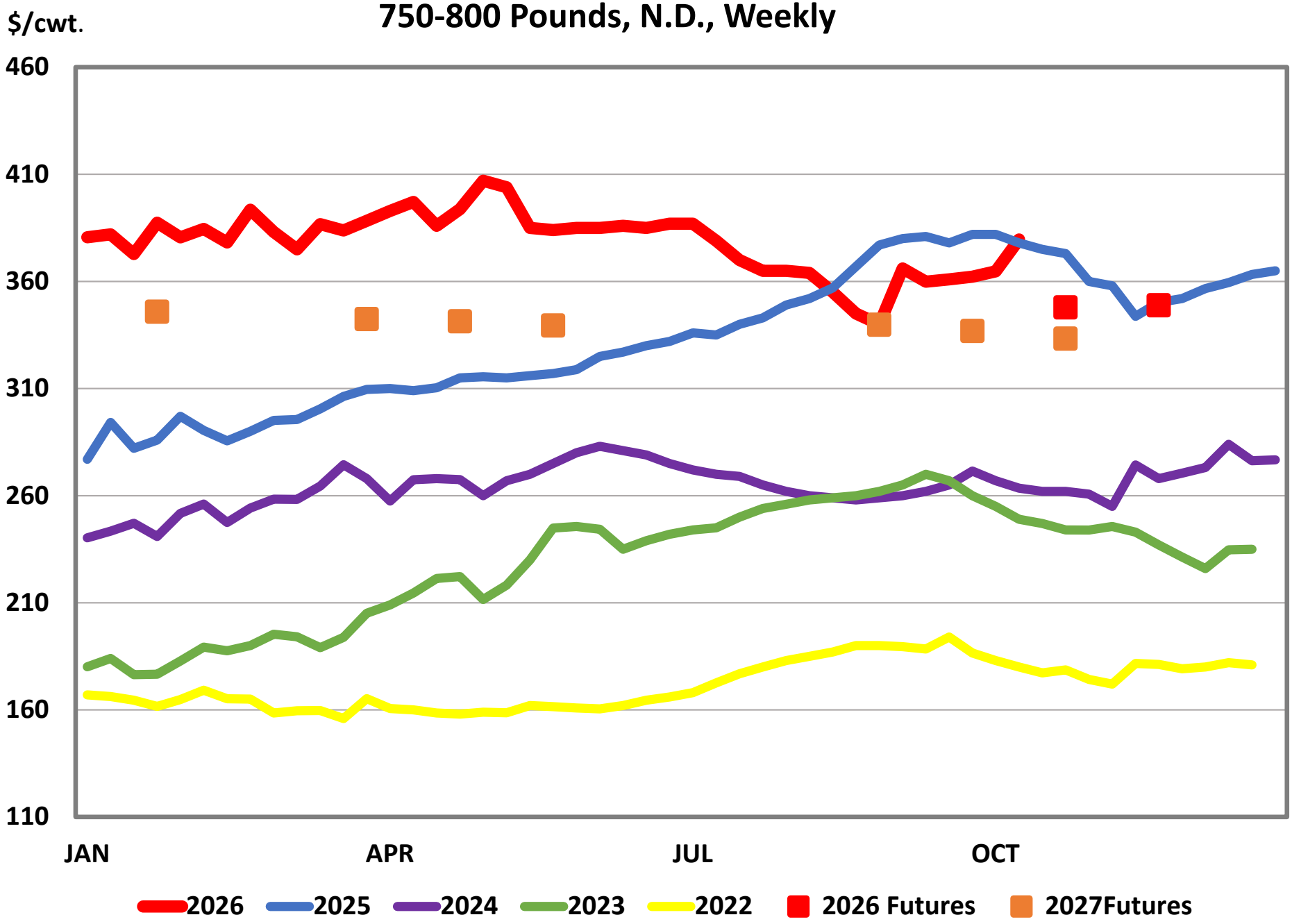
US FEEDER CATTLE EXPORTS TO CANADA

Monthly



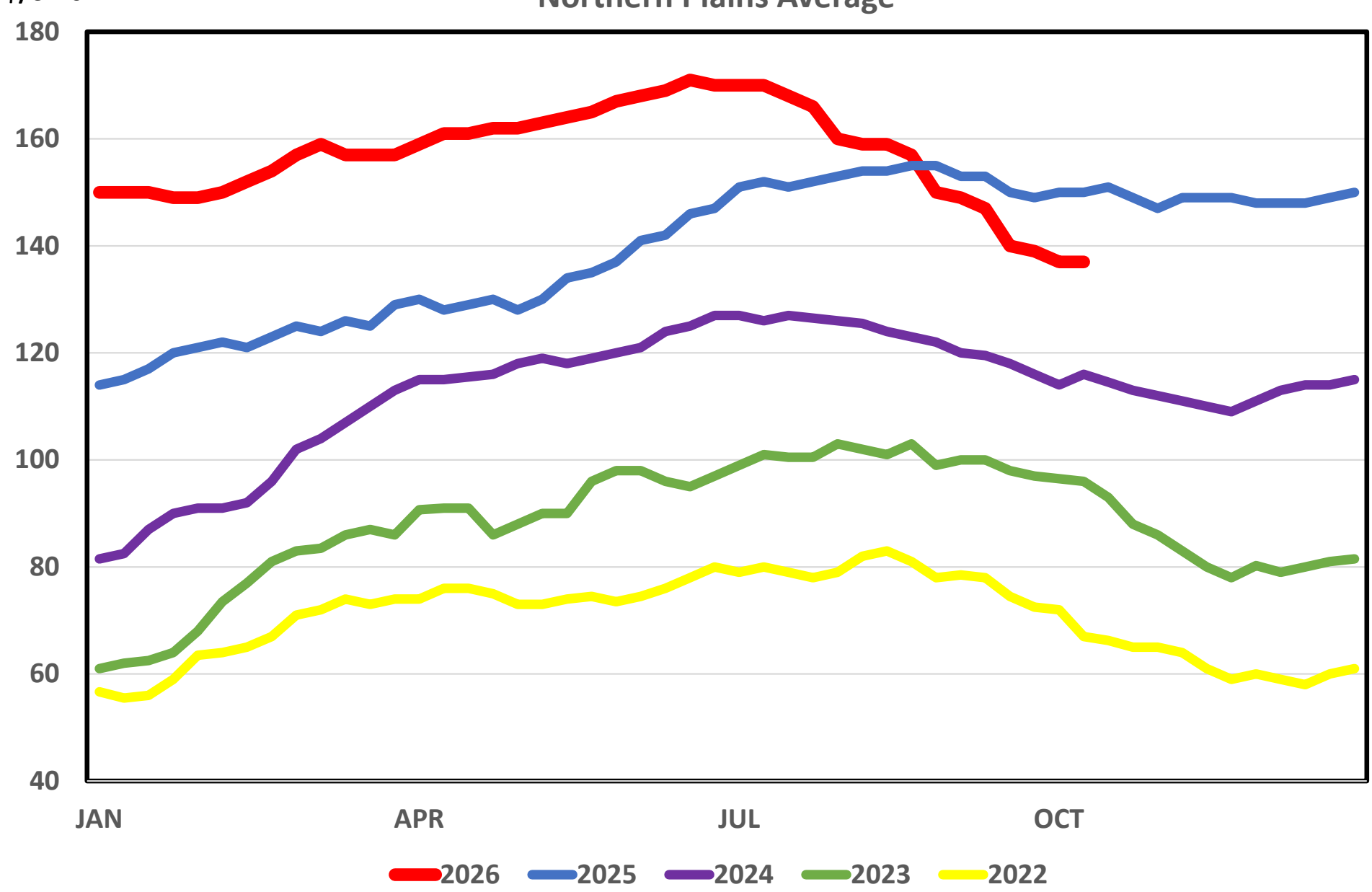
MED. & LRG. #1 FEEDER STEER PRICES

750-800 Pounds, N.D., Weekly



BEEF CULL COW PRICES
Average 85-90% Lean, Weekly
Northern Plains Average

WEIGH UP COWS		
Black	1260	189.00
Red	1240	105.00



CATTLE PRICE CYCLE PRICE RISK MANAGEMENT INCREASING PHASE









Prices High-Volatility High
Always Risk for Lower Prices

Best Marketing Strategy:
Lock-in Floor Price/Leave Top Side Open

-Livestock Risk Protection Insurance
-Futures Market Options

"Better To Have LRP And Not Need It, Than Need It And Not Have It!"



NDSU NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

A Student-Focused, Land Grant, Research University

Ag Home | Academics | Ag Hub | Ag Research | Extension

Backgrounding Cattle

www.ndsu.edu/agriculture/ag-hub/ag-topics/livestock/beef/production/backgrounding-cattle

2026 Backgrounding Cattle Videos (coming after Nov. 1, 2026)

- 2026 Price Outlook and Price Risk Management - Tim Petry, NDSU Extension Livestock Marketing Economist
- Backgrounding Budgets/ Economics for 2026 - Bryon Parman, NDSU Extension Agricultural Finance Specialist
- 2026 Rations, Feed Costs and Cost of Gain - Karl Hoppe, NDSU Extension Livestock Specialist, Carrington Research Extension Center
- Possible 2026 health issues for Backgrounding Calves - Jake Galbreath - Assistant Professor / Extension Veterinarian & Livestock Stewardship
- Considerations for weaning and backgrounding calves in 2026 - Vinnie de Souza Izquierdo- Assistant Professor / Extension Beef Cattle Specialist
- Heifer Development Considerations for 2026 - Lacey Quail, NDSU Extension Livestock Management Specialist, North Central Research Extension Center
- Disposing the 1-2% death loss via composting - Mary Keena, NDSU Extension Environmental Management Specialist, Carrington Research Extension Center
- Exploring the Hidden value in Backgrounding calves – Manure - Mary Keena, NDSU Extension Environmental Management Specialist, Carrington Research Extension Center
- BQA Certification when Backgrounding calves - Lisa Pederson, NDSU Extension Beef Quality Assurance Specialist, Central Grasslands Research Extension Center

Backgrounding-Price Risk Management ?



MAR FDR CAT FUTURES

www.ndsu.edu/agriculture/ag-hub/ag-topics/livestock/tools/backgrounding-550-lb-steers

BACKGROUNDING 550 LB. STEERS - 2.8lbs AVERAGE DAILY GAIN (ADG)

Weaning weight	550	lbs.	
Average Daily Gain	2.8	lbs.	
Days on Feed	110		
Market Weight	850	lbs.	
Projected Selling Price	$345.00	per cwt.	
Total Income			$2,932.50
Beginning Value	$435.00	per cwt.	
minus shrink if sold	3	percent	$2,320.73
Gross Margin			$611.78
Feed Cost	$1.18	per day	$129.97
Return Over Feed Cost			$481.80
Interest on Beginning Value	7.75	percent	$54.20
Interest on Feed, Vet & Med	7.75	percent	$1.63
Vet. and Med.			$10.00
Lot Cost	$0.40	per day	$44.00
Marketing (Brand inspection/Checkoff/Commission)			$50.00
Trucking (additional)	$0.75	cwt.	$2.25
Shrink	3	percent	$87.98
Death Loss	2	percent	$58.65
Price Risk Management			$90.00
Direct Cost Subtotal			$398.71
Return to Labor, Management and Risk			**$83.09**
Breakeven Selling Price/cwt			**$335.22**

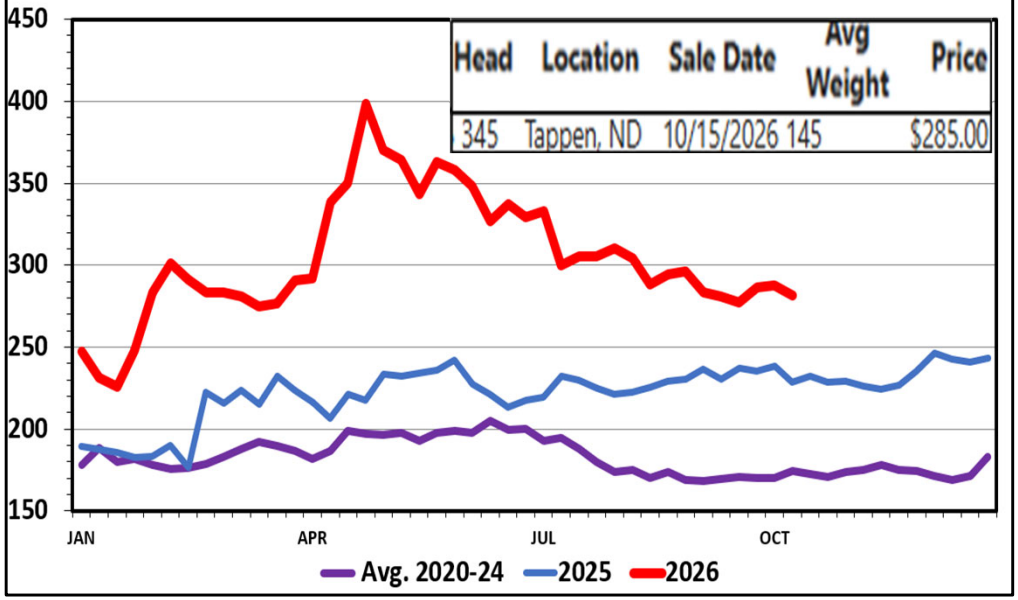
LRP?

Ration for Backgrounding - 2.8 lbs. ADG

Feed	Price		Ration % as fed	Lb/hd/day as fed
Alf-grass hay	$100.00	/T	49.3%	9.00
Corn grain	$4.00	/bu.	46.6%	8.50
Canola meal	$270.00	/T	4.1%	0.75
Ration Cost per day	$1.18			18.3

FED LAMB PRICES

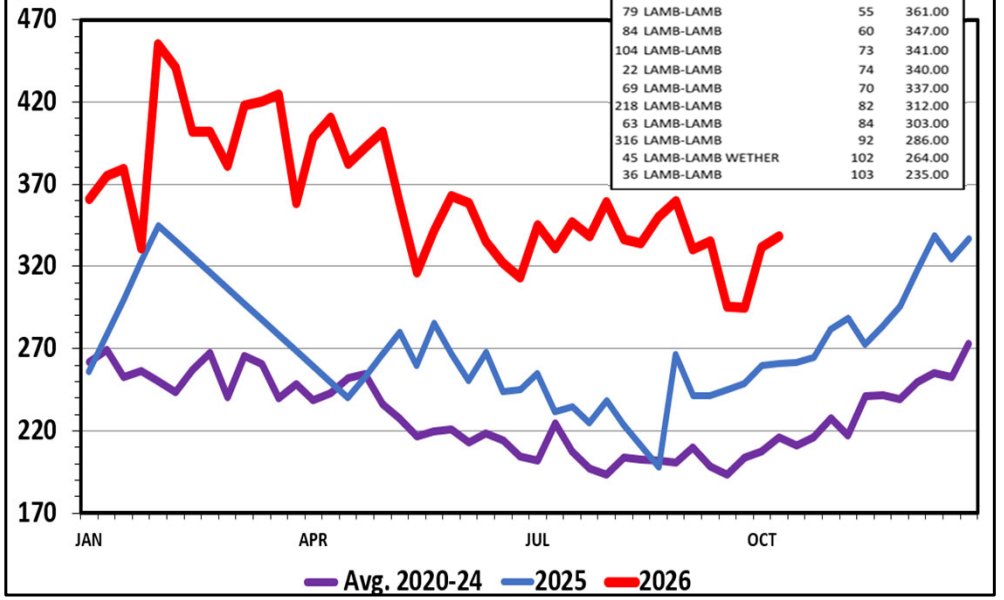
Northern Plains, Weekly



Head	Location	Sale Date	Avg Weight	Price
345	Tappen, ND	10/15/2026	145	$285.00

FEEDER LAMB PRICES

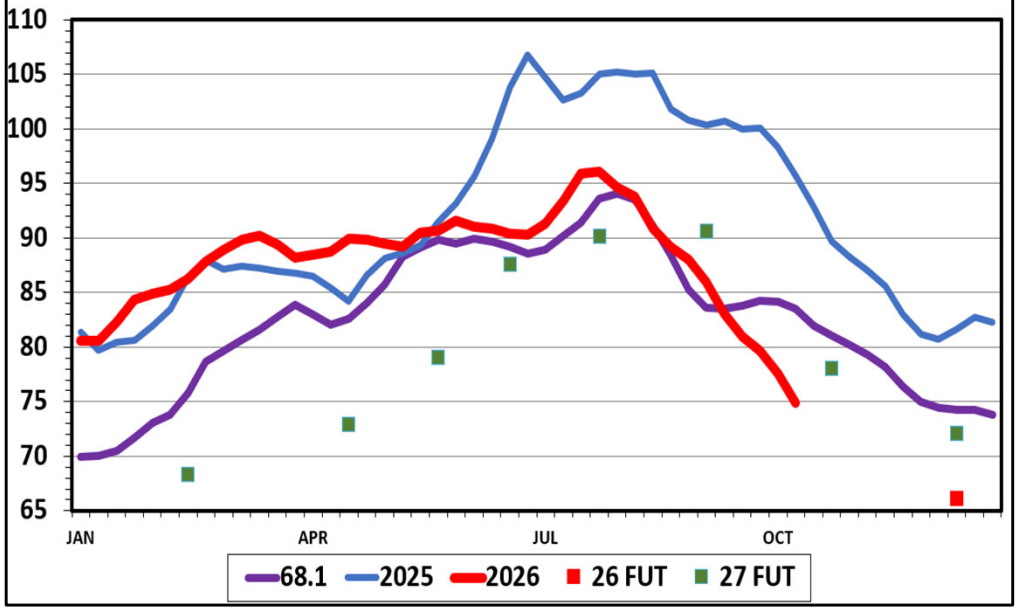
60-90 Pounds, Northern Plains, Average, Weekly



#	DESCRIP	WGHT	PRICE
79	LAMB-LAMB	55	361.00
84	LAMB-LAMB	60	347.00
104	LAMB-LAMB	73	341.00
22	LAMB-LAMB	74	340.00
69	LAMB-LAMB	70	337.00
218	LAMB-LAMB	82	312.00
63	LAMB-LAMB	84	303.00
316	LAMB-LAMB	92	286.00
45	LAMB-LAMB WETHER	102	264.00
36	LAMB-LAMB	103	235.00

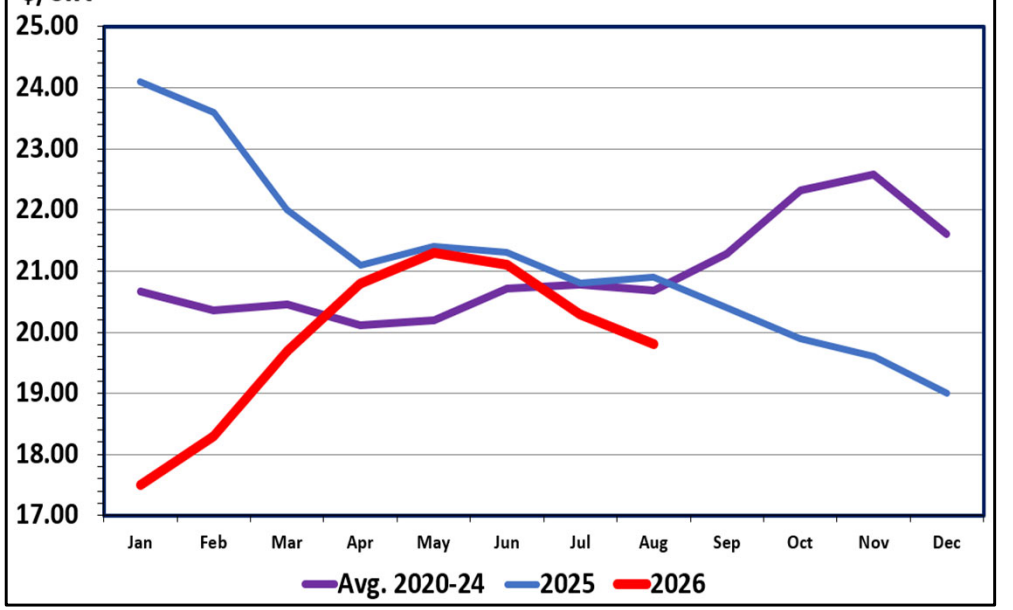
BASE SLAUGHTER HOG PRICES

National, Weighted Average Carcass Price, Weekly



ALL MILK PRICE

U.S., Monthly



THESE FORECASTS ARE PRELIMINARY AND WILL BE REVISED IN DECEMBER

EC1090
(Revised January 2025)

Plotting a Course—2027 Planning Prices

BEEF

Year*	400-500 lb. Steers (cwt) Fourth quarter prices	500-600 lb. Steers (cwt) Fourth quarter prices	600-700 lb. Steers (cwt) Fourth quarter prices	700-800 lb. Steers (cwt) First quarter prices	800-900 lb. Steers (cwt) First quarter prices	1,100-1,700 lb. Cull Cows (cwt) Annual prices	5-Area Direct Slaughter Steers (cwt) Annual prices
2027	470	410	360	340	325	150	230

* 400-500, 500-600 and 600-700 lb. weights are fourth quarter prices. 700-800 and 800-900 lb. weights are first quarter prices of the next year.
To estimate heifer prices for 400-500 lb. and 500-600 lb. subtract $30/cwt., for 600-700 lb. and 700-800 lb. subtract $20/cwt., and for 800-900 lb. subtract $10/cwt. from steer prices.
Cull cow and slaughter steer prices are calendar year averages.
** Projected for the first quarter of the next year.

HOGS SHEEP MILK

Year	250 lb. Slaughter Hogs (cwt)	Slaughter Ewes (cwt)	105-140 lb. Slaughter Lambs (cwt)	60-90 lb. Feeder Lambs (cwt)	All Milk (cwt)
2027	64	100	230	250	20

www.ndsu.edu/agriculture/extension/publications/plotting-course-planning-prices-2026

2027: Economy, Weather, Corn, Geopolitics, and Trade? Causing Volatility and Risk , especially on seasonal basis. Flexible marketing plans should consider price risk management tools

QUESTIONS ?

