

SEPTEMBER 30, 1976

About 65 times a month, I hear that we are going to wake up some morning and find ourselves out of young cows. I never can wait to learn when that glorious day is coming. I always get so excited about the part on us walking up that I forget to ask the projected time of awakening.

My step-dad sold the top end his heifer calves on the late August market. Weighing well past the five mark, they brought 41 cents a pound. Sounded like he was coming to his senses until I heard he was dickering with one of his compadres to buy a string of young cows.

Another operator out west of Mertzon put his entire herd of yearlings up for sale. Biggest cash transaction so far on the offer has been the coffee checks at the cafe.

I've kept a close check on the trade. Four buyers have looked at the cattle. At the rate they underbid each other, the definition of "bear market" and "short position" are going to have to be redefined. After taking two back seat rides as a neutral observer to open the gates, I'd say the best part of the deal would be to have a 1/16th override on the gasoline sales and the long distance telephone calls.

Lush grazing conditions are going to keep a lot of Shortgrass herders from selling their cattle. Anything, you know, that'll make you feel rich will break you flatter than the chapter in a politician's handbook on the glories of defeat.

Tall grass is no exception. A fellow ought to ranch everyday like he was in a drouth that was timed on the interest payments of a demand note.

I am going to hedge the ranch's deal. As we shape up the old cows next month, I am going to slip in a percentage of young cows to gradually disperse the whole herd.

Cattle buyers are so nervous these days that they are apt to overlook a sprinkling of smooth barreled cattle. Most of their sales criticism, anyway, is based on every sort of defect from bad angles hock joints to sloppy earmarks. I think there's a real opportunity to work off some young cows in every deal. A right smart trader could be out of the game by 77.

Range conservationists swear that dual grazing by sheep and cattle improve the grasslands out here. I don't deny that. However, keeping 500 cows at \$200 a head is a mighty fancy price to pay for soil conservation.

I figure that if we could phase out the cow herd by 1980 the chances would be good of weather failure scorching back the course forage.

Actually, we are all at a loss what to do. I use up four legal pads a week figuring and calculating a move. Screwworms are going to trim the herds to the south. perhaps a flood or a grasshopper plague will save us up here.