

OCTOBER 31, 1974

Beef production will have to change under the new price structure. Old nellies who were accepting bountiful handouts under the era of black ink are in for a hard readjustment period. Herders and their jugkeepers will be choking down on the feed spouts. Much bawling and begging is to be expected after frost.

The best idea to develop in the Shortgrass Country is to cross first calf heifers with Mexican fighting bulls. Originally the plan was to reduce calving problems. However, after further study, it was decided that a new strain of fighting cattle might be introduced for the bull fighting market across the big river.

Raising bulls for the profitable business in Mexico for years. Tickets were sold for the slaughtering and after the ears were cropped for the visiting dignitary, the rest of the meat could be ground up and sold to the tourists.

Packing house overhead was completely skipped. Sword wielding hombres would kill enough meat on a Sunday afternoon to make seven or eight hundred orders of enchiladas. It was a great business and still is. Nothing we have ever cased or ground would reach the margin of the deal. All the bull rings I was ever at had a restaurant close by. In these times, we need to give the matter close thought.

Another change that's needed in our recession ridden business has been overlooked. Cow experts keep saying that cattle need more size and length. I keep thinking they are wrong.

With feed prices like they are, we need to forget conformation and breed off the three extra stomachs that cattle have. Doctors of bovine theory are faced with filling up pages of manuscripts, not limitless spaces of stomachs. Professors should first try to keep a feed trough full before they recommend developing a bigger eater.

The ideal cow for this country would have a craw like a bird. Then she could live on pollen and seeds or pick up gravel from the roads.

When they speak of stretch, it always makes me uncomfortable. Stretch has been what there old sisters have been doing for their whole lives. Their stomachs have been outstretched only by their appetites. The Shortgrass Country made a lot more farmers and feed men rich than they did ranchers or feeders.

One of my compadres is going to import some fighting bulls. He used black bulls on his heifers last year. I don't know how small a calf he wants. Like I told him, if the Mexican stock doesn't work, he could try crossing a Rhode Island Red rooster on his calves. For all I know, modern scientists may have developed a method to make cattle lay eggs. They've done every other sort of artificial thing. As it is, we'd be just about as well off with a bunch of laying heifers as we are with a bunch of calving. I don't watch the egg market, yet it couldn't be much worse than our other deals.

Winter is going to be a big shock for the cow herds. Light rations for both the cows and the herders are going to be common.

We are going to have to stay, just to prove that we can. And if the heritage of the herder hasn't changed, I know that we can.