

# COW/CALF CORNER

The Newsletter

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

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## **Fewer cattle imports so far in 2015**

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

Total cattle imports from Canada and Mexico are down 4.0 percent for the first seven months of 2015 compared to last year. Cattle imports from Canada for the January to July period are down 21.0 percent year over year while cattle imports from Mexico are up 15.1 percent. Imports of cattle for immediate slaughter (from Canada) are down 34.4 percent compared to one year ago. Combined feeder imports from Mexico and Canada are up 10.1 percent through July compared to last year.

Cattle imports from Canada are typically a mix of slaughter and feeder cattle. Through July, imports of slaughter steers and heifers from Canada were both down over 40 percent from last year and combined for a 44.0 percent year over year decrease. Slaughter cows and bulls are down 20.5 percent from last year. Feeder steer imports from Canada are up 45.1 percent this year compared to one year ago while feeder heifer imports are down 18.9 percent from last year. Combined feeder steer and heifer imports are unchanged year over year. Lower total cattle imports from Canada reflect continued decreases in total cattle inventories in Canada, currently at the lowest level in more than 20 years.

Changes in Canadian feeder and slaughter cattle imports are resulting in a much higher percent of feeder cattle compared to slaughter cattle in the mix of cattle being imported. Slaughter steers have averaged 30 percent of total imports in recent years but only account for 15.4 percent so far in 2015. Slaughter heifers represent 9.7 percent of total cattle imports from Canada this year compared to 22 percent typically. Combined slaughter steer and heifer imports represent 25.1 percent of 2015 imports compared to an average of 52 percent. Slaughter cows and bulls typically average about 18 percent of total Canadian cattle imports but account for 24.9 percent of imports from January through July, 2015. Feeder steers account for 21.5 percent of total

Canadian cattle imports this year compared to an average of 13 percent in recent years. Feeder heifers represent 28.5 percent of total cattle imports from Canada in 2015 compared to an average of 17 percent in recent years. Combined feeder steers and heifers account for 50.0 percent of 2015 cattle imports from January through July compared to an average of 30 percent in recent years.

Cattle imported from Mexico are almost entirely feeder cattle. Feeder steer imports from Mexico are up 23.9 percent year over year while heifer imports are down 22.3 percent compared the same period last year. These changing steer to heifer proportions reflect a return to a more typical mix of feeder steers and heifers from Mexico following higher heifer proportions the last three years. So far this year, steers have accounted for 87.2 percent of total Mexican cattle imports with heifers representing 12.8 percent of the total; close to the average over the past decade. The 15.1 percent year over year increase in cattle imports from Mexico so far in 2015 follow a 12.8 percent year over year increase in 2014. Imports of Mexican cattle are up despite indications that cattle numbers in Mexico remain very tight. Continued high feeder cattle prices in the U.S. combined with the accelerating decline in the value of the Mexican Peso to the U.S. dollar have no doubt stimulated additional movement of Mexican cattle to the U.S. in 2015. These levels are likely not sustainable. Anecdotal reports indicate that Mexico continues to import relatively large numbers of cattle from Central America to supplement Mexican cattle inventories but these animal flows too will decrease as cattle numbers are depleted in Central America.

## **Are the replacement heifers ready for the fall breeding season?**

Glenn Selk, Oklahoma State University Emeritus Extension Animal Scientist

Fall-calving herds will be breeding replacement heifers in late November. Now is the time to make certain that those heifers are ready for the upcoming breeding season.

Immunize the heifers. Ask your large animal veterinarian about proper immunizations for yearling replacement heifers. Replacement heifers should be immunized for respiratory diseases such as IBR and BVD. Consider giving the heifers a modified live vaccine for longer lasting protection against these viruses. The heifers should receive this vaccination at least one month before the start of the breeding season. This would also be a good time to include other reproductive disease protection that may be recommended by your veterinarian. Examples of other immunizations that should be considered include leptospirosis and campylobacter (sometimes called vibriosis).

If a set of scales is available, weigh the heifers. There is time to make adjustments to the supplementation being fed to the heifers to insure that they meet the target weight at the start of the breeding season. To be certain that a high percentage of heifers are cycling at the start of the breeding season, they must weigh a minimum of 60% of their mature weight ([Davis and Wettemann](#)). See [OSU Research Report 2009](#). If these heifers will eventually grow into 1200 pound cows, then they must weigh 720 at the beginning of the estrous synchronization and artificial insemination (or bull turn-out if natural breeding is used). Calculate the weight gain

needed between now and the start of the breeding season to see if additional energy is required to achieve the desired weight gain.

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