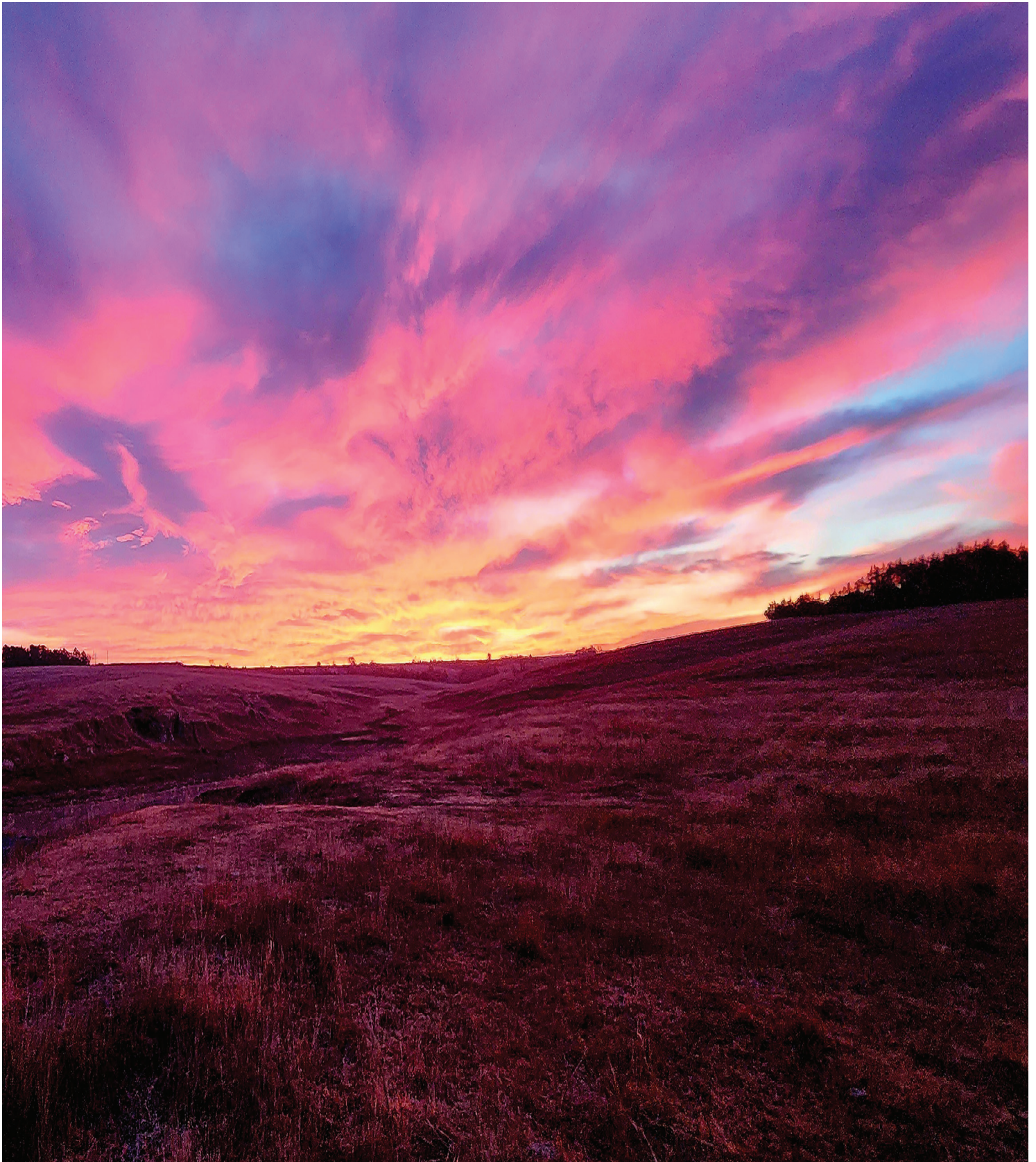


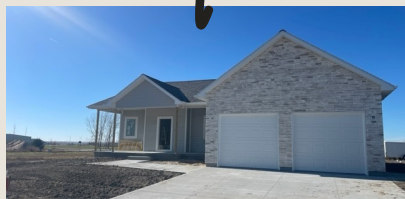
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120 REVERE CIR - LEXINGTON
\$346,000



3 BED 2 BATH 1687 SQ FT
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\$295,500



3 BED 4 BATH 4031 SQ FT
2105 PATRIOT DR - LEXINGTON
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5 BED 3BATH 2668 SQ FT
1606 HAMPTON - LEXINGTON
\$305,000



3 BED 1 BATH 1229 SQ FT
601 E 7TH ST - LEXINGTON
\$195,000



1BD/1BA 132X52 BUILDABLE LOT
4 EAST LANE DR 28 - JOHNSON LK
\$145,000



4 BED 4 BATH 5362 SQ FT
94 MALLARD BCH - JOHNSON LK
\$1,625,000



5 BED 4 BATH 3512 SQ FT
2 MERRIWEATHER - JOHNSON LK
\$1,250,000



4 BED 3 BATH 2912 SQ FT
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PRESIDENT'S THOUGHTS

FROM THE DESK OF
JIM BALDONADO

It's not been quite one year since we heard that Morgan has breast cancer. And to say the least, it seems like forever, but what a trooper she is. From the very beginning, she knew, and so did her family, that she would win this ugly battle. She will. Morgan knows her body and knows chemo and radiation are no longer the answer, so she has chosen a more natural, homeopathic approach, and we all know this will work for her.

Thank you for all your thoughts and prayers as Morgan continues on this journey in Arizona. Morgan knows she is not alone in this battle as she has her two sisters, husband Kyle, a close friend, and Sharri and I, who will be taking turns with her at all times down there. Our intent is to bring her home well and on her way to being cancer-free. Thanks again.

Here is an update on my breast cancer journey:

November 29: PET scan was done of my entire body. I will get scanned every 3 months, so this was protocol.

November 30: I got the call from my nurse oncologist right when I was pulling in to see my nephews and watch them play basketball. The nurse informed me that there are some spots that are worrisome on the lung, liver, and L4 of the spine. She said the L4 is the most concerning right now, and I will need a biopsy done of that. So after about a five-minute cry in my car, I gathered myself and I went in and watched the boys play ball and hung out with them, as that's what I needed.

December 1: Kyle and I went in to meet with my oncologist to talk about any future plans IF I am considered Stage 4. I will say she really is the sweetest person and absolutely loves each of her patients.

December 4-10: I did some research on other options available out there that are more natural and less aggressive if I were to be considered Stage 4.

December 7: Biopsy of the L4. I will say this is the most painful thing I have done so far this year. I'm glad it was only a 30-minute-long process.

December 12: I received a phone call at 5:30 from my nurse oncologist. She said, "Morgan, it is cancer and it is still triple negative, so it has metastasized." Unfortunately, this news considers me Stage 4 triple negative breast cancer. I was prepared for this news in a way as I had been told how aggressive this cancer was from the beginning and how fast it was spreading, even while I was on chemo. Even the week prior just chatting with the oncologist prepared me for this news. Kyle and I had a long chat that afternoon before the call, and we talked about "what if" scenarios. I said, right now my goal is quality of life versus quantity of life and that I want to explore other options besides more chemo and radiation. I have never felt like I have cancer until I started chemo and radiation. It just wiped me out. Right now, I feel the best I have felt in months as I stopped taking the chemo pill two weeks ago.

December 13: The plan right now is to start chemo next Wednesday, but as I told Kyle, I know my body and I don't think my body wants more chemo. So, I am exploring other options and contacting other clinics this week that have a more natural-healing approach as well as a second opinion from Mayo in Minnesota. I will be scheduling a meeting with my oncologist prior to treatment next Wednesday to go over the statistics of this new trial chemo drug. It is in Phase 3 and has shown great hope at giving Stage 4 more time. But then again, I go back and think, do I want to be sick from chemo just to get another extra year of my life? For now, I will continue to do some research and reach out to other clinics and enjoy the next week as I have family coming into town. I'll be heading to Spikes for the Reverse the Curse Volleyball fundraiser on Saturday in which I was nominated for and won, which I will receive all of the money raised, this will help cover the costs if I do decide to do more natural remedies as insurance won't pay for any of that. I am truly grateful for all the amazing people in my life! I am not giving up this "fight" and will continue to do what I feel like I need to do.

December 29: Many of you have been asking how treatment is going, and I am finally ready to let people know that I stopped treatment late November. I updated everyone in mid-December about my Stage 4 diagnosis, and we had stopped the chemo pill before then because I needed my immune system to be good for the PET scan, and then eventually the biopsy of L4. We met with my oncologist on December 14 to go over options since the chemo pill wasn't working. There were 2 options and they were both chemo infusions in the Stage 3 trial phases. Neither of these sounded like a good option as I would be on chemo the rest of my life or until it stopped working or the side effects got too bad or I became NED (no evidence detected in the body, a.k.a. cancer free).

Prior to meeting my oncologist, I did a lot of research on other alternative methods and clinics I could go to. During this time, I had a couple people tell me about a clinic in Arizona. After the talk with my oncologist and her options for treatment (more chemo and radiation), I told her about Arizona and that I was thinking of going down there. So, we held off on the chemo because I wanted to enjoy Christmas and New Years with family and friends and to ponder what I wanted to do going forward.

After much thinking, meditating, and talking with Kyle, my family, and close friends, I have decided that I am going to head to Arizona at the beginning of January. The treatment will be 8-12+ weeks, and it will be mostly eastern medicine. I may do chemo starting at Week 4, but they will only be giving me 10% versus the 100% that I was getting in the western medicine clinics. Their theory, which I completely agree with, is that the body can heal itself if given the proper tools. This will be a straight up detox of the body all while giving it the proper nutrition, vitamins, minerals, and herbs it needs. We will be healing the mind, body, and spirit while I am down there. For those of you who know me well, know this is right up my alley of what I believe. I will be forever grateful for everyone helping me out while I am down there and for those helping us back here while I/we are both gone.

January 7: Well, we made it to Arizona on Wednesday, January 3rd, (it was extremely hard to leave Winston and the comfort of my home for this long). I started at the clinic for a half day on Thursday, January 4th, and a full day on Friday. It has been a lot of information and running around getting things I need and learning what they all want/need me to do. The Bellamy family drove down this week, we got to spend some time with them Thursday-Sunday. I will start treatments tomorrow, January 8th, I'm excited to get into a routine with everything. Thank you for all the well wishes and check-ins. Here's to learning new ways to heal the body!

January 12: Full week at the clinic, and I think I finally found my routine. Megan, my twin, was with me this week helping me get organized. I totally feel like going this route was the right decision for me. I have learned so much! The fun thing about this clinic is that my "caretaker" who is with me that week can come to the classes and learn the things I learn also. So, Megan and I learned some fun and interesting things this week. We made our own body care, learned how to juice and make smoothies the vegan way, and just an overall understanding of what it takes to be vegan. She's also doing the meal plan with me! Everyone at the clinic is amazing, the "patients" here are fun and caring, and I enjoy getting to know them. I saw one lady leave walking after her 8-week stay. Come to find out, when she first arrived, she couldn't walk and didn't have any energy. When she left, she was walking on her own and was so much stronger. The things they are doing here are just so fascinating, I love to learn new things about the body and the science behind it. Every day is information overload, but in a good way!

Thank you to everyone who has helped out the past two weeks. We couldn't have done it without you!

-Morgan





CROP INSURANCE UPDATE

CINDY DAVIS

It is year-end, and in the crop insurance industry, we are focusing on several tasks while closing out the year. First, is getting claims completed from 2023, and claim checks out to producers. It seemed that the many dryland losses from 2023 all hit at once toward the year end. Very closely related is getting all row crop production turned in and processed. Also taking up heaps of time in December, was PRF – Pasture, Rangeland and Forage policies. Several new policies were written last year, giving livestock producers a little more peace of mind, if we should be unlucky enough to continue with drought like conditions in 2024. Believe it or not, once those duties are complete and even during that process, we will be focusing on the new 2024 Row Crop sales season.

We hope 2023 was good to you and yours and we look forward to working with all our producers in the new year. This reminds me of a quote from Jason Soroski, *“There is nothing magical about the flip of the calendar; but it represents a clean break, a new hope, and a blank canvas.”* I am not a New Year’s resolution type of person, but this quote speaks to me, and I’m sure a lot of producers as well. Each new row crop season begins (after much planning) with a clean field, new seeds, and new hope for a bumper crop!

2023 Row Crop Production

I mentioned it above, but your agent needs your production records as soon as possible, if you have not already turned them in. Once your APH data bases are updated, your agent can provide accurate quotes for the upcoming 2024 crop year. At the top of the next column you will find the chart showing where the 2023 Harvest Prices were set for row crops.

2023 Row-Crop Prices

Crop	States	Projected Price Set - Yield Protection (YP) and Revenue Protection (RP)	Harvest Price – Revenue Protection (RP)
Corn	NE, KS, IA, CO	\$5.91	\$4.88
Grain Sorghum	NE, KS, IA, CO	\$5.84	\$4.83
Soybeans	NE, KS, IA, CO	\$13.76	\$12.84

2024 Row Crop Sales Closing Deadline

- We have been concentrating a lot lately on our next deadline, and getting our producers the best risk management tools possible going into the new crop year. **The sales closing deadline for the 2024 Row Crops is March 15th, 2024.** This is the deadline for all changes to your existing row crop policy, including coverage changes, entity changes, transfers or even cancellations. It is also the deadline to write new row crop policies and some of the supplemental coverages. Many producers take advantage of this time and put their hail coverages in place also, providing themselves peace of mind before storm season, but also knowing that changes can be made to hail policies up until mid to late May, or the first of May for wheat in Kansas (assuming no damage has occurred prior to that date). Below are the some of the MPCI optional endorsements/coverages available to review with your agent this year:
- Beginning Farmer / Rancher (BFR) and Veteran Farmer / Rancher (VFR) – these endorsements have become increasingly popular for new farmers, and include many benefits

that can be applied over a 5-year period for those who qualify. Beginning with the 2021 row crop season, RMA implemented new procedures, allowing participants with farming experience to use Actual Production History (APH) of the previous producer, with permission, on newly acquired land. Previously, the APH could only be used if the beginning or veteran farmer or rancher was involved on the specific acreage acquired.

- Yield Exclusion (YE) – this endorsement also has become a popular option. When elected, a producer can exclude eligible yields from a database. This option is not available on all crops/counties, check with your agent to see if your crops qualify in your county.
- Separate Enterprise Units for Irrigated and Non-Irrigated acreage (if qualified), and separate coverage levels for Irrigated and Non-Irrigated acreage.
- Multi-County Enterprise Unit Endorsement: This pilot endorsement could be useful for producers who have small amounts of acreage in a county contiguous to their primary county, and want to incorporate those acres into an enterprise unit. The contiguous counties must be in the same state and both counties must be insured with the same Approved Insurance Provider. To qualify for a MCEU, one county must individually qualify for the EU election the producer chooses, and the other county does not. In addition, both county crop policies must have the same elections for: MCEU, insurance plan, coverage level, by irrigation practice, if applicable; and enterprise unit by practice.
- Do you raise White Corn or Waxy Specialty Corn? In some states/counties, coverage is available at a more favorable contract price. See your agent for details – must be elected by SCD.
- Planting may be a few months out, and we hope for optimal weather, but if you find yourself prevented from planting, be sure to contact your agent as soon as possible. You must give notice to your agent **within 72 hours after the final planting date for the crop in your county**. Don't wait until acreage reporting time to let your agent know – this could jeopardize any possible indemnity.

It is always a good idea to review your policy for some of the basics as well. RMA continues to data mine for policy errors, and the sooner we get corrections made, the better. If errors are found after the deadline, we may not be able to correct them for the current crop year, and this could prove detrimental to your coverage! Take the time to sit down with your agent **prior to the deadline** and review the following reminders:

- Make sure you have a policy for every county you need coverage in, and you have all the crops on the policy you want to insure! If you have acquired new ground or intend to, a new application may be needed prior to Sales Closing Deadline.
- Verify all the information on your policy...coverage plans, coverage levels, and options. Also, double check the entity name, and EIN for the primary insured and all the people listed under that entity.
- Has there been an entity change? (A recent marriage, or divorce, a new trust or partnership set up, has someone on the policy passed away). If an entity, such as a corporation or partnership or joint venture has had someone pass away, the

crop companies may require legal documentation to verify whether or not the entity lawfully continues.

- Trend Adjustment (TA) – although this is not a new option, it could prove very beneficial to your yields. The TA option adjusts yields in qualifying databases to reflect increases in yields through time in the county. If you haven't already looked at this option, it would definitely be one to look at with your agent, if it is available for your county/crops/practices. This option must be elected by Sales Closing as well.
- In addition to TA, there are many options available for row crops. Yield Adjustment (YA), Yield Exclusion (YE), Yield Cup (YC), contract pricing and seed corn endorsements to name just a few. Check your policy and visit with your agent to make sure your coverage is optimized.
- Have you broken out new ground or Native Sod? If so, a written agreement may be needed to request coverage on this acreage. These requests are also due by Sales Closing Deadline. Native Sod acreage comes with very strict regulations. It would be a good idea to check with your agent before you break Native Sod acreage to go over the rules and coverage available. In some cases, there is a significant decrease in coverage for up to four years and also a loss of premium subsidy.
- Do you want to insure by practice or with separate enterprise units? Separate Enterprise Units for Irrigated and Non-Irrigated acreage (if qualified), and separate coverage levels for Irrigated and Non-Irrigated acreage may be available in your county.
- Are you an organic producer? There is coverage available in most areas for organic crops. Let your agent know if you will be farming organically. Your agent will also need, on the date your acres are reported, a current organic plan, a written organic certificate, or documentation from a certifying agency indicating an organic plan is in place.
- Contract Pricing is available in some counties for certain specialty crops and also for some organic crops. Ask your agent about this option if you are considering a contract price for some of these types of crops.
- If you will be using **Precision Farming** techniques in your farming operation, be sure to check with your agent for the crop insurance rules regarding this method of reporting. There are several requirements that must be met with Precision Farming, **and they begin with planting**.
- Conservation Compliance was among many of the changes added with the 2014 Farm Bill, and still proves to be a bit of a nuisance. All producers should have an AD1026 on file with FSA. For some of you, this is nothing new, but where we run into issues with crop insurance is with new farmers. If someone new begins farming they will need to have the AD1026 on file with FSA prior to the crop insurance billing dates to receive subsidy on their policies for the next crop year. Many new producers are not aware of this rule. Keep in mind also, a new entity must have the AD1026 signed. For example, if you have been farming as a married entity but then decide to farm as an LLC or a trust, or some different type of entity – that new entity must sign the AD1026 as well. In an effort to help new farmers with this, RMA has a "First Time Farmer Certifi-

Continued on page 8...

cation” which is a one-time exception form that may help them keep subsidy the first year of farming. If you are a new farmer, it is very important that you check with FSA and complete Conservation Compliance paperwork there in addition to the crop insurance forms.

- Planting may be a few months out, and we hope for optimal weather, but if you find yourself prevented from planting, be sure to contact your agent as soon as possible. You must give notice to your agent **within 72 hours after the final planting date for the crop in your county.** Don’t wait until acreage reporting time to let your agent know – this could jeopardize any possible indemnity.

With all costs on the rise, including your farming inputs, you might want to look into the many supplemental policies available to help protect your bottom line. There are several private supplemental policies to consider, and most of them need to be written by the Sales Closing Deadline. To name just a few: Added Price Option (APO), Late Plant Option (LPO), Replant Option (RO), Base Price Modifier (BPM), and RpowerD, among others. There are also federally subsidized options available such as: Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) and Enhanced Coverage Option (ECO). As you can tell, it’s definitely a lot of information to soak in, let your agent help explain, and tailor a package that will fit your individual farming operation. Below you will find the chart detailing when prices are set for the 2024 row crops.

2024 Row Crop Prices

Revenue Protection/Yield Protection	Projected Price Tracking Dates
Corn	February 1 – February 28 December Corn – CBOT
Grain Sorghum (Multiplied by price percentage relationship between corn and grain sorghum, as determined by RMA)	February 1 – February 28 December Corn – CBOT
Soybeans	February 1 – February 28 November Soybeans - CBOT

ARC or PLC Elections – 2024

On November 16, 2023, President Biden signed into law H.R. 6363, the Further Continuing Appropriations and Other Extensions Act, 2024, which extended the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, more commonly known as the 2018 Farm Bill, through September 30, 2024. This extension allows authorized programs, including ARC and PLC, to continue operating. On December 18, 2023, USDA announced the agricultural producers can now enroll in the Farm Service Agency’s Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs for the 2024 crop year starting Dec. 18, 2023. The deadline to complete enrollment and any election change is March 15, 2024.

2024 Wheat – Short Rate Deadline

March 15th, 2024 is also the deadline for short rating wheat. This option is available in most counties. If you would like to short rate your 2024 wheat, and pay a reduced premium (normally 35% of the original premium), you must submit a written notice to your agent on **or before March 15th, 2024.** Short rating wheat gives producers the option to pay the reduced premium and intentionally destroy the crop before harvest, by grazing or other means. Short rating wheat will not have any impact on the approved production history (APH).

March 15, 2024, is not only the deadline for your 2024 Row Crop coverage, but several other programs as well. Get a head start on this busy season and get in to see your agent today. If you have any questions before that, give us a call; we are always here to help.



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STEERS VS HEIFERS: INSURABILITY OF BOTH

ARLYN RIEKER

“Why should I insure my heifers if the coverage price is a 10% reduction in price compared to the steers?” This is a question I’ve heard often over the years and especially these past few months as I visit with LRP clients. Using the following illustrations, I will show the 10% reduction is just a number applied to the heifers, and it is still a good risk management decision to insure your heifers, alongside the steers.

First, let’s look at some comparisons most of you have seen before that applies the Price Adjustment Factors (PAFs) to the feeder cattle prices.

In the first table are examples of the PAFs being applied to the coverage prices when the Steer 2 price is set at \$243.45 per cwt. This price was from the December 16th quote for 600-1,000# steers using the 47-week endorsement with an ending date of November 5th, 2023.

Coverage prices/Steer 2 price is \$175.99		
Insured Weight range	Steers	Heifers
Type/wt. 1 < 6.0 cwt.	\$267.79(110%)	\$243.45 (100%)
Type/wt. 2 6.0 – 10.0 cwt.	\$243.45 (100%)	\$219.10 (90%)

The second table applies the PAFs to the ending prices using the December 13th, 2023 Feeder Cattle Index of \$216.05 per cwt.

Example of Ending Prices/Index set at \$157.00		
Insured Weight Range	Steers	Heifers
Type/wt. 1 < 6.0 cwt.	\$237.79 (110%)	\$216.05 (100%)
Type/wt. 2 6.0 – 10.0 cwt.	\$216.05 (100%)	\$194.45 (90%)

From these tables you can see how the PAFs are applied to the steers and heifers for both weight classes in addition to both the coverage and ending prices.

Some points to remember:

- Price adjustment factors (PAFs) are applied to the expected ending values, coverage prices, and actual ending values prior to RMA publishing.
- LRP feeder cattle insurance coverage prices and rates are based on the CME Feeder Cattle contract, which is settled to the cash or the CME Feeder Cattle index (ending price) and both of these change daily.
- The CME Feeder Cattle contract and the CME Feeder Cattle index (700-899 pounds) are only based on the price for steers. Because the CME Feeder Cattle futures prices are for steers, these PAFs are used to calculate expected ending values, coverage prices, and actual ending values for the types of cattle in the prior tables.

Taking into consideration the two prior comparison tables and the three points to remember, the next table is a comparison applying the PAFs to the steers and heifers. Coverage prices, cost per cwt/head and paid losses are compared in what I tried to illustrate in a “make sense” format. Looking at the cost per head when insuring a 1,000# heifer 2, you are receiving a 10% discount/savings in premium compared to the same 1,000# steer 2. The steer costing \$144 and heifer \$129. If you don’t have a loss, you have saved 10% cost on the heifer, if you do have a loss, the savings in premium added back to the loss payment is almost the same as the steer loss payment. Comparing the 1,000# weight 2, the steer loss payment is \$274 and the heifer is \$246 which is 10% less, but when you add in the \$14 you saved on the heifer premium, the values are almost the same at \$274 for the steer and \$261 for the heifer.

Also, notice the heifer 2 (90%) loss payment is 10% less than the steer 2 (100%) and the steer 1 (110%) is 10% higher than the heifer 1 (100%). The losses correspond to the PAFs just like the coverage price and premium.

Insured weight range		< 600#						600 - 1,000#					
		STEERS WT 1		HEIFERS WT 1		UNBORN		STEERS WT 2		HEIFERS WT 2			
PAF (Price adjustment factors)		110%		100%		105%		100%		90%			
Coverage price/cwt Steer 2	\$243.45	\$267.79		\$243.45		\$255.62		\$243.45		\$219.10			
Producer cost/cwt (35%) Subsidy			\$15.85		\$14.41		\$15.13		\$14.41		\$12.97		
Insured Weight lbs.		599.00		599.00		599.00		1000.00		1000.00			
x Cost/cwt		\$15.85		\$14.41		\$15.13		\$14.41		\$12.97			
Cost/head		<u>\$94.97</u>		<u>\$86.33</u>		<u>\$90.65</u>		<u>\$144.12</u>		<u>\$129.71</u>			
Heifer savings/head					\$8.64						\$14.41		
Feeder Cattle Index (Ending price)	\$216.05	\$237.66		\$216.05		\$226.85		\$216.05		\$194.45			
Index as of December 11, 2023													
Coverage price		\$267.79		\$243.45		\$255.62		\$243.45		\$219.10			
Ending price		<u>\$237.66</u>		<u>\$216.05</u>		<u>\$226.85</u>		<u>\$216.05</u>		<u>\$194.45</u>			
Loss/cwt		\$30.13		\$27.40		\$28.77		\$27.40		\$24.65			
cwt/insured		5.99		5.99		5.99		10.00		10.00			
Payable Loss/head		<u>\$180.48</u>		<u>\$164.13</u>		<u>\$172.33</u>		<u>\$274.00</u>		<u>\$246.50</u>			
Cost savings per head/heifer				\$8.64						\$14.41			
Total loss payment/head		\$180.48		\$172.77		\$172.33		\$274.00		\$260.91			

Calculations are rounded and may differ by pennies

Coming back to the original question: “Should I or should I not insure my heifers?” In my experience of writing this policy for the last 19 years and reviewing the comparison, the answer to the question is “YES.” Insuring your heifers is a good risk management decision.

Recently, a new type of cattle has been available for coverage, it is the Unborns. This has been a great addition to the LRP policy. You can now insure Unborns (unborn bulls and heifers) as long as you have ownership of the pregnant female. These are just an average coverage price of the steer and heifers 1 types. This has been and will be a viable option to insuring the calves prior to calving.

On another note, if you have visited with me in the past or are considering insuring fed cattle (1,000 – 1,600#), the recent increase in the premium subsidy has made LRP an attractive option for coverage on the cattle you have in the lots for finishing.

Next, I want to share a couple endorsements that recently expired upon writing this:

Insured Weight	Effective Date	Ending Date	Coverage Price	Ending Price	Loss per Head	Cost per Head	Net loss Per Head
700#	6/2/23	12/1/23	246.52	223.27	162.75	51.58	111.17
650#	6/1/23	11/30/23	246.51	225.89	134.03	46.26	87.77
550#	5/30/23	11/28/23	265.15	244.48	113.69	39.07	74.62
700#	9/7/23	12/7/23	258.44	220.04	268.80	32.51	236.29

As you can see, these coverages were written later on in the year with higher coverage prices and they paid out significant losses. In reviewing the coverages written earlier in the year, the coverage prices weren’t as high as these and paid out no or lesser losses, but the market kept going up and the producer received it on the selling end.

LRP is exactly what the names says, “Risk Protection.” LRP provides protection against a decline in prices below the established coverage price for fed and feeder cattle. With the uncertainty and volatility in the markets, LRP is a viable risk management tool to aid you as a livestock producer on your bottom line. If any of you have questions regarding the LRP policy and coverage, please don’t hesitate to call.

Lastly, with 2023 in the rear-view mirror I would like to say a big “Thank You” to all the families in production agriculture. Having been a cattle producer and still being involved in the farming side of agriculture, I understand the blood, sweat and tears that go into an operation, and I’m proud to work with all of you.



PRECISION AG IN CROP INSURANCE

DAVE HENGEN

This last spring, I was accidentally asked to write an article for The Home Agency's magazine. At first, my fear of putting words to paper got the best of me, and I politely asked a famous question every parent has heard... "Do I have to?"

I got my pass on that magazine issue which eased my stress level thinking of what I'd write about. Later, after I thought about it, I realized that I did have something I could write about that possibly had not been in the magazine before - "Precision Ag in Crop Insurance"

After all my years of sales in Ag Retail, I figured my experience was worthy of at least trying to write about it. And, maybe even have a little fun in the process. Let's see if I can help anyone, or worst-case scenario, just confuse them. I'm sure many of you reading this have at least a little knowledge of how precision gets used on the farm regularly. However, you might not have thought about how it could be used with your crop insurance. Let's talk about a few benefits of combining your precision farming data with your crop insurance.

Improving the Accuracy of Reporting: In my short time as an agent, I'm not sure how many times I've heard farmers talking about how their acres at the FSA were not right. FSA acres were originally established several years ago from aerial images. Then, fields were just hand-drawn on the images. One could only guess how accurate these maps really were.

With today's technologies, such as individual row control, we can eliminate overlapping acres, giving us more accurate acre counting and reporting. For example, maybe that 100-acre field might only plant 97 acres due to a border with a fence or maybe this is one of those not perfectly square fields.

Accuracy in acre reporting is very important. This can affect a grower's premium for the better or worse depending on the acre count. Or just as importantly, this can greatly affect the field's history or APH. Either way, it is best to report the most accurate acres possible.

Affecting Claims: If there is a possible claim, precision can speed up the reporting and payment process. Without precision for reporting production, a grower must prove yield using the old methods. Don't get me wrong, I like settlement sheets as much as the next agent for proof of production. But

the grower must still have an idea of which load came from what field. And if the grain is stored in grain bins on the farm, there is that process of measuring and calculating how much is stored in there.

These older methods can take more time and effort to prove yields. And in a high claim year when adjusters are busy, it might take a while to collect all the information to get the process going. This ends up causing a delay when a possible claim would get paid. With good planting data in the spring and good harvest data from the combine, we can easily speed up the process to prove how much grain was harvested and from where. When we use good precision data, we can speed up the whole process and get a payment out faster. I have never met a person who doesn't like to get paid; the sooner, the better.

Separating Irrigated / Non-irrigated Practices: With most planters these days, farmers can control the rate of seed being planted with a prescription. This eliminates the old ways of just planting the same population straight through the non-irrigated areas and certifying everything irrigated. Or, if we wanted to separate the field by irrigation practice, one would have to make discernible breaks in the rows or change the row direction. We typically plant a lower stand in non-irrigated acres versus the irrigated acres. We can use this precision planted data to accurately separate the acres by practice.

These planting maps are then used at harvest time to separate the harvest data. We overlay the yield map over the planting map, and we can determine how many bushels came from the irrigated acres versus the non-irrigated acres. Again, using good data from both planting and harvesting, this process works very well.

These are just a few of the main benefits of using precision farming in conjunction with your crop insurance. The number one thing to remember with precision data, garbage in, equals garbage out. Be sure to have some sort of basic knowledge of how your precision works and how to get everything documented accurately.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us. We are glad to help in any way possible or help you find the person who can.

REGIONAL News

Hear from our
agents in your area!

Dave Meyer

Ruskin, NE

Another year has passed, and what a year it was in south-central Nebraska. We have been very fortunate over the last few years that we had a little subsoil moisture and caught some significant, timely rains. That was not the case in 2023. Single-digit dryland yields were the norm, not the exception with my insureds. The triple-digit temperatures with strong winds in the latter part of August and the first part of September took a toll on the irrigated crops as well. Hopefully, 2024 will bring an abundance of rain and more moderate temperatures..

Andrew Bellamy

Ansley, NE

With another year in the books and the holiday season among us, it is a good time to give thanks for the blessings we have, and for the most part, a lot of the yields showed reasons to give thanks as well. With the early moisture in the western half of the state getting everything off to a good start, there was a lot of promise with the yield potential; unfortunately, for a lot of guys, the dryland suffered with the dry August and September when it could have used another couple of showers. Still out west a lot of good irrigated yields to be happy with, even though they also suffered a little with the dry late summer. When you are reading this, we will have started on renewals and talking to you about what their coverage looks like and about some of the new products on the market, designed for capturing additional coverage with this volatile market that may fit into your risk strategy. If you have questions before we get a chance to sit down, please reach out.

The holidays are in full swing at the Bellamy's. The warmer weather allowed me to make up for my lack of Christmas lights last year, and that always helps me get into the holiday spirit. Megan, Maverick, Lincoln, and Penelope are all doing great. Maverick and Lincoln are proving to be great big bothers and always come to Penelope's rescue when she needs them and sometimes when she doesn't. Maverick has started his third sport with wrestling and has been really excited for practices, so we will see if that also happens when we go to a meet. Lincoln has been excited that we have started to get snow since scooping is one of his favorite things. Now, if we can just coordinate our efforts a little better to where he isn't moving snow to areas that I have already cleared, we will have it made. Penelope is figuring out she is the boss in our lives and is getting very good about conveying to us what she wants and how fast she wants it. She is saying a lot of names such as daddy, mommy, grandma, papa, her brothers' and cousins' names, MoMo for Aunt Morgan, and has recently added "Uncle" to her vocabulary. Megan is doing stenography when she isn't shuttling kids from here to there and has spent a lot of time traveling for depositions outside of an hour away with stenographers being few and far between in central Nebraska.

As always, thank you for your business. It is a pleasure working with all of you. Please let me know if there is anything I can do for you. Finally, I hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and a good start to a Happy New Year!

Enos & Jill Grauerholz

Beloit, KS

In our neighborhood, we are glad that 2023 is over. We are so thankful for our crop insurance, Added Price Option (APO) has paid us well. This has been the worst harvest in our 40-plus crops. We were forced to sell lots of cows this spring. Shipped in lots of high-priced hay also. The LRP coverage prices were so attractive that those policies are paying out now; some we purchased a little earlier did not pay out. Cattle prices are the highlight of the Ag economy still. I am thankful for some much-needed December rainfall, and it is much warmer than a year ago. We recommend paying attention to lower fuel, fertilizer, and chemical prices now!

Otherwise, we are enjoying our 2-year-old grandson. He is the brightest light in our lives and so much fun!!

Muddy Valentines and popping new baby calves to all. Thanks for your continued trust and business.

Rhonda Jones

Kirwin, KS

As I write this, there's a blizzard in Kansas. The area is starved for moisture, and we will take it any way we can get it. The problem is that we will end up with one or two inches of dry powdery snow and 40 mph winds that will blow it in the ditches. The area did receive some widespread rainfall in the middle of December.

The cold weather brings comfort food, and beef stew with cornbread is on the menu. This recipe can be put in the crockpot, but I cook it in the oven to help warm the house. Let me know what you think of it- Recipe on the next page!

Cheers to a new year that we hope will be profitable. Good luck to all.

Beef Stew:

Layer ingredients in a large soup kettle or Dutch oven in the order given:

- 2 lbs. stew meat, cut into small pieces
- 1 tsp salt
- Carrots, sliced, as many as you want
- Celery, diced, as many as you want
- Potatoes, cubed, as many as you want

Sprinkle with 1 tablespoon of sugar, 1 pkg McCormick Beef Stew seasoning, 3 tablespoons Minute Tapioca. Pour 1 – 46 ounce can of tomato juice over the top.

Cover and bake in 350-degree oven for 2 hours, or until the vegetables are tender. You may lower the temperature and bake longer. If using the crock pot, put on high for 2 hours, then on low for 4 hours.

ENJOY!

Clark Redding, Larned, KS

It rained two inches last week. Can you believe it? It's raining again right now. It's been so warm into December that the ground is soaking it up like a sponge. Might save some of our wheat that previously wasn't looking too healthy. Kansas has been dry, and this is a Godsend. Colorado is getting some moisture as well, but in the form of snow, along with rain.

At the moment, I'm trying to finish up year-end claims. The adjusters have done a great job this year under a lot of pressure and tremendous workloads. Everyone's desk has a foot of files on it. I can remember back in the 80's and 90's this amount of claims would have taken up until March or April to complete and pay. Things have changed!

I want to wish all of our colleagues and customers a Happy New Year. Thanks for your business and for your friendship.

Looking forward to 2024!

Kevin Ross McClelland, IA

Winter greetings from Southwest Iowa! Hopefully you all survived the holiday season and enjoyed time with family and friends. Through the end of the year we have continued to be very short of moisture. It is always beneficial to keep stalks open for the cows as long as possible, although I kind of enjoy the snow when we get it and am certain that we will not go the entire winter without some. I had heard one weatherman recently predict 36 inches of snow before spring; turns out they are notorious for being wrong.

I hear many grain bins in the area are full, as the adjusters have measured more bins than they had since 2014; at least, that is what one fella told me. When good yields collide with falling prices, as they did this fall, then we probably shouldn't be shocked by that. The Revenue Protection multi-peril policies have really helped many producers this year. We are always looking to quote and get you into the policy that best fits your own needs and operation, but broadly, RP at higher levels of coverage has seemed to be the right call for our area; RP provides great coverage at a relatively affordable price. At the end of the day, value and stability for your operations are what we try to provide you.

The grain bin doors seem tight around here and probably will be until the board starts helping us out or USDA numbers come in differently in the next reports. Basis may have to work very hard to get grains moving. Corn and bean carryout numbers seem to be in contrast to each other a bit, so maybe beans pull up corn fighting for acres this spring. I am crossing my fingers that it isn't the other way around and we all have some good sales opportunities in 2024.

Happy New Year!

Ben Rand Benkelman, NE

It's been a fruitful and rewarding year farming the desert of the western corn belt. If you were fortunate enough to miss the hail, the early spring and summer rains produced some outstanding corn and milo yields.

Despite having great rains, the PRF product still offered payments for intervals late in the year, especially in Dundy, Chase and Hitchcock counties. Further west into Colorado, this held true as well. The pastures in northwest Nebraska and most of Wyoming caught even more rain and have many tenured cattlemen referring to it as a "Once in a 100-year" type of grass. Unfortunately, PRF paid very little this year, but generally speaking, the grass was there, and the cattle performed very well.

Speaking of cattle, we now have new contract records, shattering numbers we saw in 2014. Unfortunately, since the highs set back in mid-September, the feeder and live cattle boards have sold off, but appear to be finding support here in mid-December. Fundamentals still favor the American cattleman with great demand and low herd numbers. It will be interesting to see how Q1 and Q2 play out. Cash values remain strong across the north, with fats still bringing \$175+ in the sale barns and some light weight calves still well into the \$300/cwt areas. Remember, LRP is always a great way to protect those prices.

I wish nothing but the best for you and your families this holiday season. As always, my phone is always on if you need anything.



ADDITIONAL FARM COVERAGE OPTIONS

CORBETT HAHN

It's about time to start looking forward to Spring planting. Now is a good time to review your farm policy. If you haven't done so for a year or two, you may not know about many of the additional coverage options that are available. Some are new and some have been around for a while. We'll take a look at a few of the older ones and some that are new. Either way, it's worth taking a look to see if some of these fit in your farming operation.

Cab Glass Breakage - Cab glass breakage is one that I always recommend if it is available with your insurance company. Cab glass breakage coverage reduces the deductible you pay in the event that the glass in a piece of mobile farm equipment gets broken. Without it, you are subject to the policy deductible which can be \$1000 or higher. With this coverage, the deductible is usually much lower, in some cases it's only \$100 per occurrence. The premium is per policy and not per unit, so for one premium, you cover all mobile farm equipment with an enclosed cab.

Extra Expense - Extra expense coverage pays for the added expenses incurred to continue normal farming operations which are interrupted as a result of damage to or destruction of covered property. An example might be a combine that catches fire during harvest. Extra expense will pay for the cost to rent a combine, so that you can continue to harvest your crop. This is a great coverage to have and one that we've seen our customers use many times.

Custom Farming and Custom Spraying - Custom farming coverage has been around for quite some time, but some insurers have recently added custom spraying as an option. Now, more farmers own their own self-propelled sprayers, there has been an increase in custom spraying. There are income limits and liability limits that apply. If this is something you've thought about doing, check with us to see if you meet the requirements to add coverage to your farm liability.

Hunting or Fishing Liability - A hunting and fishing liability endorsement can provide liability and medical payments to others coverage for loss arising from the incidental business of charging a fee to hunt or fish on insured premises. This coverage does not include guided hunting or fishing.

Death of Livestock Winter Perils - Some types of livestock can be covered for death arising from freezing or smothering in blizzards and snow storms. There is usually a 15-day waiting period for this coverage to become effective.

Death of Livestock Additional Perils - Some livestock can be covered for death due to additional perils that include: collapse of bridges, culverts, trestles, roadways, docks, piers, wharves or bulkheads; sinkhole collapse; being mired in ponds, creeks, lagoons, lakes, streams, or surface water; and contaminated feed or water. This means the consumption of a toxic substance, if the consumed toxic substance was present in and consumed with the feed or water provided to the livestock in the normal containers or devices, where feed or water is deposited for consumption.

This peril includes coverage against death as a direct result of livestock consuming toxic grazed plants. This peril does not include death resulting from consumption of pollutants not present in contaminated feed; or consumption of effluent, flush water, lagoon water, stagnant water, flood water, or runoff water from where the livestock are being held. Coverage does not apply to any livestock under 60 days of age. This coverage also has a 15-day waiting period.

These are a few of the coverage options that are available. *A full farm review is always the best option to find out what else might fit your farm operation.* Some coverage options may not be available from every insurer. If you are interested in any of these, please call us, and we can help explain the coverage and the cost.



CCHS RECEIVES GIFT

THERESA BUBAK



COZAD, NE, December 27, 2023 – Cozad Community Health System received a generous donation of \$100,000 from local businessman, Jim Baldonado of the Home Agency in Elwood, Nebraska. The donation was divided among three departments within the health system; \$25,000 was gifted to Jessica Botts and the Physical Therapy Department, \$25,000 to Lisa Jurjens of the Outpatient Infusion Department, and \$50,000 to Joseph Debban, APRN with the Cozad Medical Clinic.

Mr. Baldonado chose to make this donation after receiving exceptional care at CCHS. He felt it was important to pay it forward and give back to the health system that helped him recover. “Cozad Community Health System played a huge role in my recovery success,” explained Baldonado. “I don’t know where I’d be without them.”

After months of testing and research, Joe Debban, APRN, sought out a neurologist from the UNMC Department of Neurological Sciences to help identify the underlying cause of Jim’s ailment. After additional examinations and more investigating, Jim was diagnosed with a rare and potentially devastating condition known as Necrotizing Myositis; an aggressive form of autoimmune myopathy that attacks and destroys muscle tissue. Debban was now able to provide Jim with a comprehensive plan of action, as well as the necessary tools and treatments to fight his condition.

Robert Dyer, CEO of Cozad Community Health System said, “When Jim and I first met about the possibility of his family providing a gift, I was moved.” Dyer continued, “However when Jim began to tell the story of his healthcare journey and how the health system impacted him, I was humbled. He added, “Joe, Jessica, and Lisa have made such an impact on Jim’s recovery.”

Mr. Baldonado wanted each recipient to use the monetary gift as they “see fit, to benefit the healthcare system.” Jessica Botts, PT, DPT was able to purchase a new treadmill and various pediatric toys designed specifically for pediatric physical therapy treatment.

“Generosity is defined as being kind and generous,” Botts stated. “I cannot think of an individual who exudes this quality more than Jim Baldonado and his family.” She went on, “Jim is a very special individual and one I am lucky to have gotten to know.”

Lisa Jurjens, RN said, “Jim’s gift was very unexpected. I was so honored and humbled by his recognition.” Jurjens went on to say, “His generosity has allowed me to bless patients not just in my area, but in other departments of the hospital as well.” She continued, “I am excited to purchase an EMG machine for our medical Botox patients, a lab-grade refrigerator for the hospital laboratory to house their re-agents, a stair-stepper for the Cardio/Pulmonary Rehab patients to improve functions, and a blanket warmer for our Infusion patients and those being admitted.” Lisa concluded by saying, “Jim’s compassion and willingness to share his time and money with others is remarkable and his kindness never ceases to amaze me. It’s so exciting to be able to help and bless so many!”

Joe Debban recently purchased for the Cozad Medical Clinic, an InBody Scanner 770 which measures body composition, as well as a SkinPen which allows providers to perform micro needling for aesthetic services, with part of the gift from Mr. Baldonado. “Jim’s story is a testament to the power of resilience and the importance of a strong support system,” said Debban. “As Jim’s condition improved, it was obvious that his unyielding determination was the key to turning the corner and reclaiming his life.”

Cozad Medical Clinic, director, Bri Snider said, “The generous gift from the Baldonado family has made it possible for our medical clinic to add new services for our patients.” She continued, “It’s very exciting to be progressive in adding these services and we are grateful to Jim and his family for donating in Joe’s name.”

“When Jim shared his story with everyone at the Fall Ball, it was very motivating,” said Dyer. “Several people told me that after he spoke, we didn’t need a guest speaker because Jim’s journey was so moving.”

“On behalf of everyone in the health system, we would like to say, thank you, to the Baldonado family for their generous and gracious contribution,” concluded Dyer.



TWIN PEAKS

AL KUZMA

If you are someone who likes security, you should be all smiles at this point. We are currently experiencing an anomaly that, candidly, I do not know has ever happened before. Record highs in the S&P 500 stock market index and very competitive fixed interest rates.

Generically, there are three places to put money: banks, stock markets, and insurance companies. The stock market is driven by news. Good news makes the markets climb. People are optimistic, in a better mood, and tend to spend more freely. A down market has the opposite effect.

Looking back at the S&P 500, on December 1, 2021, the S&P closed at 4766 an all-time high or near an all-time high. Over the next nine months, it retreated to 3586, - 25%, on September 1, 2022. You remember those days, I certainly do; folks were not in a good mood and were very cautious with their spending. Today, the S&P 500 is back at 4766. I will call this Peak #1.

It has been a wild ride.

One of the issues with writing these articles is the lag time between inception and publication. My suspicion is that you are reading this article sometime in February. Hopefully, the S&P 500 index will be close to or even higher than where it is today.

Here is my message; you have heard the old axiom- you want to buy low and sell high. Well, my friends, if you have been investing for a specific purpose, say you have a child going to college or retirement is here, my advice to you is to strongly consider harvesting your gains and getting out of the market. If your stock market positions are for events that are 5+ years down the road; if it were me, I would sit tight.

Peak #2. In the past, if you did get out of the market, the issue was...where do you put the funds?

If you remember, bank rates in 2021 were under 1%. A quick check online shows CD rates to be over 5% in the Lincoln area. I am sure they are similar where you live. Annuity rates offered by insurance companies are very attractive as well, if not more attractive. Just yesterday, I had a client come to me and say, now that his IRA is back to 2021 value, he wanted to get out of the stock market. So, we liquidated the account and transferred it to a 3-year annuity that pays him 6% per year.

If any of this sounds familiar, I would take a very hard look at your finances. Remember, pigs go to market, and hogs get slaughtered.

Feel free to check with the good folks at The Home Agency, or you can call me at 402-430-9828.

Till next time, be well, and may God bless.



*Alan E. Kuzma, CLU ChFC,
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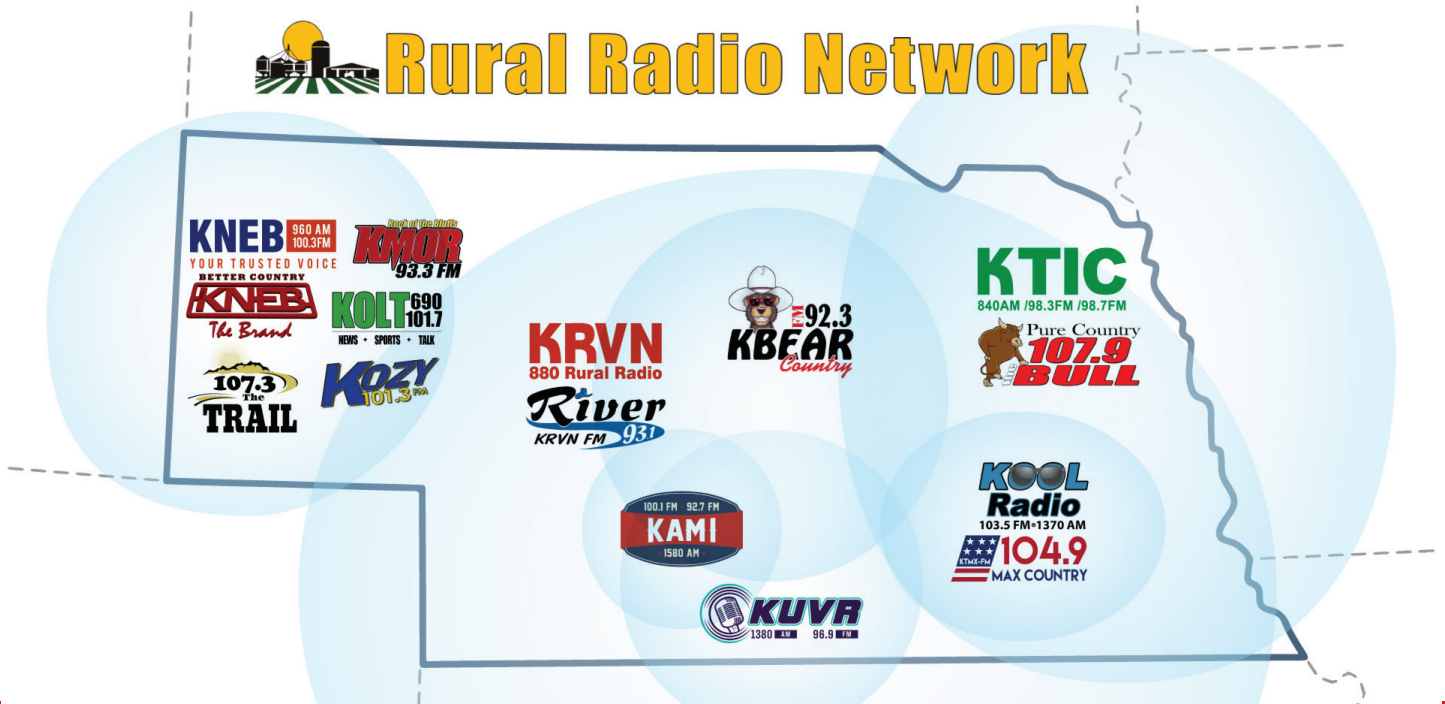


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BALDONADO PERSONALS

It's a very special weekend when the grandsons can come home to go deer hunting with Grandpa. This year is even more special with both Hudson and Axten getting very nice bucks. Thanks to Ryan Reynolds for helping me out with the deer hunts. Having everyone home for Christmas was also a special time as the grandkids are growing up too fast. Cherish each day with your kids and grandkids while you can!

fin



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