

THE MIDWEST

Everything in the Fed Cattle Exchange went unsold this week. Packers and feeders are feuding right now. The packers feel the market should be somewhere around \$122, while the feeders believe it needs to be closer to \$128. Cattle are still being contracted 2-3 weeks out. Carcass weights are 30-pounds down from what they were a year ago, at this time. We're hearing that packers are antsy to begin expanding their profit margins again.

NUMBERS: Across the board, the average was just a bit down this week. Five-weight steers were at \$1.60, while five-weight heifers stayed at \$1.42. Six-weight steers averaged \$1.50, while six-weight heifers sold for \$1.33 to \$1.36. Weigh-up cows stayed near 68-74 cents per pound, while weigh-up bulls jumped up to 90 cents to \$1 per pound. Grass cattle were in good demand again. Boxed beef is down again, but could bounce right back with grilling season right around the corner.

TRENDS: One source stated, "It appears that the top of the market has finally come. The next question is - how far will the market drop and how fast will that drop arrive? We need to be hopeful for an increase in demand, but we need to also be aware that there will be a supply increase come the first of May."

THE WEST

Packers are going to bid low again this week. They have enough cattle contracted from the previous weeks. Surprisingly, futures followed market prices and dipped lower this week. However, this mid-April drop is a typical move for our market.

NUMBERS: Compared to last week, steer and heifer calves traded \$1 to \$4 higher. Yearling steers traded steady to comparable, with more steers carrying a little bit more flesh than usual. Heifers were again \$1 to \$3 higher, with great potential for increased prices for replacement or feeders. Grass cattle remains in high demand.

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THE SOUTH

The weather has slowed things down a bit in places like Mississippi, but this is nothing too out of the ordinary for this time of the year. We saw more participation from producers looking to bring in stocker cattle.

NUMBERS: For the most part, prices stayed steady. Bred cows, about 5 to 8 months along, brought \$1,400. Pairs with calves on their side brought \$1,150 to \$1,400. Slaughter cows brought about 73 cents, while slaughter bulls brought 94 cents. Light five-weight steers brought \$1.46, while heifers averaged \$1.34. Steers at 550-600 pounds sold for about \$1.42.