

## THE MIDWEST

Prices: This week at the Fed Cattle Exchange, there were 704 head of cattle consigned to the sale, and of that 75 head sold for \$116. Futures have been a rollercoaster this week: down on Monday, up on Tuesday, sideways on Wednesday, up on Thursday, and up again on Friday. Though very few cattle have traded this week, packers ended up bumping bids up on Friday. Cattle in the North are being bought at \$120, however the heat in the South hasn't helped folks down there. Cattle in the South are being bid \$1-2 softer at \$114. Nevertheless, to call this week a mixed...quite...sideways bag of tricks would be completely fair with cattle in the North being \$1-2 higher this week, and cattle in the South being \$1-2 lower. The choice/select spread sits at \$18.62, and live carcass weights for steers this week come in around 1,449-1,452 pounds.

Look at what expert Cassie Fish had to say this week, "Cash cattle bids have been renewed but not raised as packers exhibit patience and cool resolve. The battle seems to be whether cash is a buck lower live or steady. But if some plants need inventory to supply next week's slaughter, even though most if not all plants will be dark December 23, then they must also make sure they own enough cattle to start kills the morning of December 26, following a 3-day weekend. If this week's trade volume is limited then next week's may well need to be bigger. There's a lot of discussion about kill levels for the coming weeks. It appears this week's kill will be 632k, next week 620k and the following two weeks will be holiday-shortened. The December 30 Saturday kill could be a decent size, since that beef will ship to retailers for post-holiday to resupply cases with cheaper items like ground beef and chuck roasts. The January 6 kill could be a monster and the first week of 2018 could see production as big as this year's whopping Thanksgiving slaughter of 572k."

## THE WEST

Prices: I may be partial to the good country in the West, but boy this summer may have given folks a run for their money with the drought and numerous fire, but come this fall prices have turned to their favor! Even though the board may have been down this week, live prices were not affected in sale barns. Steer calves weighing 600 pounds sold for \$1.63-1.65, five weight steer calves sold for \$1.82, four weight steer calves sold for \$1.97-99, and heifers were .10 cents back in most classes. Replacement quality heifers are still in high demand, heifer calves weighing 550 pounds sold for right at \$900/hd. Weigh up cows and bulls were steady this week, cows were in the mid to low .50s, and bulls averaged anywhere from .70-.80/pound depending on quality. Some fancy AI bred three-year-olds brought \$2,300. Bred heifers were averaging \$1,500-1,650. And the solid mouth seven-eight-year olds brought right at \$1,050-1,100. Sources in the West still remain confident in the 2018 market, and continue to be thankful that cattle are still bringing the prices that they are.