Bull Session 11-29-21

**Holly Stoltz:** [00:00:00] Tricia, if you want to go ahead and start. And Patrick, that would be awesome. Just kind of explain your situation and then we'll hit Russ for a little bit and then we'll open it up for questions.

**Tricia or PJ Kimmel:** we're talking about drought as it, as it pertains to the yearling operation, I guess.

And like Holly said, you know, we, we were cow calf for a lot of years putting up dryland hay, we don't have any irrigation or anything like that. It was all dry land hay and, and you know, grazing on a lot of BLM and native range land, and some improved pastures and things like that. Forever. And then in 2017, we went to Missouri to a ranching for profit school and just kind of had, our minds opened up a little bit to some other options.

And we came home that fall and sold off the cow herd. In November they went down the road and they, we just decided they were too big and they just needed too much feed, you know, and, and on a year like this, or like actually that we've had for the [00:01:00] last couple of years that's proven to be a pretty good decision.

I guess, I feel like one of the main benefits to having the yearlings is the flexibility that, that you get with it. You, can choose when you buy them. You can choose, when you sell them granted there's the market affects your, your decisions.

But at least it's not quite as cumbersome when you have to de-stock, it's just a lot easier to destock a few head at a time or whatever you need to do, so, and manage your, your pastures that way. So yeah that's kind of what we've been doing. We rolled in a lot of calves here the end of April.

They were going out to grass the middle of may this year, and we had no rain. So by the 15th of June, we're already destocking and by the first July still no rain. So we destocked some more, very liquidable having yearlings got to the. end of the the last of them grazed our hay crops, grazed our cover crop, which you know, it was a tough year all the way around, but everybody made the comment to me.

Well, [00:02:00] well, you're lucky because you got a yearlings, you can sell them whatever you want. Well, yeah, I gotta agree with that, but we also put ourselves in that position to where we could do that. So you know, if we're in cow calves right now, it'd be a tough situation far as the hay the cost of the hay.

So I feel like, you know, we're ahead of the game by doing what we're doing. You know, all their water holes are all dry. We've developed some water here. This fall still got a ways to go, but yeah, I mean, we're basically out of cattle right now and until we get some moisture, I'm not ready to stock the ranch.

We were able to manage our pastures by destocking earlier to save some grass in them. So , I'm excited about that. So when the opportunity comes, you know, we can probably buy back earlier or ahead of everybody else. So, but a few advantages to having yearlings, I think, way less overhead costs. We're basically running about three to four times more [00:03:00] for half the amount of time.

And don't have to spend on winter feeding the cows. Don't spend all summer putting up the hay and it's been, it was a good decision four years ago, I guess on our part, might not be for everybody, but it also allows us to intense graze on our hay fields. And then in the fall and our cover crop with high stock density, and it's fun to do.

Yearlings may be a little more high risk, but you know, there's high reward in it too. So I guess let's just kind of, what we've seen about it anyway. So if anybody has any questions, don't be afraid to ask I'll try to help you out the best I can. But so, and it really was a transition.

It's not like we just jumped straight into stockers. We, we liked our cows, you know, it was, we liked calving and we liked all that. So it was really kind of a mental block , we got the cows down the road, but then the next year we're buying back bred heifers and, and the plan was to sell those that fall as bred [00:04:00] heifers well then the market on bred heifers kind of fell out that fall.

So we sold about half of them and ended up keeping half of them. And what do you know, we're back in the cow calf operation. , which was fine. I mean, it all, it all worked out fine, but it just kind of cemented our, plan that we needed to get out of this model and, and switch to something different.

So then, you know, we calved those out and sold them as pairs the next year. And, and then we made the full, the full leap into stockers after that, I guess. And we've, we've done it a few different ways. You know, we've kind of been learning as we go. There's been a lot of learning as we go on this, you know, the one year we had a plan to buy them in the spring, but then we, we had some cheap hay available.

We, we called it cheap hay. And I thought we could buy some calves at a good price. And so we started feeding them through the winter, but, you know, cause you can feed way more calves and you can cows and and it worked out all right, but it was a lot more labor intensive than we ever imagined it [00:05:00] was going to be.

And just learn some more. We had, we learned all about disease in, in weaned calves. You know, there were just more than we ever thought we would ever need to know and had a lot more death loss than we imagined it wasn't, out of range by any means. I mean, we, it was kind of what we predicted, but it's still when you're running those higher volumes you know, if you're talking 10% death loss, that's just a larger number of dead animals on the ranch.

And you know, that takes some getting used to mentally, I guess. And your doctoringall the time. So, you know, we learned from that the next year we waited until late, like in may to start, or, well, I guess maybe April may to start buying. And so those calves didn't set foot on the ranch until several months later, then the next year.

And that was a good decision. You pay a little more for them, but you're not buying the dead calves and not having a doctor your way through that. I mean, it's, you kind of have to look at what your [00:06:00] resources are and, you know, in time and money and just water, everything, and, , make, make the best decisions you can.

And, and then I guess this last year, one of the things that we've learned we, we throw ourselves into learning I guess, is, is how to protect ourselves from the markets in your own buying futures and things like that, which that was, that was a big learning curve too. And, and it, it worked well for us.

So But there's, there's ways to protect yourself in any situation, but you have to put the work in to, to research it and learn all you can about it.

**Butch Gillespie:** This is Butch Gillespie. I can jump in. You retain ownership then, or through the feedlot. I'm just curious.

**Tricia or PJ Kimmel:** No, we haven't, we haven't gone that far, yet. Most of the calves in, we're buying them kind of forward contracted them for April may delivery and then they'll go out August, September. So not only haven't retained them all the way through yet, other than there's a handful of them that we've kept back, that we fattened as beef and that's a whole nother [00:07:00] enterprise that we're kind of dabbling in, but but yeah, otherwise.

**Holly Stoltz:** So Russ, do you want to kind of tell your story and, and then we'll open it up for more questions.

**Russ Bloom:** Yeah, no, thanks. I enjoyed listening to that. My story is kind of similar. In fact, I was interested to hear that it was ranching for profit, that you got you guys thinking different. 25 years ago when I was a vet in Helena, a client of mine went through ranching for profit and he came and told me about it.

And I became a convert. That totally changed my thinking and started me on the road that I'm on. I mean, yeah. You started looking at things as a business. You know, I grew up on a cow calf operation. That's all I ever knew. When I came back and took over after getting interested in the ranching for profit and everything, I knew I always hated machinery.

I never could fix it. Like I hated it. So. When I come back and I said, dad sell the haying equipment. I'm going to graze everything. And he thought I was nuts, but I started doing it. And just like you, I made plenty of mistakes. But I also learned as I went [00:08:00] along I was cow calf for the first few years.

But then for all the reasons you said I just kind of started transitioning into yearlings and this would have been back in 2003, so 18, 20 years ago or so. And then over the course of a couple of years I transitioned and then I've been probably full, full yearlings. I don't know, 15, 16 years now.

And a lot of the reasons I did it or what you said, and then also on my ranch, I have a lot of up and down country and and those cows, they just wouldn't graze those high. Areas I could put the salt up there, but protein tubs, whatever where a yearling, I mean, that's what they're doing. I always tell people they're like kids in a shopping mall.

I said, they just got to go see what's up high and they'll just cover the ground. And for me, they're just a lot more efficient. And same thing also, you can run, you know, two to three yearlings you know, for a cow calf pair and just penciling it out. For me, it's, it's just been better. My, my overheads much, much lower.

And I'm, I don't, I'm a one man operation. I have three kids, [00:09:00] they were home to help me when they're growing up, but they got jobs quickly and they're all gone now. And so I pretty much have to do things. And with yearlings, I can do it by myself. Most of the time I rotationally, graze everything. I bring in, depending on the year, 13 to 1500 yearlings And I'll I used, so let me backtrack a little bit.

I've owned them all. I've owned part of them in many years. I own none of them and I'm just contract graze. And the last four or five years, I've just been contract grazing. I've realized I'm better at grazing them than I am at owning them. The risk looking at the market, playing the futures. I usually do it wrong.

And so I just decided I'm better at, at grazing and putting on weight than than I am at owning them. I just, I, I like it better. I've had a couple of real good clients. I get one iron cattle and but I'll run about 1100 head out on the dry land and I'll rotationally graze those. And [00:10:00] then I run about 200 head down here underneath a couple of pivots on a hundred acres.

And I'll rotationally graze. Those that's more, polywire moving them every day. The ones at the ranch, what I call the ranch, which is the dryland place. They'll still get moved to every day to third day, maybe, but they're just bigger fields. With more permanent, I have a lot of electric fence.

Everything I do is with electric fence. And one thing with yearlings, even on my ranch, which is the dry land west to Sims here, which is about 5,500 acres over the course of the first couple of years, I actually ran a one wire electric fence around the entire perimeter, just inside the barbed wire fence.

Because otherwise with yearlings, you're going to wear out your horse, riding the neighbors and everything. But that one wire electric fence, I trained them in within a couple of days and everything I do then is with just one wire electric fence out of the dry land, it's permanent fence in here.

It's more polywire you know, one thing, if you're going to run, I run everything as [00:11:00] one mob. And so you got to have a lot of water and so not every place would have that, but I've developed if there is a drop of water, I catch it. I mean, we have good Springs. I put in ponds, I was real fortunate. My dad developed Springs and he taught me how to do it.

And so he already had a good start and then I just took it kind of the next deal. So I have lots of water. So when I contract res I'll bring them in around the 20th of April, which is earlier than most people. And I'm able to do that because I destock either in August or the first part of September.

So I have all that fall growth. And so I'll bring them in on, on old grass and the clients like that because it gets them out of their backgrounding lot or whatever, feeding hay. And then and then, like I said, I'll, I'll run them until either August or about labor day or whatever, depending on the, on the deal.

Incoming weight is important. The lighter they are, the better they are or the better they'll do. And you want to make sure if you're contract grazing or whatever that you that you have an incoming weight limit because what you and I [00:12:00] think of a yearling, someone else they'll, they'll ship in 900 pounders when you're thinking 650 pounders.

And obviously that 900 pounder will eat a lot more. One of the big advantages I kind of smiled when you said a couple of things. It's nice to have time off. I grew up in a very conventional ranch and, you know, go to ranching for profit and they talk about why don't kids want to come back to the ranch?

Why should they, they see their parents work, work, work, starve, starve, starve. I mean, that, that's, that's the way it is. I heard you mentioned the word fun. I use that word too. Ranching is fun again. When I was growing up, it wasn't fun. It was work. You can love it, but it's just, and and right now I have three kids.

Two of them have expressed interest in coming back to the ranch. And I guess that would you know, we'll see how life works, but yeah, I think that's a mark of success because so many of my neighbors they're like, we don't know what we're going to do. The kids don't want to come back. And I just, so, so anyway, so yearlings for me has worked well.

You know, so I'd be glad to answer any, any questions, but [00:13:00] kind of a similar story to you guys. So,

**Tricia or PJ Kimmel:** yeah. You know, you mentioned something that jogged something in my mind, too. When you talked about how you run them in one mob that that's been our goal to run them in one mob. But one wall that we did run into was a, and I think it's probably mostly just our office here, but the BLM wasn't exactly on board with that.

And so,

So we still have a few mountains to climb there to get them all in one mob. So the early part of the season, typically they're split up kinda running, more set stock than, than we'd like, but that's just, that's just all we can do right now.

**Russ Bloom:** Mine's either all deeded or a little bit of state lease.

But I was telling Holly before we started here, I bought a ranch in Eastern Montana with a few partners 20 years ago by mile city. That was my first experience with BLM and we were going to run it just like this. And after two years with the [00:14:00] BLM, I said, I will never, ever own another ranch with and have to deal with the BLM.

And I haven't yeah. See you're up against. Yeah, I don't envy you,

**Tricia or PJ Kimmel:** I don't think every office is that way. I know Craig and Connie have talked about their experiences with BLM and they've had really good luck and they're just one county over ,

**Russ Bloom:** that was my experience. If you got the right person, they were wonderful.

And what I've found is the young people were excited by what we were doing and they got hammered by the people higher up and they got beaten down and, and I decided I wasn't going to have my, the success of my operation be based on who happens to be the field person. So yeah, that's a frustrating deal.

So, and I don't know the

answer

**Tricia or PJ Kimmel:** Well it, maybe over time we'll, we'll wear them down,

**Holly Stoltz:** So I have a question for you guys really quick. So when you're buying that late in the spring and that large in numbers, where are you finding them? Are you [00:15:00] going through the sales or are you do have private people that you just purchased their calves from?

**Tricia or PJ Kimmel:** We were kind of a forward contracting throughout the winter different guys that are feeding calves.

I have a neighbor that he likes to feed calves all winter. So we kind of forward contracted that. You know, by some off the video auctions that are a later delivery cattle I got guys, that'll put them together for me throughout the winter. And I just tell him what I want them to weigh and what what's it going to cost me.

And, you know, you lock them up with some down payment money and I don't want these calves in here until, you know, the end April 1st to may. And they're fine with that. You know, next year we're looking at, you know, a way later turnout. So we're going to have to have some moisture first, this winter and whatnot, but kind of what we've been doing year before we bought them all ourselves through sale rings, order buyers, put them all together throughout the winter.

had one [00:16:00] guy tell me. When I first started this he said, wait till spring, so your money's not tied up for another five, six months. And so I did the opposite. I went and tied my money up and suffered some death loss in that deal. But he was right in the end. I, I can see where he was coming from with that, you know, so that's kind of what we've been trying to do here last year is just kinda forward contracting them somehow.

So I know, you know, this is part of a drought deal and I've had a lot of people ask me about selling cows, getting into yearlingsand it might work. And then again, it might not, I don't know, next spring, what yearlings are going to be worth. And there's still, you know, the biggest fear everybody is finding enough yearlings, but it seems like you're, there's so many cattle out there.

You'll find them one way or another what it's going to cost. I don't know, but. Yes, we'll, maybe protect ourselves on paper a little bit that way with calls and put options. But we haven't done that quite yet. I missed [00:17:00] the bottom here a couple of weeks ago. So we can still maybe get into that a little bit, but it's kind of where we're at.

What do you think, Russell? What, what do you do there?

**Russ Bloom:** Yeah, that's the nice thing about this contract grazing. I mean, I used to do a little bit of everything you say. And so now this contract grazing, my client puts all the cattle together, their sales, mostly sales barn, cattle, but he puts them together in the fall, but they're totally straightened out by the time they get to my place in the spring.

I mean, they're, yeah, they're not green. And they're, they're green as far as feed wise, but I mean, there's the death while they're already straight over the sickness and everything, but yeah, but it is a tough problem because I found is when I wanted, if if he didn't forward contracting or put them together yourself over the winter, you're trying to buy them in the spring when everybody else is, and boy you're paying a premium and it was pretty, pretty steep to overcome that premium cause yeah, it's, it's nice not having to winter.

But it sounds like you're doing a pretty good job of spreading your risks.

**Tricia or PJ Kimmel:** So right [00:18:00] now we're still not, not very experienced at this.

**Matt Dawson:** Where do you monitor the forward prices for the yearlings?

**Tricia or PJ Kimmel:** Kinda, you know, off the futures board is kind of what we've been looking at, but you know, there's a cash price and then there's then the futures. You know, if I can set a price and look at my futures out in August, September, that's kind of where we're basing it on, basically.

It, you know, it's pretty close. You can protect yourself by doing that by some August puts when, when the price is good. So another thing is a LRP, livestock risk protection. You know, there's, some guys that's been using that. It's done nothing to cost me money so far, but that's why basically like the put options I can get out of them any time I want to, when I can make a profit.

LRPs based on one date, the end date of that contract. And it's basically a put option, but a government [00:19:00] subsidizes like 30 or 40% of the premium, but so far I haven't, you know, it's protected us, but I haven't made any money on it. So I think I'm done with the LRP

One thing, you know, Russell was talking about custom grazing at some, you know, we're kind of looking more into for next year. If you know, we don't get any moisture, but come April may. If we do get some moisture, we're still looking at a later turnout date. So you know, that that could be a huge opportunity for us, next year.

I mean, everybody's needing grass, everybody's needing hay. So, you know, and that's way less risk in that might not be as much money in it, but there's way less risk in it so let somebody else by the high praise calves, all just graze them. Put the weight on them, basically in the end, that's all you're selling is your grass anyway.

**Russ Bloom:** So yes, I agree with that. That's what I finally decided. You're not going to hit the highs, doing the custom grazing, but it's a lot less [00:20:00] risk and it's kind of, other than total, destocking in a drought. I have a very good idea about what my income's going to be you know, year to year. And I just keep my expenses in, you know, I may not hit a home run, but I'm also not going to go broke.

So

how do you get into it? If you let word out slightly that you have grass, your phone will ring off the hook, but I mean, and seriously, if you want to contact me privately, I mean, I'll give you a few numbers or depending on where are you located?

**Matt Dawson:** I'm south of Helena, about 40 miles.

**Russ Bloom:** Yeah. Everybody's looking for grass. I mean, it's just like anything else. I mean, some, some people are easier to work with than others or whatever. But yeah, and I made mistakes early on. I mean, I, I had a place in miles city, which was totally a new country for me. And I got tangled up with the guy who everybody in the [00:21:00] country knew you shouldn't get tangled up with, except for me, because I was new.

So that was an expensive experience. But but yeah, I mean, once you have gone to contract grazing business, you'll never have to advertise. People are calling you cause everybody's looking for grass. So

**Tricia or PJ Kimmel:** just about like selling hay right. Yeah. Yeah.

**Russ Bloom:** Yeah. And it's kind of the contract grazing deal. It would be kind of like the hay market now. I mean, there's two ways to approach it. Like you could about name your own price this spring for grass, but I have a long term client who you know, he's, he's with me maybe when a year he could get it cheaper and he sticks with me.

And so, you know, it's just like people, some people might sell their hay at 300 bucks a ton this year, but then, you know, if they have a long-term deal, they might sell it for 185 because the guy comes back every year. So anyway, got it. Kind of evens out in the long run.[00:22:00]

**Conni or Craig French:** Oh, this is Craig French. Mostly probably for Russell with. Contract grazing. I've heard a theory that if you do take in cattle, they can, may want to have a, for the first month of monthly charge until your animal adjusts and then weigh them after that first month and then go into your per month charge.

Is there any per for daily gain or just per month charge depending on how you do it, but is there any validity to that theory?

**Russ Bloom:** Yes. I've never worked at quite that way, but I'll kind of tell you the way mine did for, for probably the first, at least 10 years that I did this. I charged strictly on the gain.

I got paid so much per pound of gain and I would weigh them every month, the whole bunch. I mean, whether I was running 1300 or 1500, I have a good scale, a Rockwell scale. And we would weigh the whole bunch once [00:23:00] a month. I liked that I got paid every month. It was as close as. You're going to get through a regular job as far as paycheck come in.

Okay. Can everybody hear me? Okay. I got a little feedback there. So anyway, so, but by weighing them every month, what I was able to do was I was really able to document and get a history of how the cattle will gain each month on my place. So this is getting back to your question. The first month I made not much money.

The first 30 days I'd be bringing them in here in the middle of. April, which is earlier than most, but they're basically eating old grass and a little bit of Crested wheat or cheat grass coming up. And those cattle would only gain half to three-quarters of a pound a day because they're kind of getting straightened out and everything.

So the first check wouldn't be much, but from May 15th to July 15th, that I'm, you know, on, [00:24:00] on this short grass, you know, east slope of the Rocky mountains country, I'd say I was printing money, but those cattle would gain per day three to four and a half pounds a day. And one guy who I ran on for you guys recognize the name, but I won't say it.

I mean, he fed out a lot of cattle and he's an old guy and he's a good guy. And and he just the first year or two, he just couldn't believe it. Cause he goes, he goes, they, they, they won't gain that in a feed lot. And I just said, well, they're good cattle. And anyway, and then, so for about two months, They're just pouring on the way three to four pounds a day.

And then from July 15th when it heats up and that grass starts getting dry too, till about the first part August, they'll cut back to two pounds a day. And then what I found is that in August, when it's really hot, till September, they don't gain very well at all. No matter how good the feed is there'll be under two pounds a day, maybe a pound and a half.

So the way I figured it and this kind of a long-winded answer to your [00:25:00] question, it kind of evened out so that over the course of the summer, they'd gain 2.2 to 2.5 pounds per day. But it really taught me that if I. Charging by the, by the pound of gain, I'd give them that slow first month because I figured they're getting lined out and stuff and just getting primed to really gain for June and July.

But I learned that if I was charging by the pound, that I was basically working for free in August because they didn't gain. And that's why I would typically ship them out the 1st of August, but they weighed a thousand pounds already anyway, so the client was happy to ship them. Now, what I've done in the last few years is because I got the same client.

We know how much they're going to gain and everything else. We've just basically taken what they would have gained on the average. And we've just converted that into a monthly fee. I've done that for two reasons. One is just kind of simpler. I don't have my kids at home and even though I might weigh them twice a summer, I don't weigh them every month.

It just, it [00:26:00] eliminates weighing them once or twice, but the other reason is, and this gets back to if you're charging by the gain, Yeah, you end up playing a little bit of a game game about the incoming weight. Cause obviously if you're charging by the gain, the lighter they are, when they come in or the more shrunk, the more weight you're going to have versus if they load them up on feed and water and ship them in.

So they have 50 pounds of feed in them. Then you know, they shrink that off in your first month, month and a half. You're feeding them for free because it's just shrink. And I had a client do that one time. And so it was always kinda like, what's fair if they're shipping in what weight is it when they leave or when they arrive.

So anyway, so that's another reason I kind of went to a monthly deal with this client, with this long-term deal. So does that answer your question or did I just confuse you.

You're suggesting about charging by the month, the first that would be, that would be a fair way and a good way to do it. I guess it depends [00:27:00] on what you're charging by the pound. If you could get a client who might say, well, I don't want to give you the best of both worlds. I don't want to pay by the month when they're not gaining much.

And then when they're gaining a lot, you're gonna charge me by the pound and charge me a premium. So anything's negotiable. Yeah. So

**Bill Milton:** I have a question to both of you, so, Russell you've been in it for quite a while. What's been the high low in terms of your, what the clients have paying for the cost of putting a pound on their animals.

Oh, when

**Russ Bloom:** I first started, I think I charged in the low thirties. And then now if you figure it out on a per pound deal, it's more like 40 to 45 cents.

There's a little, there's a little bit of caveats in there that make that effect at somewhat the 40 to 45 cents a pound. Now, when I first started, I think I was at the high end. I think I should be raising my prices here. Like everything else the last years has gone up, but I haven't yet. But so yeah, so that's the answer.

Your [00:28:00] question is, I think right now the, the rate would be about 40, 45 cents a pound of gain. .

**Bill Milton:** And how about Trisha? You guys, what, what do you think is costing you to put a pound on a

**Russ Bloom:** that's not what it's costing me. That's what I'm charging.

**Bill Milton:** Yeah, no, I understand. Yeah, but in terms of when you're actually buying.

Yeah, how's that working economically in terms of what's that gain costingyou

**Tricia or PJ Kimmel:** . You know, last year was a pretty decent year. on our yearlings, what they come in weighing, what they ended up weighing in August, September this year, it's kind of a total wreck, but we made it through there with about 900 yearlings into August.

We destocked 800 by July. So, you know, I mean, how do you figure that, you know the first set of calves, I went down the road, we basically got ourmoney back. The second set that went down the road. Yeah. We made a slim margin, but [00:29:00] you know, far as what what we're doing, we've only really done it for two years.

So we're still working. You know, we started out with 1,750 yearlings. There turned out May 15th and by July 1st, we've already, destocked 800 head. So, you know, I don't know. I haven't really figured out that cost again, especially on a year like this year.

**Bill Milton:** Totally appreciate. Yeah, that's a situation and just those two years yeah, I'm just thinking how both of you, I mean, it's interesting, obviously, Russell, you've had a lot of years of experience, but you know, whether you were a cow calf guy or a yearling guy or combination or whatever we all seem to learn a lot over time.

How many mistakes can we afford to still? And so, yeah, I just you know, appreciate everybody's, you know, I mean, I'm on this call cause I'm just curious, like I'm, we're mostly cow calf and we're part of a co-op in which we know kind of what a price of our, our animals is going to be because we own them all the way to the rail [00:30:00] yet in a drought situation, I've come to really appreciate that.

Your place fully stocked with pairs and you have to destock. That can be expensive deal. So yeah, there's, there's no black and white answers here, but yeah, this is really, really interesting. And, and Russell, yeah, I think God for your clients, if they can put on a pound for 45 cents, that's pretty good deal.

That's that's doing a great service.

**Russ Bloom:** No, I've, it's it's time that I look at things again. I had an interesting talk. I met a guy actually at a meeting, had nothing to do with cattle here. He is from South Dakota and he's a pretty sharp guy. And basically he claims, and I don't think he was full of it. I think he knew what he was talking about that that the guys there for grass for yearling would pay 200 bucks for, for four months per yearling.

And I go, that doesn't pencil. And he goes, no, it really doesn't. But he goes, they'll pay it. So anyway, that's, that's in central South Dakota, he claimed, so I said, well, I'm [00:31:00] way too cheap. And he says, yeah, you are. ,

**Tricia or PJ Kimmel:** we're not contract or anything, but I, one thing I want to maybe mention is that when you're buying these cattle, it would be worth studying up a little bit on the whole sell by marketing thing, because really you make your money in the buy on, on these cattle, you have to buy them.

Right. And there's of course, a lot other factors all along the way, but there there's a lot of money that can be left on the table. If you, if you buy a wrong, I guess.

**Russ Bloom:** I think the sell by accounting, I'm sure you've read the Gordon hazard and bud Williams and all that. And that's an interesting concept to get through, but I think that is the correct way to look at it. But it's hard to get your mind around that a little bit.

**Tricia or PJ Kimmel:** Yeah, it is. We went down to Wally's class in Oklahoma and you know, he's talking about buying number two cattle and I told Wally all we got Montana's number one, cattle.

They're all premium cattle so tough to make your money in the buy around here.

I mean, [00:32:00] you buy seconds and thirds, you might have more death loss than what you'd like to. So there's kind of goes both ways, I guess. Also, when you look at the difference between heifers and steers, I mean there's some years you might make more heifers and , and that's one thing we've been doing is we've been buying all heifer calves and spaying.

It takes a lot less money to put together a set of heifers and the spread seems like it's a lot farther apart than you know, between the heifers and the steers. And then when you go to deliver them at a gap, gets a lot smaller. I feel like. So I guess that's kind of where we're at with that versus the heifers versus the steers anyway,

but I don't think in the cookie cutter methods with any of it, I, that's kind of the beauty of you doing yearlings really is the flexibility that you, that you gained by just in that sector of the market.

**Russ Bloom:** Yeah, the flexibility is good. The destocking just like this year. I mean, [00:33:00] we peeled off the heavies the 1st of August and shipped, you know, a third of the cattle and just made everything a lot easier.

So talking about the gain here. Here's one interesting thing that I found by weighing them. So I run, like I said, a thousand head on the dry land, 200 head down here on the irrigated. The irrigated is on beautiful old hay ground. You know, it's got SanfoinClover, beautiful. hay, they're up to their bellies in hay moving them every day.

And the ones out on the dry land will outgain those cattle every year. It's just that hard, hard grass. It'll put the weight on them and you'll just think don't these ones in here. We'll do it. And they won't.

**Bart:** What about in August? Did you see the same on the irrigated versus dry land

**Russ Bloom:** they actually do worse on the irrigated and it's complete counterintuitive.

There was one August and this is about 10 years ago. I mean, I did a great job of rotational grazing them. I moved them two to three times a day. They were on [00:34:00] lush feed all day, every day. And it was a real hot August. I mean, they got water right there. They're not having to travel for water. They have to walk a hundred yards to water.

And I think that was a bunch of spayed heifers that year at the end of August. And I was getting paid by the gain. I think they put on eight pounds in August.

No. So the answer to your question is on the irrigated ground, it doesn't matter irrigated or whatever, when it gets hot in August, they just, they don't do well.

**Tricia or PJ Kimmel:** One thing we do kind of have in our arsenal that that w we've utilized some as the cover crop grazing, it's definitely a later fall feed, but man, the nutritional value is really good on it and they gain really well on it.

So if you have it. Any fallow near you, that you could, whether it's your own or somebody else's, if you can get them to, to plant some cover crops on there, a good variety, a good mix. You know, that might be a viable option. Also for us, it's been pretty affordable [00:35:00] feed and it it's just really good quality feed for that time of year.

**Russ Bloom:** Is it just a Gabe brown mix of a little bit of everything or what's it's yeah, I think that's a great,

**Tricia or PJ Kimmel:** yeah, it's a diverse mix. We get it out of Canada, sorghum, millet, turnips radishes, sunflowers, lot of diversity in it. And by August, this country is completely dry. Droughted out, dried up, you know, you might get some later rains, but it kind of gets us through August.

We basically stock our native range in may and June, and then we. Go off of that unto our kind of Crested Wheat, alfalfa hayfields, instead of haying it, we graze all that and that's in July. And then we go on to cover crops in August. So it, you know, it basically keeps them cattle on a plane of nutrition that keeps them going.

But you know, we're running a lot more numbers. So that hay ground, if, if you're not grazing it, it's going to be sticks within 30 days. So [00:36:00] even like this year, we laid a lot of it down in swaths just to capture the nutritional value. And the cattle still had something to utilize. Otherwise the hoppers and the drought would had been on sticks.

So it got us by, but you kind of got to do that. Otherwise there's nothing left for themto eat anyway. So it's been working for.

**Conni or Craig French:** So this is Connie France. I've got a question on your health protocol you guys talked about when you had calves in the winter, you did a lot of doctoring. What about in the summer with your yearlings? Is there any, any routines, any vaccinations that you give when you do have problems? How do you treat them?

We've, we've looked at with our yearlings the dart guns we've set up portable corrals and doctored them just through a corral system. And mainly foot rot is. The thing that we've dealt with, but is, is there anything you guys have found that, that limits those sorts of issues with yearlings?

**Tricia or PJ Kimmel:** Well, Russell, you're the vet you can ask,

**Russ Bloom:** you want to cut your foot rot by a huge amount and your [00:37:00] pink eye iodized salt That's that's the key is the iodine in the salt and what I, I get a custom mix made up. But what I, before I did that, I actually talked with a yearling guy when I first starting.

And this sounds just kind of Western, but if you have just straight stock, loose salt, and then if you buy it's called ethi iodide, E T H Y I O D I D E. If you grow two handfuls of that per 50 pound bag of salt, that works just about right. And that will cut your, a foot rot down and your pink eye dramatically.

You know, but unless you, maybe you're in ground that I don't know some swampy ground and stuff, they're going to get more, but, but I'm really a big believer. So to answer your question is iodized salt, but it's not just iodized salt you buy at Murdoch's. It has to be. Spiked with this Ethyiodide. So and then as far as we're treating them no, I, what I do treat and [00:38:00] I don't, I used to have a lot more, now everything comes in well vaccinated straightened out.

I don't have to treat that many, but I do ride them every day. But on average I might pull one a week pneumonia usually, and then I just use the typical, whatever. I mean, you know, the high price stuff, if they're expensive. And I still use a lot of LA 200 Banamine cause I'm cheap. And if I'm catching them early, it works on them.

So same for foot rots. I use that a lot for foot rots.

**Tricia or PJ Kimmel:** So we use a dart gun with Draxin and just cause it's easy and I guess mainly. We might have a little run in with pink eyes early in the spring kind of runs its course. Yeah. You might have a few with foot rot, so they get darted with the dart gun, whether it's foot rot or not, but it seems like if you can catch it early, they get over it.

And then I guess around our water tanks, you know, if you got a lot of mud around there I think that can [00:39:00] be you know, spread some of that. So we just try to keep that water source dried out around the tanks and seems like it helps. And we do feed a lot, all iodized, salt and mineral. So, yeah. Yeah.

**Russ Bloom:** I think the salt and minerals important onyearlings, especially

**Conni or Craig French:** so Russell, where do you get your Ethyiodide

**Russ Bloom:** I use, I don't think you need a prescription. I should know this, but I I'm a vet, but I don't practice anymore. And I haven't practiced for 20 years. I keep my license up, but I don't I used to be able to just get it at Conagra.

And if not, you might have to get a prescription from your vet, but I don't think so. You just used to be able to just buy it over the counter. And I think you still can just at ConAgra GTA or whoever. So just throw two handfuls of that for each a 50 pound bag of salt. And I did that for years and years.

**Conni or Craig French:** So another question on health, and I don't mean to take up all your time, but flies, when we're talking about salt, we did put garlic salt out for [00:40:00] our, our yearlings when we had them and seemed to help some, but you know, they still had a few flies. Is do you guys pour, treat, what do you do about the parasites?

**Russ Bloom:** I have fly tags on mine. And it's interesting you say, because actually my client this year provided me with the garlic salt, and I only have one year of anecdotal data, but there were less flies on those cattle this year than any time I've ever seen. And the only thing I did different was the garlic salt that he provided.

So on one year basis, I think it's helpful, but I'll tell you more in a few years.

**Tricia or PJ Kimmel:** Yeah. There's a lot of people like a lot of Canadians that are putting garlic in their mineral now and they all swear by it. So I even know mineral companies in Canada that are adding it in there too. And so must be working.

**Russ Bloom:** I think that mineral that he brought with the garlic, I think it comes out of Canada.

**Bart:** What's [00:41:00] the rate on the garlic and the salt.

It's premixed

**Russ Bloom:** when he comes it's it's an it's in a bag. So I can't tell you that. It's it's just a commercial mix

**Tricia or PJ Kimmel:** half and half. Now it ain't that much. I have no idea.

**Russ Bloom:** Yeah. It smells like garlic. I mean, it isn't just a little bit, you can, it smells good.

**Conni or Craig French:** We got, we did it by the pallet and our shop certainly smells like garlic.

We shouldn't have any vampires in our shop either. Don't think we get ours from Redmond and it comes in a 50 pound sack and it seems like a pretty good product.

**Bart:** Roger and Betsy, are you sleep or what?

**Roger or Betsy Indreland:** No, just listen. Just listen BJ. No, I think my comment, I got a couple, but one is, I think there might be. Russell it, I don't know if you're doing, if you're doing primarily heifers or steers or is it a mix

I've done

**Russ Bloom:** both, but I've for the last number of years straight steers.[00:42:00]

**Roger or Betsy Indreland:** And I was wondering if there wouldn't be quite an opportunity with a shortage of feed to feed somebody, you know, to summer somebody who's replacement heifers. I think, I think there's a lot of people would love to love to put put the replacement heifers out somewhere. We'll take that burden off.

Cause I certainly expect the cattle cycles coming up and we're trying to keep cows around them.

**Russ Bloom:** No good point. Well taken. Yeah, no, I'm sure. You're right. I'm sure it wouldn't be

bad thing about running and heifers is I'm surrounded by cow calf outfits and I'd be yeah. Yeah. So

**Conni or Craig French:** he knew somebody that raised a good bull that we could put with those heifers

**Roger or Betsy Indreland:** Connie

**Bart:** so much for shade on them in [00:43:00] August, or I guess I'm just what's really caused them not to gain weight. What's your, what's your thoughts on that?

**Russ Bloom:** Yeah, no, I haven't. I have no shade. I don't have any trees. I think it's just in the heat. I mean, they have good water. So I think that it's just, it's just too hot.

I just don't think that they're, I dunno if they're grazing, I know down on the irrigated ground, I think that that feed is just kind of more washy. I mean, I don't know if it's more so than earlier in the spring, but that it has to do something with the heat that their, their feed intake just isn't as high, because, so I don't really know the answer to it, but I can tell you after weighing a lot of cattle for a lot of years, it's, it's a real phenomenon, at least on my place.

**Roger or Betsy Indreland:** For what it's worth. There was a great article in working with working ranch magazine, I think last month. And this was in Utah, but a bunch of, a bunch of people there that had BLM ground actually. They, [00:44:00] I like 30, some of them got together, but they were right next to a big allotment that Deseret ranches had.

And they were actually able to convert. They grouped together. And then they were able to convert that, you know, sell the idea and do a grazing plan on a BLM because they were afraid they were going to lose or reduce their AUM. But it was, it sounded to me like, I don't know anything about it, but there was a lot of people named in the article.

I'm pretty sure it was working ranch magazine. And it just sounded like a real success, which could be pretty interesting, , especially in areas where there's a lot of it.

**Tricia or PJ Kimmel:** Yeah. That was in a working ranch. Actually read that article. It was a good article.

**Roger or Betsy Indreland:** That's what I thought. Yeah.

**Tricia or PJ Kimmel:** Oh, I think eventually they made, they made the people's attitudes will start to change. You know, if you're managing your grazing well, I can see where people think they're just going to get into yearlings and to set socks for, you know, that that can be damaging possibly,[00:45:00]

I guess, Hey Russell, I, this question is for you, I guess, but you know, we've been looking at if there was some way that we could get, you know, yearlings later on in year, maybe July, you know, our biggest problem is, is if we don't get rain in may and June, we have no grass, no grass grows. So our biggest problem is trying to stock this ranch on AUM.

And if it don't rain, we're overstocked. It never seems to rain too much, or we have over abundance of grass, but you know, we're looking at, Hey, you know, let's make the grass and then we know how many cattle we can bring in, you know, but we're looking at later in the summer, July, August, you know, maybe we can run them later into November, but at least, at least you would have some way to, to measure what you have out there and match matcha with, you know, the number of cattle.

Well, what's your thoughts on that?

**Russ Bloom:** I think it's a good thought. And in theory, I'm like you, I'm not quite [00:46:00] sure if the right size cattle are out there for what you need, the numbers you need, that would be the only thing, but you know, more and more people are, you know, calving later or something, you know, summer calves.

Yeah. I don't know. I mean, it seems like. There's always cattle. If you're, if you're looking, I mean out there, but it, it would be tougher to stock, I would say, but not impossible. I think it's a good idea because yeah, the biggest thing is, is yeah, you're trying to stock it and you're trying to guess if it's going to rain or not.

**Tricia or PJ Kimmel:** Exactly.

**Russ Bloom:** Yeah. And so that's what I stock my place. And most years I have some leftover and last year I pushed it a little hard, but yeah, so it's a tough deal.

**Tricia or PJ Kimmel:** So even a, you know, even farther out into the fall, November, December, and even if you could winter graze a class of livestock, you know, you're looking at like this year $300 a ton, Hey, well, if there's a class of livestock, you know, [00:47:00] later calving cows or something, but your forage is already made.

So you're looking out there and saying, okay, I have this many pounds per acre now figuring out the number of cattle. And you could still winter graze a class of livestock and still make pretty good money on it compared to the hay price. You know, it's kind of where my thinking is , there.

**Russ Bloom:** I think you're onto something because I've always said that there's an asymmetrical value of grass, grass in November is more valuable than grass in June when everybody else, I think you good, especially I think this hay deal has maybe woke a few guys up that before wouldn't have considered fall grazing or winter grazing.

And now if you can come in, I mean, I'd like to ask this question up there. What would the market be? Cause I've actually kind of was thinking a little bit, the way you are that maybe I should be tailoring and kind of change the way I do and yeah, graze November and be charging these guys for their cows so much per day.

I have one neighbor that I run a few [00:48:00] head and it's more as a favor, but it's, it's a good deal for both of us. So. I guess I agree with you. And then I would ask, have you heard what people are paying? I surmise . It'd be more cows. You know what the rate is

**Tricia or PJ Kimmel:** for winter grazing.

**Russ Bloom:** Yes, yes,

**Tricia or PJ Kimmel:** no, I haven't because nobody winter grazes in this country, they're all feeding hay.

Yeah. And I, I looked at that as an opportunity because now I'm grazing these pastures. That's never been grazed at that time of the year, you know, so I'm totally grazing a different time of the year. So I think that's a huge opportunity for the soil and for the grass. And not only that, but the opportunity for the cost of feed.

If I, if I can graze them out versus the cost of hay. I we're just trying to get down that road and figure that out a little bit, I guess, because I would love to rest all my pastures next year. And just see how much grass I can grow over the growing season. And then [00:49:00] it's all stockpile for winter forage, you know?

So it's just a different way of looking at it, maybe.

**Russ Bloom:** Yeah. So maybe you guys should be buying calves in August 1st part of September and running them in fall winter grazing. Yeah. Looking out of the box. Yeah,

**Tricia or PJ Kimmel:** that is, I just far as a freshly weaned calf. I, I, you know, you might have some death loss in that, but whether your wintering cows pregnant cows or older yearlings or something, there's just gotta be some class of livestock that would fit very well with that without having a huge death loss.

**Russ Bloom:** Yeah, I agree.

**Roger or Betsy Indreland:** One time we paid a neighbor for some winter grazing. And if you, if you did the math on say $200 a ton, hay, and you fed them 40 pounds of hay a day, times 30 days. That's $120 per month. So if you could be somewhere less than that, [00:50:00] for sure. I think it would be a value plus that's not evenfed.

That's just the, hay, I mean, if you, if you did it for a hundred, it would be cheaper for them to do that.

**Conni or Craig French:** Interesting year consider an PJ because we're along the same lines. We, we do plan on being mostly destocked from about June one on and seeing how much recover we can get. And we considered this fall early winter grazing concept. And so for example, if it was 30 bucks a month for summer grass, 60 bucks a month for winter.

hay, maybe $45. Somewhere in the middle, if you're grazing in the winter time, I was just something considering,

**Tricia or PJ Kimmel:** I guess. And we're really considered that path just because you know, BLM is already looking at a June [00:51:00] 1st turnout and you know, we always talk about overgrazing and it's a function of time. Well, you know, this country needs to be rested in, it needs to be rested for a year or two. I mean, it's, we're, we're just so far behind on moisture right now.

So I'm just trying to plan ahead even farther ahead of the yearling deal. And I guess it's kind of what I've been thinking on that winter graze. And even if it is. You know, large numbers for two months, November, December, but at least I know how much grass was made over the summer. And, you know, I don't really feel like it really affects the plan when you're grazing in the dormant season versus the growing season.

So I guess where I'm at with that,

we'll let you know when a year and a half out we decided,

**Russ Bloom:** , I own some yearlings. And even when I was in cow calf and I mean, it worked well for me. I mean, on, on, on the hay ground, I swath grazed some and some, I would just, but I mean, I'd be out there moving my poly wire and a foot of snow [00:52:00] and it worked wonderfully, but that was for only I did it for a couple of years and not huge numbers, but I mean probably 300 calves or a couple of hundred head of cows.

And it worked. And talk, and actually you still got sickness and some death loss, but there's a heck of a lot less on, you know, freshly weaned freshly weaned meaning that they've been weaned at least a couple of weeks. The sooner you can get them out on grass, the healthier they're going to be. You get them out of that dusty corral.

So you still gotta, you still got it, but it's, it's, it's better than it's less than an, in a corral

**Bill Milton:** so I have a couple drought related questions. So. Russell, it sounds like were you impacted by the drought at all? It sounds like you've just been doing things just like you've been doing on and that this year didn't really impact you very much.

**Russ Bloom:** No it was dry here, but not as bad as what you guys had.

We actually, we had a mid-May snow wet snow storm and that got us off. And then the middle of June, we had an inch and a half of [00:53:00] rain. So it was, it was bad, but it wasn't as terrible as what, a lot of the rest of the state had. So my place got hit a little harder than usual, but it's still in pretty good shape.

And I'd like to think that it's, some of it is a result of doing things right for 15 or 20 years. I think that my organic matter has been built up. I think I hold the water, et cetera, et cetera. So, I mean, I've driven through Eastern Montana. I've driven through my neighbors and most places look worse than mine.

And the, and I, I only shipped about two weeks earlier than normal, so, but, but my place doesn't look as good as I'd like it, but it's not as bad as a lot of places. So does that answer your question? Yeah.

**Bill Milton:** Yeah, yeah. And then the second question is, so I know a few people, including ourselves enroll in this federally subsidized range insurance PRF program.

I'm [00:54:00] just curious if you guys have used that program. I've looked at the program, have any thoughts about that program and then I guess anyone else on the call you know, whether they feel that, that program it's kind of where we've learned over three years, it's a little more complicated than we thought though.

We, you know, we've made a little bit of money on it. Yeah.

**Russ Bloom:** I'd be interested in here when people I'd say, cause now that you say it, I actually remember when it first came out 10 or 15 years ago, I did it for a year or two. And to tell you the truth, I've completely forgotten about it. I must have quit doing it because I didn't think it worked well for me and I D I didn't even know it was out there.

So I'd be very curious to hear other people. Yeah. So I'm embarrassed to say that I knew about it and I've completely forgotten about it.

**Bill Milton:** Sono need to be embarrassed. It's that people who have had quite, quite it's been quite useful, but it's how you pick your months and what, you know, how many acres you put in and how much money it's.

It's not [00:55:00] just like, yeah, you get this program. And if I get a drought, I'm going to get a bunch of money because it doesn't work like that.

**Russ Bloom:** So a lot of these decisions you had to make as far as kinda how you were going to structure it and.

**Tricia or PJ Kimmel:** December 1st, if you're interested, that's when the deadline is.

**Bill Milton:** Yes. Right, right. Yeah.

**Butch Gillespie:** I'll jump in here real quick. And stock growers they just had their annual convention and they did have two different people, Harold Rice. He used to be the executive secretary there at stockgrowers, but he sells that insurance and then they doubled up with a guy by the name of up there and that Denton area, I think it was that does the puts and the, all that stuff on the futures, but they worked the two together.

Now. I got in there late and I kind of the same way we did it a couple of times, 10 years ago or more, and never could see where it really helped out all that much. So I'm not same way. I kind of forgot about. But by working the two [00:56:00] together, you know, maybe there's some possibilities there. It was intriguing.

But I'd have to know a lot more about it before I jumped into it. But by double teaming it, so to speak they thought there would, there might be some brilliance in that method. So take that for whatever it's worth.

**Tricia or PJ Kimmel:** Yeah. We looked into a bill and I'm still trying to decide, but to me it was it's insurance. And you gotta pick the right months when it's gonna rain when it's not gonna rain. And there's a lot of if ands and buts about it. I don't know. It's kinda like how bad do you want to buy more insurance, I guess, and the payout wasn't all that great.

I didn't think so. And I think doesn't it it's based on the rainfall for your entire county and in counties like ours Blaine counties certainly geographically. So if one portion of Blaine county got some rain and maybe the Northern portion didn't then [00:57:00] you were out of luck.

Well, that's not true. There's, there's supposed to be a weather station on every township, but so they say, I don't know how they monitor that.

Cause I've been around this country and I've never seen one of their weather stations. So, but they go in grids, I guess, they can pull up the last 30 or 50 years in these grids and it's kind of, you're a crap shoot. Roulette table. The thing that says, okay, you know, it's time to hit on black, but that's the way I feel about it.

**Bill Milton:** I don't know, Holly, this probably would be a topic unto itself. There are a few people out there who have really used this program quite effectively. And we've just gotten into it and it's been useful, but in some respects, it's often, sometimes less actually drought insurance, you know, the way you do this is more kind of an investment program.

And if you work with an agent working with [00:58:00] all the various algorithms, it's, you know, they usually get a return. People get a return on investment if they'd do it properly, but then you can kind of work both ends, but as much time as we put into it, it can be really significant. You know, if. If you, if you do it well or work with people who do it well, particularly on a year like this, but for tonight, this, you know, obviously this isn't the topic, but I could see down the road for bull sessions, you know, we might put together a good panel of folks and they explore this tool because it's just one of many tools to try and get through the kind of things we're experiencing this year.

**Russ Bloom:** I'd sure be interested in here. And that bull session. Yeah.

**Holly Stoltz:** Hey Russ kind of a question for you. We did this about for about four years and the first year we bought those twos and threes, Patrick was talking about and had pretty significant death loss. We've been buying about 525 pounders. Have you found that there's a sweet spot in the weight that you'd like to bring in where they gain the best [00:59:00] when they, when they come onto your place?

Are they a certain,

**Russ Bloom:** yeah, actually that 500 pounder would be about it because if they're much smaller than that, you're getting a little too light and too easy to die. But yeah, there was one year and unfortunately I did one year, just the way the client shipped in. And it seems like I had about 300 head, a 400 pounders, 300 head of 500 pounders and then 600 pounders.

And I actually weighed them. I forget how I did it by rack weighed them separately. And those 500 pounders was the sweet spot. So unfortunately it's very tough to get them. I mean, I've, I, I've tried to have my contracts say, bring those in because I know that I'll make more money off them. They eat less, they gained more, but the guys were just telling me, they say, we can't find them in this country because we might, yeah, by the time we winter them and stuff, we can't get them that light that time of year.

So if I could find them 500 pounders, but in my experience getting [01:00:00] significant numbers that you can get them 6, 6, 50. You're doing good. So

**Bill Milton:** we're just joking here. We know, we know how to come up with some light calves. Okay.

**Butch Gillespie:** Getting back to a, yearlings versus just taking in cow, calf pairs. Cause it does look like there's going to be a lot of need for that. Or demand for pasture for a cow calf pair. What are some of the dynamics there? I'm assuming it's mainly just that the cow calf pairs, you probably do a little more forage than it would for for the yearlings, obviously, but when you're doing the math on it, the economics how does that pan out?

**Russ Bloom:** Well, here, I'll give you my [01:01:00] opinion on it. You can run at least two, if not three yearlings per cow calf pair. Now there's a lot of ifs in that and people go, oh, no way that isn't the conversion 0.75 or whatever. That's. If you really watch your forage that is an accurate, and then it depends. You've got to make sure you're comparing apples to apples back in the day when they were figuring it.

And cows were 900 pounds and cows are weaned at three 50, then maybe the conversion was more accurate. Most, not probably not the people on this phone call, but most of our neighbor ranchers, their cows are going to average 1600 pounds. They calve the, 1st of February, the calves are 400 pounds when they go to grass.

And in may, you know, 750 pounds I'd come off in August to, I can run three yearlings for one pair of those. If assuming they're coming in at 600, six and a quarter. So that's my little, little spiel on it. And I, and I can [01:02:00] tell you this from running them down on this irrigated ground, where I could really keep track of numbers and the amount of feed they use and stuff.

I mean, I could see it. I mean, pairs versus yearlings. I mean just how, how many yearlings you could run compared to the pairs

**Butch Gillespie:** Now myself, if I could get enough money from those cow calf pairs per month I wouldn't be dealing, but there's many heads of livestock that has some appeal. Cows use the don't test the fences quite as much as yearlings do.

So that's why I kind of brought the question now. So, but I guess it's all depending on how much money a cow calf guy is willing to put it out to. So,

**Russ Bloom:** so I'll throw that question out there. You guys probably cause I don't, I haven't, I used to follow the cow calf market pretty good, but I don't pay any attention anymore.

What is the going rate that people are paying for AUM for summer range for cow calf pair?

**Butch Gillespie:** Well, up here I've heard 35 to [01:03:00] maybe 40, but it seems to me like maybe it might have to have more than that to, to make a competitive comparison there. That's just my thoughts.

**Russ Bloom:** Well, I agree with that. And that's why I went to yearlings in the first place because that's 30, 20 years ago.

It was 30 bucks a cow. Yeah. Cow calf pair. Well, if I was getting 20, 25 for my yearlings, I was making and it could run three yearlings for a cow calf pair. The math is pretty easy and that's I guess, and I think you're right. I think a lot of people are only willing to pay that. Now in this drought here, it might wake them up.

But how much the value of that grass is, I think that the going rate should be much higher than that. And I think maybe, maybe, yeah, hopefully you can get that now. Hopefully you can get 60 bucks a pair. So

**Butch Gillespie:** kind of where my head was at.

**Russ Bloom:** Well I'm, I'm sorry. The lady who did [01:04:00] the hay calculation, she was dead on. Yes, these guys should be paying a hundred bucks a month for fall grazing their cows or winter grazing. And that's a bargain. That's a bargain if they, but most, most people don't put a pencil to it and they love feeding their cows.

It doesn't matter whether it's $300 a ton hay they'll complain more, but they won't feed them any less. And that by God, they won't pay the neighbor a hundred bucks for that month, because now that robbing blankety blank neighbor, that would be a bargain, but most people don't put a pencil to it. Okay.

I'm off my soap box.

**Tricia or PJ Kimmel:** That mindset with them. Yeah. And then you still got to put the diesel fill in the tractor to feed the hay bale or however you're doing it too. So it's not cheap. Yeah. But that's about where we're at up here, thirties about tops. You know, back when 20 13, 14, and then cattle prices went through the roof all, then everything else went up, including all of our leases and we're still there to 30.

[01:05:00] So, but I gotta agree with Russell on that. And if you're $30 for a cow calf pair and you can run three yearlings, well, I guess that's maybe one reason why we're doing what we're doing, I guess. So the bigger reason

**Roger or Betsy Indreland:** I wonder some and I've been, I haven't really done any calculations on it, but just for what we've, we've done some, one or two dry cows over and we went, are those dry cows really, really cheap. But we achieved 90% utilization. So they run along behind, behind cows. And I mean, so our winter costs are really, really cheap on those, but I wonder if some combination, you know PJ, like you were talking maybe, maybe, maybe you go in with a big bunch of calves or something for November, December, something like that, but you're going to have some grass that you could, you could winter some dry cows on pretty cheap.[01:06:00]

I don't know. That's just throwing that out there. You might own those longer. You might end up owning those all the way until the next October or August. Right. You know, but I don't know. I know that that utilization on certain areas of a property. But have some value as long as you're going to rest it long enough behind that.

**Butch Gillespie:** Are curious here, are you saying buy, buy these cows when they're cheap? You know, later October, November, they are like, they are right now. They're pretty darn cheap. And then just turn them out there, put some weight on and then the price normally comes up and you've got extra weight. Is that kinda what you're thinking?

**Roger or Betsy Indreland:** Yeah, I, I think my thought would be to take weight off of them through the winter. Just make, just get them to survive and put the weight on them. As soon as the grass comes on.

**Butch Gillespie:** Oh, you have to hold them that long and the next in spring.

Huh? Interesting.

**Roger or Betsy Indreland:** If you've [01:07:00] got good feed, you could probably put some weight on them, but depending on the winter some winters, even with good feed, they might not do too well. Depending on the shape when we get them,

or you could, if they were in decent shape, you can breed them early and then send them somewhere else where they typically calf. You know what a different time of year, then most people here.

**Russ Bloom:** I can show you my sense of timing. I actually decided to do that one year, I bought light cows and was just going to, you know, put some weight on them or whatever, some thin Shelly, cows and bought them, that was the mad cow year. I bought them and mad cows. I have an uncanny sense of timing.

**Tricia or PJ Kimmel:** How did they winter for you though?

Russell?

**Russ Bloom:** Yeah, no, actually they were doing fine until that. And then I actually, whether it was right or wrong, I followed the bud Williams, advice that if you're going to pull the plug, [01:08:00] pull it early. And so when that thing hit, I pulled it and I think I probably broke even. But I actually think, I agree with everything everybody's said about if you, if you read about it and think about it, the only value or the only class of livestock that actually gains in value per pound is a thin cow.

So, and it doesn't take much to get her by and yeah, so I I've often thought that there's real opportunity there. I guess I got stung a little bit that one year and maybe it scared me off, but yeah, I think that, there's an, like I said, there, you can breed some back or yeah. In fact, I've even thought, you know, getting along your line of thinking is that I shouldn't be running these yearlings at all.

I should be. Doing what you're thinking about doing, but buying something like these thin cows and, and they know how to get out and rustle and yeah, they'll do fine and they're easy to get along [01:09:00] with and trained. And I think there's an opportunity there. What's keeping me from doing that now is doing this yearling deal.

About 20 years ago, we started going down and living on the beach in Mexico. And I don't want to give that up.

So that's the rest of the story. Yeah. Why do things the way I do so,

**Butch Gillespie:** for whatever it's worth, it is interesting for years. We've wintered, , when the especially when we calved in April y we went around just native grass and short grass country up here, but a nine tenths of a pound of protein on a pregnant cow.

will do wonders on dry grass as far as keeping them in really, really good shape. It's just, of course you have to have the vitamins and minerals to go with that, but you feed it as a package, but it flat works, we did it for enough years, said I'm totally confident. It's just amazing.

**Roger or Betsy Indreland:** What kind of a product did you use to,

**Butch Gillespie:** well, I just guess I've been [01:10:00] in the feed business for, for a number of years, but not so much with cattle.

Ag say hogs in dairy cows from the Hutterite Colonies but. For the protein, I just bought whatever would work whether it was I camelina meal that and had the oil squeezed out of it. But for, you know, this you know, biodiesel deal distillers, if you can get the right kind of distillers that can work good.

High fat canola can work really good, you know, on most of that runs around three tenths of a pound of protein, or even a little more. So you can feed them. What we did is we just spent them six pounds of that every other day, or about three times a week. And just so you get almost a pound of protein in them a day on the average, they don't need that protein every day, but every second or third day is good enough.

But so you can kind of find that you know, distillers like over North Dakota the best place to buy it. Now here. Some of the feed mills do bring it in and you can [01:11:00] buy a bulk there. And that's by far the easiest thing to do. Now, we just mixed it with minerals and vitamins in the back of the pickup.

So old fashioned way, but it works.

**Holly Stoltz:** Anybody else have any other questions we're about at our time, but if you guys want to stay on, I'm more than welcome to stay too, but there's not any other questions, then we can call it an evening. ,

**Butch Gillespie:** from my perspective, thanks a lot for setting this up and doing it. I found them very, very entertaining.

**Tricia or PJ Kimmel:** You do this once a month or once a week, or how often do you,

**Holly Stoltz:** so we try to do it once a month and we try to pick a topic like, you know, something like this that's of interest to people that's come up in past bull sessions. Like bill said, maybe the, the programs would be the next good one. We just kind of, whatever is kind of going on.

We did a drought one that last month we did like how everybody did in the drought. The month before we did a winter feed [01:12:00] supplement, we've done like the virtual fencing. So we just try to like, just do different topics and then let the conversation flow from there. But it seems to work pretty well.

**Tricia or PJ Kimmel:** Cool. Thank you. We've heard it.

**Russ Bloom:** I've really enjoyed it. Thank you. I got a lot out of it, so appreciate it.

**Holly Stoltz:** Well, thank you for showing up and Tricia and Patrick. Thank you too. Really appreciate your input. So thank you.

**Russ Bloom:** I'll be tuning in next month, looking forward to it. Thank you. Thanks everybody. Thank you.

Thanks a lot. Have a good night. Thanks everybody. Goodbye.