



# West Virginia

## AG ED NEWS and VIEWS

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Harry N. Boone, Jr., Ph.D., Editor

### ***Long-time Professor, Administrator Named Provost at Potomac State***

by Bill Nevin, External Communications Manager,  
West Virginia News and Information Service

A long-time West Virginia University professor who has served as interim president of Potomac State College of West Virginia University since July 2003 has been named the school's new provost.

Kerry S. Odell has been tapped to lead Potomac State as it becomes a fully integrated division of WVU, rather than a regional campus, effective July 1, 2005. Under legislation passed in 2003, the two-year residential college will become a division of WVU on July 1 with a provost rather than a regional campus president.

Provost Gerald Lang called Odell a "visionary leader who cares about the mission of Potomac State, one that provides educational programs that springboard students into careers as well as onto four-year, degree-granting institutions."

Lang added, "Dr. Odell was highly recommended by the search committee and a popular choice of the community. He has demonstrated that he has the administrative ability to move the college forward in the years ahead."

Odell's background in agricultural and environmental education is also a good match with Potomac State's two college-owned working farms, Lang said.

Before becoming interim president at PSC, Odell served as an associate

professor of agricultural and environmental education in WVU's Davis College of Agriculture, Forestry and Consumer Sciences. The program stresses communication and leadership skills to prepare students for positions in teaching, extension, environmental technology, government, industry or entrepreneurship. His research focuses on leadership and education in agriculture and natural resource production.

He also served as the college's associate dean for academic affairs and development from 1994-2000. Before that, he was an associate professor of agricultural education and assistant professor of agricultural education.

Odell has a doctorate from The Ohio State University, a master's degree from The Pennsylvania State University, a bachelor's degree from the University of Georgia and an associate's degree from State University of New York at Alfred.

"I am excited about the opportunity to continue to promote Potomac State College and to build upon the many improvements made to campus facilities, academic programs and student life activities over the past two years," Odell said. "The energy and enthusiasm of the faculty, staff and students as well as the College's positive relationship with its alumni, area school districts and the



community significantly influenced my desire to remain in Keyser. My wife Cathy and I look forward to becoming a permanent part of this community."

Potomac State, created in 1901, offers 50 two-year associate of arts programs, 9 career/technical programs, a bachelor's degree in nursing through WVU and a bachelor's degree through WVU's Regents Bachelor of Arts Degree program.

The student population at Potomac State is approximately 1,300.

The campus is located in the Eastern Panhandle, a recreation haven for hiking, rock climbing, mountain biking, skiing and white-water rafting.

You may contact Dr. Odell at Potomac State College, 101 Fort Ave., Keyser, WV 26726, phone 304-788-6810, or email [Kerry.Odell@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:Kerry.Odell@mail.wvu.edu).

# ***Editorial: Preventing a “Runaway” Class***

by Harry N. Boone Jr.

Imagine you are driving a fully loaded semi over a mountainous road for the first time. You stop at the top to admire the view. Your driving career (and personal safety) depends upon you and your equipment reaching the bottom safely. Through inexperience and/or carelessness, you make the decision to let the truck coast and quickly build up speed. You quickly reach 50 mph, 60 mph, 70 mph..... You try the brakes. They slow you down momentarily; however, you smell the tell-tale odor of the brakes getting hot. You know that it's only a short time until they overheat completely and become useless. What do you do? By this stage the only option is the runaway truck ramp near the bottom. You hope and pray that you don't hurt someone before you can reach the ramp.

Too many inexperienced teachers (and some veterans) approach discipline in the same manner. They want to be liked by the students and fail to establish sufficient discipline in the classroom. Just like the runaway truck, the classroom quickly gets out of hand. The teacher tries to establish some order in the classroom, however, the friction between students and teacher increases. While it is possible to bring a runaway class into control, many teachers give up in frus-

tration and leave the profession. A runaway classroom (along with the runaway truck) can be avoided with a few basic steps.

The first step is to develop a discipline plan for your classes. Discipline plans are as unique as the individuals administering them; however, all plans will include some basic elements. The discipline plan will start with a few basic rules. Exactly what do you expect from your students? Next communicate these rules to the students. Post the rules in the classroom as a constant reminder to the students.

Secondly, plan a set of consequences for obeying and breaking your rules. A planned set of consequences will serve two roles. First, it will provide for fair enforcement of the rules. Each time a rule is broken, the same disciplinary action will be taken. Secondly, it will remove anger from the discipline process. As a teacher (or parent), you never want to decide upon disciplinary action when you are angry.

The consequences should include disciplinary actions for first, second, third.... offenses. Disciplinary actions may include verbal warnings, written warnings, loss of privileges, office visits, and paren-

tal visits. As an agricultural educator you have a powerful and often unused discipline tool in SAE visits. You may elect not to mention the incident during the visit, however, because you know dad and mom, junior (or juniorette) will react differently to you and your discipline rules.

Finally, don't forget positive consequences for obeying your rules. If the consequences are selected carefully, it will be as enticing to your high school seniors as "toy boxes" are to grade school children. Positive consequences can take the form of individual or group rewards. Group rewards often improve classroom discipline by using peer pressure. Because a part of the students want the reward, they often will pressure others to conform to the rules.

As you start a new school year, make it your goal to "gear" the class down and keep it under control with a fair and well thought out discipline plan. Good luck on a happy and prosperous school year.

*The opinions expressed in the editorials are those of the editor and do not necessarily represent official positions and/or opinions of the Agricultural and Environmental Education program, the Davis College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Consumer Sciences, or West Virginia University.*

## ***Gamma Sigma Delta's 2005 Extension Faculty Award of Merit***

***Bruce M. Loyd, WVU Extension Service, Lewis County***

Bruce M. Loyd has worked as WVU Extension Agent in Lewis County since 1992. Prior to that time, he was an Associate Extension Agent with Penn State University, in western Pennsylvania with program responsibilities in a 4-county area for dairy and agronomy. He earned a BS degree in Dairy Science from Virginia Tech in 1986 and a MS degree from Penn State University in Dairy and Animal Science in 1988.

Bruce's primary responsibilities in Lewis County are agriculture, community development, and support for the 4-H program. Major programs he has implemented include beef cattle marketing, beef production, 4-H livestock, brush management and control, pasture management, and pesticide education and safety. He presently serves as co-chair of a statewide Extension Youth Agriculture Team and was elected as a member of the WVU Faculty Senate.

Bruce Loyd has been active with the WV Beef Expo since 1993, served as the Expo Chairman in 2002, and currently serves as the show and sale chairman. He has been a member of the Lewis County Economic Development Authority since 1993, served as President in 1998, and is currently treasurer. He has been secretary and a key person in the success of the WV Dairy Cattle Show since 1996. Bruce serves as a member and advisor to virtually all agriculture and farm organizations in Lewis County. He was a board member of the WV County Agents Association from 1994 – 1998; then served 2-year terms as Vice-president, President-elect, and President.

He has co-authored a publication on brush control using herbicides, and several fact sheets on control of invasive plants on farms. He has also co-authored applied research reports on marketing of

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*Bruce is currently a WVU Extension Agent in Lewis County.*

# *Successful Agriculture Education and FFA through Cooperative Teaching*

by Jeremy Greene

Have you ever coached a career development team that set lofty goals for themselves, and worked as hard as they could to achieve them? Each individual member put in the extra time and effort to learn and teach concepts which others in the group did not understand. In many if not all of these cases, the team motivation comes from within. We can define these situations as team success at its best. This is no news flash to any of us. We teach teamwork every year in the classroom, through SAE, and officer training. But do we achieve it ourselves? In many cases we do not. How is it that we teach a subject but do not “practice what we preach?” I am sure there are students somewhere that are thinking the same thing. Hopefully this will serve as a refresher in departmental cooperation and therefore provide increased potential for student success in areas where road blocks have been constructed.

Perhaps the most basic and pivotal part of group success is desire. In order to achieve the goals of the group efficiently and effectively, all of the parts have to want to participate. It is all too common to work with people who are the last to walk in the door and the first to walk out. It is no secret to any of us that in this profession, in order for us to perform our job correctly, we have to go above and beyond the call of duty. If the desire to do that is gone [www.monster.com](http://www.monster.com) is always looking for new résumés. There is certainly no shame in moving on; however there is shame in filling a chair while others work to make-up for someone’s lack of performance.

From time to time, inspiration and desire are hard commodities to come by, but when we see past students and their success on the job, in the community, and with their families, we can regain some of that lost motivation. Hopefully we can find inspiration in our co-workers as well. I would like to think that we are all still inspired by those who motivated us to enter this career, our agriculture teachers and FFA Advisors. If these things do not get you fired up to do the best that you can, look to some of your current students. They are just itching to learn and participate. They need but one teacher to open the doors for them.

As desire and motivation take hold, we are excited to take on new responsibilities

within the group. This willingness to embrace responsibility is pivotal to the success of a team; however, creating a monopoly on responsibility is no more useful than taking on no responsibility at all. As a member of a group we must allow for equal responsibility and input on all sides of the spectrum and make decisions based upon the consensus of the group, no matter how much responsibility has been placed in our hands for a given situation.

With this in mind, in the long term group setting which we are involved, it is important that we have a little slice of the pie to manage ourselves. Those of you in single teacher departments know what I am talking about. Psychology teaches us that when someone feels powerless, they will take action to satisfy their need to have control over something. In many cases this is where the seeds of displeasure begin to germinate. From time to time responsibilities can create a blizzard on what is already a train wreck of a day. It is times like this that we as group members need to be able to pick up the slack for our co-workers. We all have days in which we need someone to take over after some unforeseen event(s); deadlines, commitments, calendar conflicts, family emergencies, etc. All throw a “monkey wrench” into planned events and activities. If we cannot rely on our co-workers, and they cannot rely on us to fill the void, our department is or is going to become ineffective. Sometimes we all have to be willing to bail the water to keep the boat afloat.

Any time that a group of people have to work together to make decisions and in some cases compromise there will be conflict...there will be conflict...there will be conflict. Is the record skipping? Conflict is a part of everyday life. It is how we deal with this conflict that separates effective groups from ineffective groups. How do we deal with differences effectively? Before that question is answered, let us look at the ways in which problems are NOT solved, but are usually tried regardless.

- Complain about the problem with a third party member(s)
- Ignore the problem altogether and hope that magically it will disappear
- Try everything within your power to make the life of your nemesis a nightmare

- Hibernate in your space, vowing no communication with other group members
- Have them sent to the principles office (i.e. delegate someone else to deal with the problem)
- Second guess/contradict what your co-worker has said or done in a public setting
- Yelling uncontrollably back and forth waiting to see who walks out and slams the door first
- Although not a direct link to the conflict you choose sides over who you think is right

It is typical to see these actions carried out, but any and all of them are only going to make the situation worse and eventually cause the relationship(s) of group members to erode away into oblivion. The only effective way to deal with conflict is to address the problem within the group.

We must talk about the root of the problem with those that are responsible for the situation’s creation (remember that from time to time that each of us is the individual responsible for the problem). This is where we have to be willing to handle a little (or maybe even a lot) of constructive criticism. I have only known everything once in my life; that was when I was 17. Since then I have learned a lot about what I already knew. I am sure many of you can relate. We can all stand to be better people, better educators, and better role models, even if we do not like to hear about it. If we close our mouths and open our ears, we would be amazed with what we find out about ourselves, good and bad.

It is also excessively important to relay criticism of co-workers the same way in which we relay criticism to students and parents. Talk about some good qualities along with the bad ones; criticism is not constructive if it breaks the will of a person. Be as gentle as possible, while still getting the point across. No matter how much time we spend on the subject in class, or elsewhere, we show students more about teamwork through our daily life than any other time. The most important thing that we do as teachers is to set an example for students to follow. How do we develop that example of teamwork? Many of us don’t even work

*(Continued on page 5)*

# *Agricultural and Environmental Education Alumni Profiles*

## **James Beatty, 2005 WVAAE Outstanding Young Teacher**

Agriculture Education at Elkins High School has become a very important part of over 90 students' lives every year. A good teacher, in my opinion, is the result of having great students to educate on a daily basis. My philosophy is very simple; all students that come into my classroom are given an equal chance to learn the skills and competencies necessary to be successful in the field of agriculture. All students will be challenged to perform at high standards while applying mathematical and analytical skills they have been introduced to in other academic areas.

The agriculture education department at Elkins High School has several facets that allow students to learn in a variety of atmospheres. Each student entering the program is encouraged to follow one of three career cluster pathways before graduating. All three clusters begin with Agriculture and Natural Resources 1 and Agriculture and Natural Resources 2. After receiving instruction in the introductory areas of agriculture they will continue on the path of selecting a career they wish to pursue. Option one is to continue the general agricultural curriculum and take Agriscience 11 and Agriscience 12. This will prepare them to pursue a postsecondary education in agriculture.

Option two is to specialize in animal and veterinary science. This would consist of taking small animal veterinary science and large animal veterinary science. These courses prepare them to enter a 2 or 4 year institution with a major in pre-veterinary medicine or animal sciences. Option three is the most popular among students at Elkins High School. This is the forestry curriculum. Students are encouraged to enroll in Forestry 1, followed by Forestry 2, to prepare to enter in any collegiate program in the Forestry and Natural Resources areas.

I have written several grants, and solicited several donations from the community in order to provide the best opportunities for my students. Approximately \$100,000 has been invested into the local program over the past 3 years. Through grants the program has added a 30' x 60' greenhouse which is utilized to raise plants that are native to the state of West Virginia. These plants will be raised by students in the For-

estry 1 class during the spring semester. Approximately seven thousand plants will be produced and sold to benefit the continuation of the greenhouse and fund FFA activities for the members of our local chapter. This curriculum develops students' skills in experiential learning as well as developing an appreciation for plants that are native to the state of West Virginia.

In 2001 when I took over the Elkins High FFA Organization, there were approximately 30 paid members that had the opportunity to participate in activities at the chapter level. In 3 years the membership has grown to 56 members with at least two-thirds of the members participating in at least one activity above the chapter level in a school year. The average attendance at our bi-monthly meetings is 40 members.

The first partnership the Elkins High School agriculture education program made under my direction was with our local Wal-Mart store. By applying for a \$1,000 fundraising matching grant, the manager of the store, a former FFA member in Georgia, professed that he wanted to become involved in our program any way that he could. This led to many monetary donations that add up to approximately \$5,000 over the past 3 years. Wal-Mart has donated numerous pallets of mulch to our chapter in order to beautify the school landscape. Wal-Mart is one of our major supporters that help the program to continue developing our local agriculture program.

Carol Cain, Randolph County School Board President, has been an avid supporter of the program during the past 4 years. Carol has helped in locating funds to build our greenhouse as well as paying for the startup costs this past year. Carol faithfully attends all chapter banquets and is available to help students at any time. She is a member of the local chapter's advisory committee and received the honorary state FFA degree in 2005 for her continued support of our chapter as well as the Tygart's Valley, and Harman FFA chapters.

As far as professional development, as a part-time student I completed my Master of Science Degree in Agriculture and Environmental Education in 3 years. My

thesis researched the characteristics of West Virginia Agriculture Educators. I have participated in many state level workshops and conferences. I had the opportunity this summer



to attend my first national conference, the Delta Conference for LifeKnowledge Integration in Colorado Springs. This conference was well worth the time and trip to Colorado. I gained more professionally from this conference than any other I have attended. I strongly encourage everyone try to attend this conference in the future so that you can learn the proper methods of LifeKnowledge integration as well as reaffirming why you are teaching agriculture.

Participation in the National Association of Agriculture Educators has been constant throughout my brief teaching career. I attend faithfully and participate in all state meetings. I feel that I have gained immensely from participation in the WVAAE as well. I have traveled to Indianapolis for the National Agriculture Education Inservice and this fall I will travel to New Orleans to participate in the Teacher's Turn the Key program for young teachers at the NAAE national convention.

I recently learned that I have been selected as Region 6 winner in the Outstanding Young Agriculture Teacher category. I will receive recognition in December in New Orleans for this accomplishment. My ultimate goal is not to win awards to put on the wall, but to represent my chapter, my school, my community, and my state to the best of my abilities.

*James completed B.S (2001) and M.S. (2004) degrees in Agricultural Education from West Virginia University and is currently teaching agricultural education at Elkins High School.*

# *The Joys and Discomforts of the First Year Agricultural Teacher*

by Matthew Knopp

My first day as an agriculture teacher is just a vague memory now. I know that coming out of college I believed that I was going to take the agriculture teaching profession by storm, but I soon found out that there would be more than just a few obstacles along the way. Some I can say I expected while others were quite surprising and difficult to overcome.

I guess I can actually divide my first year's highs and lows into several categories; the first involving demographics. Coming out of the small community of Frozencamp, West Virginia I can honestly say that Parkersburg was one of the largest adjustments I have had to make in my life. Since early childhood I have been accustomed to plowed fields and cattle grazing on the rolling hills of Jackson County, but now it was a little different. The two lane roads were gone and the one way streets were like mazes. This change has definitely allowed me to have some fun adventures.

Secondly, I would like to make reference to the community around Wood County itself. I have been fortunate to meet some really great people that make this job worthwhile. They are always willing to help and really make me feel comfortable in this county. I have also had some members that have really made me grow up quickly. I guess they were expecting a 35-year veteran and not a first year rookie, but I can honestly say that they have only strengthened my phi-

losophies and ideals that I have taken from so many wonderful mentors.

Third, I would like to discuss the relationship between my students and myself. What a change it has been for everyone. I have lost count of the many highs and lows I have been through with this crew. The transition has been satisfying of course with a few headaches along the way. It is so hard to replace such a respected and beloved man as Mr. Shaver is in the community. They have definitely responded as well as I could have expected. They have accomplished new things and reached new heights and this progression has really given me the understanding why I love this profession so much. They have done well as a group this year. An example is a ninth place finish as a chapter at the Career Development Events. I have been moved and motivated in this profession for a different reason. The students are trying new things such as public speaking, the American FFA Degree, and taking on new leadership responsibilities. To me this is what it's all about. I want students to try something new, overcome a fear, and develop themselves as future leaders within their communities. When I first met with my officer team this year we set out to develop a mission statement that would represent them for the entire year. In return they developed *One Way with the FFA*. The one way is success and I can honestly say that they are on that one way street today. From time to time they have had to give me direc-

tions for these little one way streets in Parkersburg.

Finally, I would like to thank several individuals for their help during my learning year.

Robert Herrod has been a great colleague and friend who has helped me anyway he could and together I believe we have learned from several mistakes this year. I would also like to thank Mr. Shaver for his words of wisdom and the countless hours he has devoted to helping me get settled. Leon Ammons and Jason Hughes have also given me hope for the profession by helping me with the ham and bacon project and just letting me know that there are veteran teachers out there willing to work with you. Last, but not least, I would like to thank the Ripley teaching staff for what they have instilled in me. They definitely lit a fire under me a long time ago and I still cherish my times at Ripley. Their dedication to the profession is something that I hope to use for years to come as I proceed down my pathway in agriculture education.

*Matt completed a B.S degree (2004) in Agricultural Education from West Virginia University and is currently teaching agricultural education at the Wood County Technical Center.*



## *Successful Agriculture Education* (continued)

in multiple teacher departments. You may be saying to yourself that students do not have the opportunity to see me work in a group setting. However, the fact of the matter is that we are members of a school team, an agriculture teacher's team, a family, etc. Students see how we act, not just towards people that work in the department on a daily basis, but also how you work with teachers in the school building, administrators, and parents alike.

It is absurd to think and believe that students are going to act the way that we tell them is proper and expect them not follow the bad example that we may project. The

saying, "do as I say, not as I do," does not work, especially for adolescents.

Surveys of the largest employers in United States consistently find that one of the primary factors that determine a potential employee's employability is their ability to work effectively in a group setting. With this in mind, how can we allow ourselves to present the wrong example to our students? Commonly we are in denial of our departmental problems and think, incorrectly, that students do not know the conflicts that exist. But the reality is that they do. They know all too well and many times have already chosen sides.

It is the intention of all of us to provide our student with the most opportunity to learn and succeed. It is through cooperation with each other that we are able to present the most effective environment in which these things can happen. If you have problems with individuals that you work with, it is time to begin working towards a renewal. Allow the agriculture department and the students in it to realize their full potential through cooperative agriculture education.

*Jeremy completed a B.S degree (2002) in Agricultural Education from West Virginia University and is currently teaching agricultural education at Jefferson High School.*

# ***Research in Action: Price-Protection Options for Beef Cattle Producers***

by Kleski, M. C., Boone, H. N., McConnell, T. C., Gartin, S. A., & Boone, D. A.

*Problem Statement* Price risks of live-stock products have always been a major challenge for producers nationwide. In many agricultural commodities, such as row crops, small grains and tree fruits, price and yield protection crop insurance products have been developed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in order to provide market and yield stability in times of hardship. The government seeks to insure the income of farmers against the occasional crop failure and price decrease. In most cases farmers are able to purchase insurance policies that will provide payment to them should their production fail or reach expected market prices. Livestock has been left out of risk management and price protection programs. In recent years, several new insurance products have been introduced for the crop sector and the forward progression of these particular options has helped to establish a need and necessity to address the needs of livestock producers.

*Purpose of the Study* The purpose of this study was to analyze price data for yearling beef cattle sold in a selected state between 1988 and 2003 to determine if a price protection option in yearling cattle production was feasible and obtainable. An ex post facto research design was used. Case studies were utilized to compare individual producer prices versus statewide prices.

*Methodology* The population for the case studies was four purposefully selected farmer/ producers. Farmers were selected from across the state based on the following criteria: (1) Must sell at least one graded lot of cattle within a year's time; (2) Must have price data for at least seven consecutive years; (3) Must be willing to share pricing information and sales receipts with the researcher; (4) Individual calf weights must be 600 pounds or greater; and (5) Lot weights must be 9,000 pounds or greater.

The study traced price trends throughout the state as well as the individual producer prices to test the potential benefits of a price protection program. The case studies examined product prices and compared the producer prices received and the average corresponding state price to identify years that a price protection option would have assisted the producer. Within the study six data sets were collected and analyzed.

The first data set served as the base set and consisted of yearling cattle pricing data from all livestock auctions in the state. Sale prices and receipts were recorded from 1988-2003. This allowed for in-depth analysis of market cattle prices during that time period and ultimately provided the base set of prices to compare the case study groups. The second data set was a light weight cattle data set compiled using the same market auctions across the state. This allowed for studying the entry cost prices for the cattle market. The four remaining data sets were records and sales of the four producers used in the case studies.

In the base study group information was collected on the following variables; sale date, location, breed/color of cattle, sex of cattle, number of head in the lot, total lot weight, average head weight, price per pound and overall price for the lot. In addition, records were limited to cattle lot weights of 9,000 pounds or greater with average weight greater than 600 pounds. This allowed for price adjustments on each of the given variables. It was expected that prices would vary depending on weight, color and sex of the cattle sold. In the state data set, calculations have been done to determine the standard deviation of the sale cattle in regards to weight groups, sex and year. Further analyses were done to determine the means of the group. With regards to the case study groups, the same information was collected including sale date, location, breed/color of cattle, sex of cattle, number of head in the lot, total lot weight, average head weight, price per pound and overall price for the lot. Means and standard deviations were calculated to analyze the differences among the group of cattle, between the case study group and ultimately the difference between each member of the case study group and the base data set.

The data collection procedures allowed for a base group to be used as the overall prices for the state. The case study method allowed for analysis on each member of the case study group to determine if they were at the average, above the average, or below the state average for prices received. This helped to determine if each member of the case study would have benefited from a price protection option for

their cattle. By comparing the data collected from each producer in the case study, issues such as location challenge and environmental factors also came to the forefront. Ultimately, this helped to identify locations and producers that may benefit the most from a price protection option.

*Findings* When the data set was initially analyzed, statistics were calculated for each data set. The data included the statewide yearling data set, which consisted of yearling cattle prices from sale markets across the state; the light weight cattle data set, which allowed for studying the entry cost prices for the cattle market; and four data sets from the records and sales of the four producers used as case studies. The total number of lots of cattle included in the six data sets was 3,759. The total data set included 131,825 head of cattle. It was found that the majority of yearling cattle in the state were sold in the months of August, September and October. Sales during those three months accounted for 72.9% of the total cattle sales and accounted for lots of 1,174; 939; and 626, respectively. The next closest month was April with a total of 587 lots or 15.6% of the sales. April sales were primarily made up of the lighter weight cattle which represented the most probable time that 400 and 500 pound weight cattle entered the market.

Breeds were identified by the sale markets in all cases except black cattle. All black and black white face (BWF) cattle were categorized based on color because there was no way to identify individual breeds within the black color groups. The majority of cattle sold in the state were medium (M) grade cattle. The M grade accounted for 2,780 lots (74.0%) of the total sales. Black cattle dominated the market place with 1,904 lots (50.7%) of the total sales. The next closest breed group was black white face (BWF) cattle with 850 sale lots (22.6%). Weight classes for the study were established based on one hundred pound increments and ranged from 400 through 1200 pounds weight classes. The most prominent weight class sold in the state was found to be 700 pound weight cattle with a total of 1,310 lots (34.8%) sold. The next closest group was the 600 pound weight cattle with 1,094 lots

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## ***Research in Action: Price-Protection Options for Beef Cattle Producers (continued)***

sold (29.1%). This analysis determined that most farmers were trying to sell yearling cattle in the 600-799 pound weight range.

Four beef cattle producers were selected and the researcher analyzed their personal cattle sales and compared the results with the state cattle prices. This comparison provided evidence related to how individual cattle producers compared with the state-wide cattle prices and how they managed their risks to ensure profitability. The case studies examined product prices and compared the producer prices received and the average corresponding state price to identify years that a price protection option would have assisted the producer. All four operations were on the state's Gold Quality Assurance Program which requires for all cattle to be vaccinated and weaned 40 days before sale or in the case of this operation 40 days before they were put into production.

*Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations* The case studies investigated sales and market prices endured by the producers. A price protection option would have assisted the producers in the case studies. The following highlights support this conclusion. Based on the case study data, the more diverse the operation and the more the producer had to buy cattle, the more risk was evident. This statement was based on the fact that producers have more entry barriers, such as higher prices and buying options to the market including they must purchase the cattle, provide initial turn out costs, transport the animals, and cover the cost of putting the gain on the animals. In a production operation where the calves were bred, raised and sold on the local farm, pro-

ducers have fewer risks because the factor of buying cattle at the current market price to start the feeding cycle is eliminated.

Operations that were less diverse were more likely to manage the risks and less likely to benefit from a revenue insurance program. The case studies used in this study were very different in their make-up and allowed the researcher to study different facets of the market. Based upon the data, it was found that Case Study 3 would have been least likely to benefit from an insurance option. This could be partially due to the fact that the operation raised their own cattle and all of the cattle were black M grade. This allowed the operator to manage the risk and insure years of profitability.

Using the case study data, there were years where individual producer prices were below state averages. This phenomenon could be explained by numerous factors such as weather, type of cattle, or lack of animal gain. Revenue insurance doesn't care what caused the loss. The insurance will assist the producer to maintain profit or breakeven revenues for his/her operation. The decision to use price protection options and the situations when price protection options will be beneficial must be made on a case-by-case basis at the producer level. While three of the four case studies had years when they could have benefited from a protection option, it does not mean that all operations of that type would benefit from the protection option. The procedures used in this study will serve as a guide to help producers understand how to look at personal records and

compare them to state level data to assess if they could benefit from revenue insurance. Revenue insurance programs were based on personal Schedule F forms. It is essential that producers complete a personal price analysis of their operation and not base their decision on another farmer's findings.

In conclusion several recommendations can be made. The first recommendation is that more research be conducted in this field. While this study attempted to identify if a price protection option could be useful in the state, more research should be done on the benefits of revenue protection to individual producers. Secondly, this study examined cattle sold in 9,000 pounds or greater lots. A study should be done to assess smaller producers that may not be selling cattle in lots of this magnitude and determine if the smaller producers are witnessing the same market risks.

This study looked at a pricing history and identified that there were definitely years when a pricing option would have benefited producers, however, this study did not look at the years that the pricing option would not have assisted. Research needs to be conducted to analyze the cost of revenue insurances and how they would benefit the producer in the long run. It is essential to maximize your market prices in years when the prices are low, but it needs to be determined if in years of profit the cost of the revenue insurance would be feasible.

*Matthew Kleski earned a Master of Science (2004) degree in agricultural education from West Virginia University. He is currently employed as a Price Support Specialist with the Ohio farm Service Agency.*

## ***Personal Note from the Editor***

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their thoughts, notes, and prayers during my recent surgery and recovery period. I have a genetic heart condition called hypertrophic obstructive cardiomyopathy. In other words the septum separating the ventricles had enlarged to the point that blood flow to the aorta was being

obstructive. The condition had progressed to the point that I felt faint and was short of breath when I walked across a parking lot. On May 19, I had septal myectomy surgery at the Cleveland Clinic where the surgeons removed a slice of muscle from the ventricular wall approximately one centimeter thick. For the most part the surgery

was textbook perfect. I was released five days after the surgery and spent the summer recovering and building my strength. I feel great and currently walk approximately two miles each day, however, I still have restrictions on the amount I can lift.

## ***Congratulations***

West Virginia was well represented in the National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE) competition. **James Beatty** was selected as the NAAE Region 6 Outstanding Young Member. Region 6 is

comprised of thirteen states in the northeast. **Jason Hughes** was named the Region 6 Outstanding Teacher. **James Beatty and Kevin Oakes** were selected to represent West Virginia in NAAE's "Turn

the Key" competition. All three individuals will receive a scholarship to attend the national conference in New Orleans to receive their awards. Congratulations to all three individuals.

**Important Dates**

Sep 10	WVU vs Wofford	Morgantown
Sep 28-30	WV State CDE Events	Morgantown
Sep 24	WVU vs East Carolina	Morgantown
Oct 1	WVU vs Virginia Tech	Morgantown
Oct 15	WVU vs Louisville	Morgantown
Oct 26-29	National FFA Convention	Louisville, KY
Nov 2	WVU vs Connecticut	Morgantown
Nov 10	WVAE Program and Policy Meeting	Morgantown
Nov 24	WVU vs Pitt	Morgantown

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