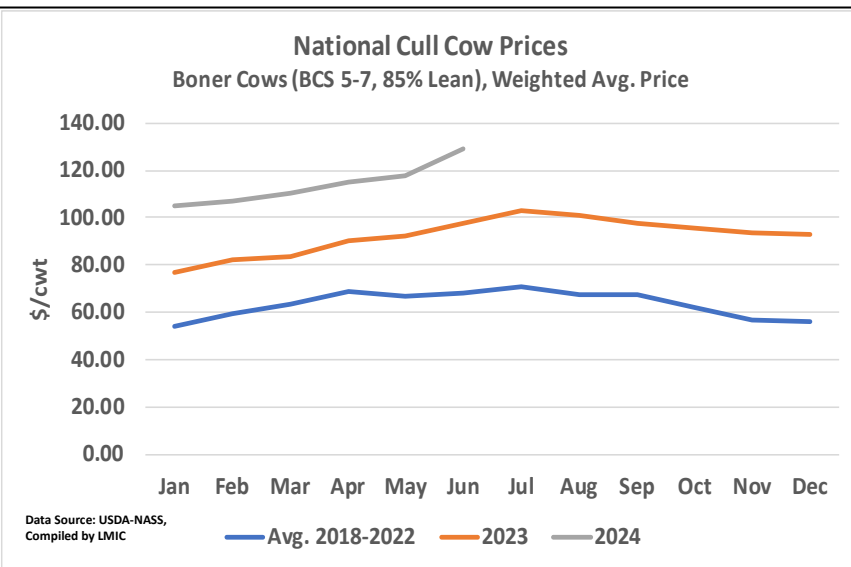
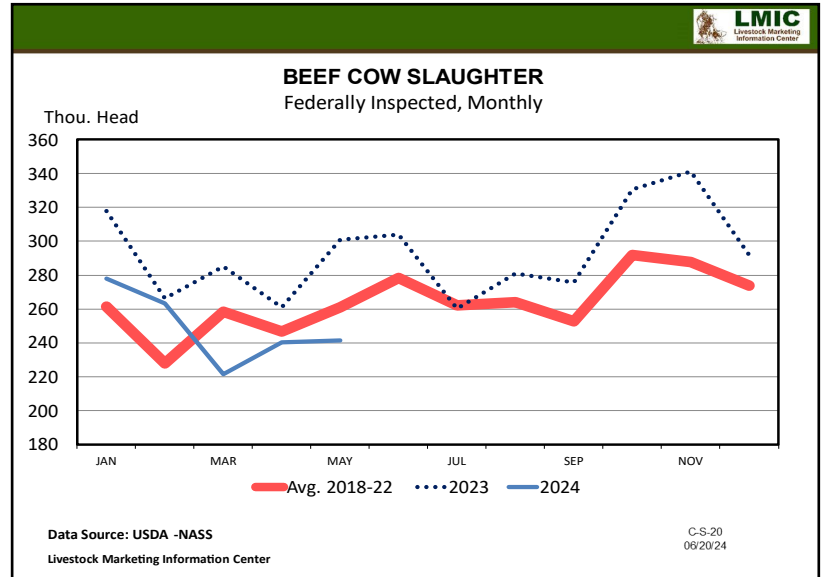




The Cull Cow Market

Prices for feeder cattle have well exceeded year ago levels, and that has been a hot topic over the last year. But what about the cull cow market? Steer and heifer prices are important to follow, but cull cows also play an important role in both the cattle market and beef market. Cull cows are crucial to the ground beef industry as their carcasses provide ‘90s’ (lean trimmings) that are combined with ‘50s’ (fat trimmings from fed cattle) to essentially make ‘80/20 ground beef’. With tight cattle supplies, there are fewer cull cows being sent to slaughter which in turn affects beef production. Throughout the first half of the year, beef carcasses from fed cattle have been heavier due to feedlots increasing the number of days cattle are on feed. This has helped to offset the decline in cull cow slaughter, making the 2024 beef production forecast higher than expected. However, beef production is still expected to decline by 6% in 2025 due to limited supplies. Beef cow slaughter in May was down 20% year-over-year. Total beef cow slaughter over the first half of 2024 has declined by 21% compared to 2022 and by 12% compared to 2023.



Due to the decline in the number of beef cows being culled, prices for cull cows (85% lean) have increased on average by almost 25% since the beginning of the year, by 32% since June of 2023, and by 90% since June 2022. Following the same upward trend are prices for replacement cattle. Prices for young, bred cattle have increased by roughly 20% since June 2023 and are continuing to steadily increase. The takeaway here is that while cull cow prices are reaching high levels, there may be an opportunity to increase a cull cow’s value by selling her as a bred cow or even as an open replacement if she is in good body condition. The value of female cattle is

rising as the thought of expanding cow herds begins spreading across operations throughout the country. So, whether selling open cows as slaughter cows or as replacements, it is important to analyze cull cow management strategies in order to capitalize on the current market.

Questions, contact Hannah at h.baker@ufl.edu

See this update and other helpful resources online at <https://rrec-ona.ifas.ufl.edu/about/directory/staff/hannah-baker/>

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