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UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
EXTENSION

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Strong Pasture and Range Conditions in 2025 So Far

Pasture and rangeland in the U.S. are in good shape for much of the country this year. Some areas in the West are struggling, but the Plains, Corn Belt, and Southeast appear to be doing well. A little over 30% of range and pastureland conditions were rated as poor to very poor. This is the lowest for this time of year since 2019.

Traditionally, conditions improve at the beginning of the summer and deteriorate at the end of the summer. 2025 was similar to the five-year average in May, with poor to very poor conditions accounting for around 30-35% of ratings. These ratings dropped below 2024 and the five-year average in mid-summer and have been below these benchmarks

ever since. The low was placed in early August, with 26% of pasture and rangeland conditions being rated as poor or very poor.

Regionally, the western states (including the West Coast, Great Basin states, Arizona, and New Mexico) continue to struggle with poor conditions. In August, over 50% of pasture and range conditions were rated as poor to very poor. This is the worst for this time of year since 2021. This is also well above the five-year average of around 40%.

States in the Plains and Corn belt have reported improving or good pasture and range conditions for much of the summer. The Great Plains states (including Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, the Dakotas, Nebraska, and Kansas) saw significant improvement since May. Over one-third of the range and pasture in this region were rated as very poor or poor at the beginning of May. This was nearly 20 percentage points worse than last year. By the end of August, however, this dropped to just 25% and below last year's rating for this time of year.

Conditions in the Corn Belt, Southern Plains, and Southeast largely started well and have continued to be strong or followed year-ago ratings. In particular, the Southern Plains have seen very little poor conditions on pasture and range lands. Around 20% of the Southern Plains' pasture and range lands are rated as poor or very poor. This is far below last year's rating and the five-year average rating which were above 40%.

So far, these conditions generally support cow-calf producers' ability to grow herds. Good forage availability is necessary for expansion, but it is not sufficient. The right market incentives and time are also needed to see expansion. Additionally, there are still a couple of months left before winter sets in which will also impact producer decisions.

The Markets

Markets remain full steam ahead for most areas of the country. Feeder steer prices were variable week over week and remain at levels that are well above last year and historical norms. In many markets, these prices are also moving higher in contrast with normal seasonal patterns. Five-area fed steer prices remained roughly even compared to the previous week. In general, cattle prices continue to be supported by relatively cheap feed and strong cutout values.

		Week of 8/29/25	Week of 8/22/25	Week of 8/30/24
5-Area Fed Steer	all grades, live weight, \$/cwt	\$243.60	\$244.25	\$183.81
	all grades, dressed weight, \$/cwt	\$385.65	\$386.17	\$290.29
Boxed Beef	Choice Value, 600-900 lb., \$/cwt	\$412.66	\$406.61	\$310.63
	Choice-Select Spread, \$/cwt	\$24.73	\$25.15	\$12.62
700-800 lb. Feeder Steer	Montana 3-market, \$/cwt	\$370.00	\$382.07	\$249.97
	Nebraska 7-market, \$/cwt	\$395.46	\$385.24	\$259.33
	Oklahoma 8-market, \$/cwt	\$378.08	\$368.21	\$248.51
500-600 lb. Feeder Steer	Montana 3-market, \$/cwt	--	--	--
	Nebraska 7-market, \$/cwt	\$473.96	\$473.38	\$340.03
	Oklahoma 8-market, \$/cwt	\$440.53	\$441.38	\$289.61
Feed Grains	Corn, Omaha, NE, \$/bu (Thursday)	\$3.84	\$3.87	\$3.94
	DDGS, Nebraska, \$/ton	\$138.88	\$137.25	\$147.57

Data Source: USDA-AMS Market News as compiled by LMIC

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