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Meet the Staff

Center for Agricultural and Rural Development

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materialize, consequently the bearish report indicates highs for the year may have been established. Third quarter prices should average between $30 and $35 per hundredweight and fourth quarter prices in the upper $20 range per hundredweight.

Although slaughter numbers through May were 2 percent greater than last year, pork production has increased 3 percent because of higher slaughter weights, in part due to the low cost of feed ingredients. A moderate growth in demand and the recent gains in the export market have not been enough to offset the larger production, which has resulted in noticeable increases in cold storage stocks. This could further depress prices in the fourth quarter when slaughter numbers are expected to again top the 2 million head per week level (see article on pp.0-10).

For the last week in June, Texas-Oklahoma Slaughter Steers were trading in the mid-$60 per hundredweight range. The mid-month price received by Iowa producers for steers and heifers was $65.90 per hundredweight. The latest cattle-on-feed report suggests placements had slowed compared to placements during the first quarter. First quarter placements were more than 20 percent above 1998 levels and slowed to less than 1 percent above in May.

Packer demand in May was strong, and it appears that feeders continued to market cattle aggressively through May. Dressed weights have declined as feeders moved showlist up in order to take advantage of the packer demand. Cattle feeders have been in the black since February and want to take advantage while they can in the face of large slaughter-ready cattle coming to market later this summer. Feed costs will continue to be low, but hopefully they will not be a signal to hold cattle back this summer. After the summer run, feeder and fed markets are expected to show some strength.

Meet the Staff

Being on the cutting edge of agricultural public policy is one of things that Assistant Director Keith Heffernan enjoys most about his association with the Center for Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD).

“In general, there are a lot of changes and repositioning taking place in agriculture, which can be threatening to the industry. CARD has to keep ahead of the trends, and our work has to be relevant to current and future agriculture,” Keith said.

The Midwest Feeds Consortium is one example of this forward-thinking approach. Keith worked with researchers at CARD and other entities to look at the feasibility of using soybean oil meal in fish rations. This research identified a new opportunity for U.S. soybean growers and processors. (For more information about the consortium’s findings, please see the Spring 1999 issue of Iowa Ag Review, vol. 5, no. 2., available online at http://www.card.iastate.edu)

Keith is also working with AgSTATE (Agricultural Strategic Thinkers Acting Together Effectively) to develop a strategic plan for Iowa agriculture. He and Department of Economics Chair John Miranowski facilitate the group, which is composed of people representing farm and commodity organizations, agribusinesses, state government, and ISU. CARD’s role is to help identify resources for the group and to help AgSTATE to develop its vision for agriculture, Keith said.

A graduate of ISU, Keith has worked at CARD for almost 5 years. Prior to coming to CARD, he was the director of public affairs for the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation, worked on former governor Terry Branstad’s staff, and served as the executive director for the Iowa Corn Growers Association.

“My entire career has involved the development and implementation of agricultural policy, and before coming to CARD, most of the work I did was on the implementation side. At CARD, I have the opportunity to work more on the development side, and here we are able to do the necessary research to determine the best solution for the problems and challenges facing agriculture,” he said.

In addition to his responsibilities at CARD, Keith serves on the Terrace Hill Commission, the Farm Foundation Roundtable, and as board president of the FarmHouse Alumni Association. He is married to wife Alexa, and they have two children, Andy, an ISU graduate who lives and works in the Seattle, Wash., area, and Kim, a sophomore at the University of Northern Iowa.