



## Beef Across the United States – Lets learn about Nebraska

### The Nebraska Beef Cattle Industry

It's the state's single largest industry and the engine that powers the state's economy. The multiplied impact of the \$6.2 billion in cattle sales each year is \$12.1 billion. Cattle-related employment means income for businesses up and down main street in towns and cities across the state. In short, the beef cattle industry has an unmistakable impact on other economies in Nebraska.

### Nebraska is Unique

The importance of cattle feeding to Nebraska's economy runs deeper than in other states. Nearly 5 million head are finished and marketed in Nebraska, a state with a population of 1.8 million residents. Texas markets a third more cattle than Nebraska, but it has a population of 20.1 million residents is nearly 12 times larger. Iowa markets less than 2 million cattle and has 1.1 million more residents than Nebraska. This means such states depend on other industries. Their standard of living isn't nearly as dependent on cattle feeding as Nebraska's.

### Four Times as many Cattle as People

January 2006 figures illustrate that Nebraska continues to have far more cattle than people. Cattle outnumber Nebraskans nearly 4 to 1. Cows number 1.88 million, versus Nebraska residents who number just 1.8 million. The cows and the 5.1 million head that are annually fed in Nebraska total nearly 6.64 million cattle. On average there are 2.3 millions head of cattle on feed.

### Why so much Beef in Nebraska?

Nebraska has a unique mix of natural resources. Cattle turn grass from 24 million acres of rangeland and pasture, more than one half of Nebraska's land mass, into protein and many other products for humans. The land grazed by cattle allows more people to be fed than would otherwise be possible. More than one billion bushels of corn are produced here each year, 40% of which is fed to livestock in the state. Cattle producing families, who make their living from the land, have a strong incentive to protect their animals and the environment.

Nebraska is known as the **Beef State**, in part, because it produces one of every five steaks and hamburgers in the U.S. Nebraska has the top three beef cow counties in the U.S., including Cherry County, with nearly 166,00 cows. Just as Washington is known for apples and Florida for oranges, Nebraska produces beef.

### Nebraska Beef Facts

- \$12 billion impact to Nebraska's economy
- 20,000 beef cow operations
- 1.88 million head of beef cows
- Average herd size is 94 head
- 4,570 cattle feeding operations statewide
- 5.1 million cattle fed and marketed per year
- On average, there are 2.3 million head of cattle on feed
- Only 770 feeding operations are larger than 1,000 head

### Where Nebraska Beef ranks nationally?

- 2<sup>nd</sup> – Hides exported total \$377 million
- 2<sup>nd</sup> – Live animal and meal exports total \$666 million
- 2<sup>nd</sup> – Cash receipts from cattle and calves, \$6.6 million
- 2<sup>nd</sup> – Number of cattle on feed with 2.7 million head. This represents 18.9 percent of the nation's beef supply.
- 4<sup>th</sup> – Beef cows, 1.88 million head, or 5.8 percent of the U.S. herd.

### Nebraska Ag Facts

- Nebraska's five leading commodities for cash receipts are cattle and calves, corn, soybeans, hogs and wheat.
- Twenty-one percent of all Nebraskans are employed in farm or farm-related jobs.
- Every dollar in ag exports generates \$1.54 in economic activities such as transportation, financing, warehousing and production. Nebraska's \$3.0 billion in ag exports in 2004 translated into nearly \$4.7 billion in additional economic activity.
- Nebraska has 48,000 farms and ranches; the average operation consists of 952 acres (385.26 hectares); average net income per farm was \$41,977 during the 2000-2004 period.
- In 2005, there were 11 operating ethanol plants that produced over half a billion gallons (18.9 hL) of ethanol, which was 5% more than 2004 production. Over 15% of Nebraska's corn crop goes into the production of ethanol.
- The Nebraska livestock industry accounts for approximately 62% of the state's total agricultural receipts each year. Nearly 55% of Nebraska farms have livestock or poultry operations.
- One American farmer/rancher produces enough food for 129 people – 95 in the United States and 34 abroad.
- Of every dollar spent on food in 2002, the farm value was 19 cents; 38 cents goes to labor used by manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers. The remaining 43 cents paid for marketing costs such as packaging, transportation and advertising.

### Nebraska's Natural Resources

- Nebraska's farms and ranches utilize 45.7 million acres (18,494,536 hectares) – 93% of the state's total land area.
- Nebraska is fortunate to have aquifers below it. If poured over the surface of the state, the water in those aquifers would have a depth of 37.9 feet (11.55 meters). During 2002,

Nebraska producers irrigated 7.6 million acres of land. Of the total cropland harvested, 43% was irrigated.

- Nearly 24,000 miles (38,616 kilometers) of rivers and streams add to Nebraska's bountiful natural resources.
- There are nearly 22 million acres (8,903,119 hectares) of rangeland and pastureland in Nebraska – half of which are in the Sandhills.

Sources: 2007 Nebraska Cattlemen, Nebraska Agricultural Statistics, National Cattlemen's Beef Association, United States Department of Agriculture-Census of Agriculture