

Soybean Prices Rush With 'Mad Cow' Regulation

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Europe's regulatory reaction to control "mad cow" disease could benefit Ohio and Indiana soybean growers who have been enduring low grain prices, said agricultural economist Allan Lines, Ohio State University.

In recent weeks, France, Italy, Greece — with Germany expected soon to follow — have banned meat and bone meal ingredients in all livestock feeds as a precaution against the spread of "mad cow" disease through herds. For soybean exporters, that's an opportunity to sell more product as European farmers seek out plant-based sources of protein for livestock feeds, Lines said.

Soybean markets have reacted to the regulatory news with two strong upticks since mid-November, raising cash prices by 25 cents per bushel to \$4.80 per bushel, Lines said. If sustained, that could beat the estimated average price of \$4.65 per bushel for the 1999-harvested crop. It also gets into the upper level of the \$4.40-\$5 per bushel price range that the USDA projects for the 2000-harvested crop.

For the time being, the price gains have probably topped off, but other increases could result from other countries banning meat and bone ingredients from feeds, Lines said.

There are two caveats to temper any enthusiasm of U.S. producers, however, Lines said. One is European countries' import restrictions on genetically modified (GMO) crop varieties. This could limit trade with the United States where farmers commonly grow these crops in the form of Roundup-Ready soybeans that resist certain herbicide applications.

In comparison, GMO varieties haven't been approved in some countries of South America, which could be a likely source for European imports, Lines said.

The other big "if" is how Europe disposes the meat and bone meal products it has banned, Lines said. Properly processed meat and bone meal can be safely fed to livestock, he said. Although Europe won't use it, other countries needing a cheap protein source may use the cast-off products, which could then dent U.S. soybean

exports to those countries.

In all, Europe ranks second to Asia in terms of agricultural trade with the United States, Lines said. But soybean would rank high on Europe's list of feed sources because of the great

amount produced in the world, particularly by the United States that is expected to have a record soybean harvest of 2.78 billion bushels. Other plant sources of protein are rapeseed and sunflower, which are minor players

in the feed meal markets.

Actual U.S. soybean exports have been running about 17 percent below last year's, while USDA has projected only a 2 percent annual decline.

AHA Recognizes Millers

WOMELSDORF (Berks Co.) — A mother and daughter were each recently recognized by the American Hereford Association (AHA) for producing cows which were named to the national breed registry's Dams of Distinction list.

This is the second consecutive year Sheila Miller received this recognition, and the first time daughter Emilie Miller received the honor.

"I was thrilled last year when I was notified that two of my cows were listed," said Miller. "It was even more exciting to receive the news last month that Emilie's cow has achieved Dam of Distinction honors, along with another Hereford cow from our farm."

"It took me more than twenty years to have a cow listed,"

noted Miller. "Emilie's cattle made the list in less time! She has built and improved her herd of Hereford cattle during her lifetime, and especially during the past seven years when she has been active in 4-H and FFA. Emilie's first Hereford was a heifer calf her dad and I gave her the week after she was born in 1985. The size of her herd has grown right along with her!"

"I'm proud of Emilie's accomplishments, even though it's tough when her cattle beat ours in the show ring," Miller said. "This year, she showed a bred-and-owned steer that was out of her Dam of Distinction cow, Boomer, as her 4-H project and won top honors in the county. Her steer, K-Ci, a STAR Chairman son, was reserve grand champion at Reading Fair,

heavyweight at Kutztown Fair, and reserve heavyweight at roundup. She had a great year in the show ring, but I still have her beat when it comes to Dams of Distinction females, at least until next year!"

Miller, along with husband Michael, has been raising purebred Hereford cattle in Berks County since 1980. They own and operate Deutschland Farm in Tulpehocken Township, a 150-acre cow/calf operation.

Craig Huffines, AHA's executive secretary, said of the Dams of Distinction females: "These are the most efficient cows in the Hereford breed. They have met the strictest requirements for early calving, reproductive efficiency, calving intervals no greater than one year, and weaning weight ratios in the top end of the breeder's herd."

The Millers join 607 breeders who produced cows that earned the distinction in 2000. There were 1,969 cows named to the prestigious list for this year, according to AHA officials.

Named to the Dams of Distinction list for Miller is 4-year-old DL Prioritize 9614, a daughter of DS Assemblage (WTK 55Y Bond 75A son) out of a FPP First Priority 28U daughter. In 1999, Miller's Dams of Distinction cows were DL Prior Forecast 9406, a daughter of IGT Forecaster 173T out of a FPP First Priority 28U daughter; and DL Miss Tulpehocken 9412, a daughter of Salunga Ascendant 12B.

Emilie's Dam of Distinction is DS Boomer 3F, a 4-year-old daughter of Remital Boomer 46B out of DS Bonita 19D, a Bond daughter. Emilie purchased this Boomer daughter from breeder, Dennis Stockdale, Dayton, as a weanling and exhibited her at the Junior National held in Forth Worth, Texas in 1997 and at the Pennsylvania Farm Show in 1998.

In order to be honored as a Dam of Distinction, each cow has to wean a calf born after Jan. 1, 1999; produce at least three initially calves at 30 months of age or less; and have an interval between the first and second calves no greater than 400 days. In addition, 370-day calving interval must have been maintained after her second calf. The longer initial calving interval allows breeders to calve 2-year-old heifers prior to the mature cow herd, have weaning records submitted to the Hereford Performance Program on every calf produced, and have progeny average 205-day adjusted weaning weight ratio of at least 105.

"These are the cows that meet the highest standards of commercial cattle production," said Huffines. "The cows must do her job, but also her owner must manage the herd correctly to give her the opportunity to excel. Only a small portion of active cows are recognized. All heifers have the potential of being a Dam of Distinction but only a small percentage fit the job description of an ideal cow year in and year out."

Other Pennsylvania breeders with Dams of Distinction females for 2000 include Flat Stone Lick, Marianna; Frazier Polled Hereford Farm, Georgetown; Stanley W. Hunt, Slippery Rock; Lee-Mar Farms, Eau Claire; Twin Ponds Farm, McVeytown; Rolling Shade Polled Herefords, East Greenville; Curt Stockdale, Dayton; and Donald Sunday, Dover.

A complete listing of Hereford cows that were recognized and the breeders who produced them is available from the American Hereford Association on its website at <http://www.hereford.org>.

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