

# Equity News



A PUBLICATION OF EQUITY COOPERATIVE LIVESTOCK SALES ASSOCIATION

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## A Holiday Note from our Board President

When your regional board of directors began the new year, we started with the same commitment to our members that we always do; provide excellent service and keep their continued trust to help them meet their agricultural business needs.



**Adam Quandahl**  
District X Regional  
Board Director

This year has been extraordinary in many ways, and as we approach the end of 2024, I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to each of our members. Your commitment, trust, and feedback have been the cornerstone of our collective achievements in the 2024 year.

Reflecting on the past year, I am proud of what your regional board has accomplished together. A few highlights include; review of the cooperative's bylaws to enhance the eligibility of our membership, review of our pension plan and development of plan to close out, maintaining our 2024 budget, and successfully expanding our footprint in Iowa with the completion of the Maquoketa market.

While this year presented its challenges, it also once again highlighted our resilience and adaptability. The unexpected loss of a longtime district 2 regional board director, David Wilke, left the board with grief and the task of getting a new director on board.

As we enter 2025, the regional board believes the cooperative will have many opportunities for growth and expanded services for members. We will dive into strategic planning as a focus and continue to build on our momentum and make an even greater impact in the livestock marketing industry.

None of this would be possible without your support and active participation in your cooperative. As we step into the new year, I encourage you to stay active, share your feedback, and help us to continue to provide excellent service.

Wishing you a joyful holiday season and a prosperous new year!

## Happy Holidays from All of Us at Equity

As 2024 comes to a close, I want to thank every Equity member for placing your trust in us. Your confidence drives our commitment to serve you — not only as a livestock market but as a partner in helping you reach your goals in your agricultural business. We've accomplished so much this year, and I'm excited to reflect on our progress.



**Curt Larson**  
President/CEO

Our continued dedication to provide excellent service to our members remained strong. Your regional board and executive team stay active in local, state, and national industry issues. Representing our members on government policy, farm bill, animal disease traceability, and product of USA labeling, are just to name a few. Successfully supporting our producers in the marketing of dairy cattle during the highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza.

A highlight of the year was the completion and opening of our Maquoketa, Iowa, market. Equity has not expanded its number of markets since the 1990's. Increasing livestock market access in Iowa for producers demonstrates the dedication we have for expanding services.

We are eager to build on these successes and embrace new opportunities to serve you better. Thank you for your patronage this past year, and we look forward to the opportunity to serve you in 2025.

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# Equity News

## Industry Updates

### Changes to Animal Identification Rules

We have discussed the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal Disease Traceability Rule changes in previous newsletters, but the deadline for compliance has now past, and the only official identification to be applied to cattle must be both electronically and visually readable (840 tags). Cattle that were tagged before November 5, 2024, can continue to carry their prior identification, but any cattle tagged after November 5, 2024, must have a tag that is both visually and electronically readable. This was a USDA rule change, but most states use the USDA definition of "official identification", so this is affecting in-state movements of animals as well. Equity Livestock markets have an inventory of these tags and can apply them if necessary for the animals to leave the market. It is best to contact your Equity Livestock market or representative to determine which of your animals need official identification.

### Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) or H5N1 Virus

HPAI is an influenza virus that had primarily been infecting wild birds until a couple of years ago when it spread to domestic poultry. This virus is extremely fatal to

poultry, fowl, and other birds. Earlier in 2024, the virus was discovered in dairy cows and continues to spread throughout the dairy industry. Although it has a low mortality rate in cattle, it does impact feed intake and milk production. Currently a negative virus test and certificate of veterinary inspection (CVI) are required for any lactating dairy cows crossing state lines (except cows moving directly to slaughter - no other stop). Some states have been approved by USDA to offer a voluntary testing program in which producers have a weekly test on a bulk milk sample and if they maintain negative weekly samples, they may be allowed to move cows across state lines without needing a negative test on each animal, Wisconsin currently does not have any such program.

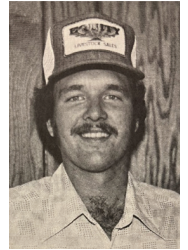
### New World Screwworm Fly

Many United States producers are not familiar with the New World Screwworm, as this is a pest that was eradicated from the U.S. in the 1960's. This is a fly that lays its eggs on live animals, and when those eggs hatch, the larvae burrow into the flesh of the animal causing massive amounts to

*(Continued on back page)*

## Ed Sandstrom, Jr.

Equity longtime employee, Edward L. Sandstrom, Jr., passed away unexpectedly on Wednesday, September 4, 2024. Shortly after graduation, he began his career at Equity Livestock for 43 years. Ed began his career as a hog-marketing representative at Equity's hog marketing facility in Arlington. He was later promoted to market manager of the Bonduel and Marion facilities. Throughout the last several years, Ed served as a field representative. During his career he made many friends throughout Wisconsin, working at sale barns and traveling to farms. Ed enjoyed hunting, fishing and trapping. Ed's contributions to the livestock industry will be dearly missed.



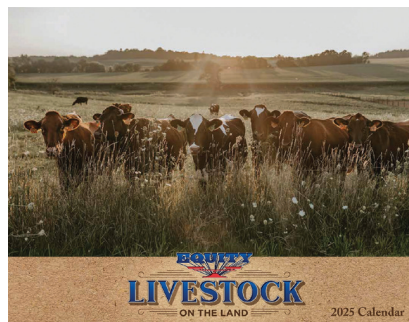
Here is a photo of Ed that was in our September/October 1982 Equity News.

## 2025 Calendar

In the heart of rural landscape, we often find livestock. Our 2025 Equity calendar theme is Livestock on the Land.

Congratulations to Britney Leege, our 2025 Equity Calendar Contest Winner! Her photo can be found on the cover of our 2025 calendars that are available for pick up at your local Equity markets.

Thanks to everyone for submitting your livestock on the land photos. Be sure to pick up a calendar to see if your submission photo(s) made the calendar!



## David Wilke

Regional II Director, Dave Wilke, passed away unexpectedly earlier this year. Dave was an integral part of Equity and made significant contributions to our cooperative. His leadership, dedication, and passion were evident in everything he did. He served on the Equity board as regional director representing the Lomira market for over 18 years, and he will be deeply missed by all of us.



Dave Wilke



## John Jenks - Equity's Third President/CEO

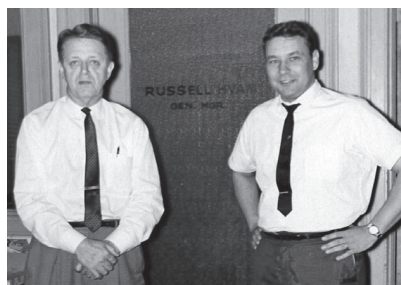
This past October, John passed away at the age of 92. He was an influential leader whose tenure spanned over three decades, leaving a significant mark on the Cooperative.



John Jenks

retire, and the Equity Board chose Jenks as the third President and Chief Executive Officer in Equity's history. Jenks worked with the Board to provide continued strong and visionary leadership for the membership and conducted his duties admirably during a period of significant changes.

Born and raised in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, John D. Jenks served in the United States Marines during the Korean War, and attended the University of Ottawa, a small college in Kansas.



Russel Hvam and John Jenks, 1964

In 1960, John started as an auditor with the State of Wisconsin, where he became familiar with farming operations and the cooperative movement. It was a relationship which would last his entire working career.

John was hired by Russell Hvam, Equity's second president/CEO, to serve as Equity's controller in 1963, having extensive experience and exposure to Equity during his years as a state auditor.

As Equity entered its 50th year in 1972, Hvam announced his plans to

John announced his retirement from the cooperative in 1996. In 1997, he was asked to reflect upon what is special about Equity. He stated that the cooperative listens to the

producer's ideas and what fits their needs best for marketing livestock - a principle that Equity still follows today.

John's service to Equity and its members was a considerable portion of his life, and his contributions will be remembered as pivotal in shaping the Cooperative and the livestock industry.

*For more information on Equity's history and Jenk's contributions to the Cooperative, visit our website: [www.equitycoop.com](http://www.equitycoop.com) under the "About Us" tab, click "Equity History."*

## Upcoming Wisconsin Beef Quality Assurance Certification In-Person Meetings



2024-25 is the 3-year mark for many farmers needing to get recertified in the Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) program. In 2018, certain packers announced they would only purchase cattle from farms selling finished cattle that are BQA Certified. Farmers needing to get recertified can go online to [www.bqa.org](http://www.bqa.org) or attend an in-person meeting.



Scan the QR code to register for an upcoming in-person meeting.

Please go to <https://tinyurl.com/2hr5karf> or call one of the County Extension offices listed below to register for the in-person meetings.

Below is a listing of upcoming meetings scheduled at one of our Equity Markets. Visit Wisconsin Beef Council's website at [www.beeftips.com](http://www.beeftips.com) for a complete listing of in person meetings.

### Jan 16, 2025 | 12 pm:

Equity Coop Lomira, N11579 Industrial Dr, Lomira. 920-294-4032

### Jan. 29, 2025 | 1 pm:

Equity Coop Altoona, 5150 Hwy 53 South, Eau Claire. 715-748-1413

## Financial Solutions for Your Success

We are here to help producers succeed. Contact us to learn more about how we can help finance your livestock.

- Livestock Feeding Program
- Revolving Lines of Credit



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# Equity Maintaining Great Representation on Wisconsin Beef Council Board

The Wisconsin Beef Council (WBC) is an organization working for the beef and dairy producers of Wisconsin. Their mission is “to build beef demand that is sustainable for future generations.” They seek to accomplish this through a variety of programs funded by the Beef Checkoff in the areas of promotion, consumer information, research and education. Funded by the \$1.00 per head assessment on all cattle sold in the state of Wisconsin, half of the dollar remains in Wisconsin and is allocated for in-state beef promotion efforts by the WBC Board of Directors. The board is composed of beef and dairy farmer leaders representing statewide cattle organizations. Equity is well represented on the current board as well as their executive committee. Of the eight members currently serving on Executive Committee, four are Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association representatives. Our President and CEO, Curt Larson, is serving as President- Elect. District V (Stratford Market) Regional Director, Todd Cummings, serves as the Consumer Information Committee Chair. Brad Solchenberger, District IX (Richland Center Market) Regional Director, is the Promotion Committee Chair. Abdullah Hussaini, Jr. VP of Marketing, serves as an At-Large Member on the Executive Committee. Dan Reeson, District VIII (Monroe Market) Regional Director, also serves as a member of the WBC Board of Directors.



## Producing Quality Beef Workshop

Altoona Equity Coop Livestock (5150 US-53, Eau Claire, WI)  
Feb. 26, 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

### Topics will include:

- Live cattle evaluation and discussion with packer & sale barn manager
- Impacts on value: shrink, mud, dirt and fitness for transport
- Meat quality defects - real examples from the packing plant
- 2022 National Beef Quality Audit Results
- Quality and yield grades discussion and hands-on practicum
- Pre-harvest factors that impact meat quality
- Feeding and management practices to produce cattle the market seeks



To register, visit <https://bit.ly/3GSZtUJ> or call the Wisconsin Beef Council at (800) 728-BEEF (2333) or 608-833-7177.







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## Industry Updates

(Continued from page 3)

damage and often death to the host animal. The agriculture industry in North and Central America had been successful with using Panama as a natural barrier to contain the pest to South America for a number of years. In recent months, the pest has been detected as far north as Mexico which prompted USDA to stop all imports of live cattle and bison originating from or transiting through Mexico. USDA and Mexican officials are working on health protocols, prescreening requirements, and isolation facilities to allow for these cattle to move from and through Mexico into the U.S. again, but we are not being given any timeline yet.

### Cattle Inventories

The United States beef cow herd was estimated at 87.2 million head on January 1, 2024. This is a 73-year low,

which produces the smallest calf crop in 2024. Meanwhile, we continue to see cattle on feed placements at some of the highest levels in 20 years. The placements can only be that high with such a small calf crop if virtually no heifers are being retained to begin rebuilding the herd. Pair that with better weather in the wheat belt, creating more demand for grazing cattle, and the restrictions on Mexican cattle coming into the U.S.- it looks like feeder cattle volumes will continue to be extremely tight. Add the threat of tariffs on beef being imported from Mexico and Canada, as well as the JBS/Brazil's shutdown of 11 beef processing plants during November in Brazil, and our finished product inventory could get very tight as well. There are many moving parts to watch in these scenarios, so stay tuned!

## Bid Beyond the Ring

Online auctions allow producers to benefit from price discovery by obtaining competitive bids from a large buying presence. This service also increases flexibility for buyers to bid beyond the market ring as long as they have an internet connection. Buyers can view the sale via live video and bid from their personal device.

Equity currently has five auction markets that offer live online sales via CattleUSA including Altoona, Maquoketa, Monroe, Stratford, and



Waukon. Pre-registration on CattleUSA.com is required along with an approved buyer application found at your local market or on our website. These are live, real-time auctions, meaning this is a live broadcast of an ongoing sale within the auction ring accessible online.

If you would like to participate in the online auction or learn more about the service, please reach out to your local market or visit our website at [www.equitycoop.com](http://www.equitycoop.com).

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 Lomira..... 920-269-4351  
 Maquoketa ..... 563-652-8080  
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 Reedsville ..... 920-754-4361  
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