



NICHOLS

NEWSLETTER

ROSS' THOUGHTS



Ross Havens
Nichols Farms
Marketing
Coordinator

Office: 641-369-2829
Cell: 641-745-5241
rossh@nicholsfarms.biz

Less risk, more money

Spring is one of the most rewarding times of the year at Nichols Farms. Calving season is well underway, and there's nothing quite like seeing a new calf hit the ground - each one representing years of genetic progress, careful planning, and a shared commitment to improving the beef industry. The consistency and quality of this year's calf crop have been especially encouraging and reinforce the direction we're heading as a program.

Our bull sale season has also been exceptional. We are incredibly grateful for the strong demand and the trust so many of you continue to place in our program. To our long-time customers - and those who are new to Nichols Farms - **Thank You.** Your support is the foundation of everything we do. As we near a complete sellout of our available bulls, we're humbled and appreciative of the confidence you've shown in our genetics.

As input costs continue to challenge profitability across the industry, we remain focused on the traits that truly move the needle - health and efficiency. Bovine respiratory disease (BRD) continues to be the leading cause of sickness and loss in the beef industry,

continued on page 5

Adding Heifers to History: The Waddells of Iowa

Taylor and Stephanie Waddell represent successful young cattle producers who started farming when they bought Taylor's grandfather out in 2018 when Taylor was just 22 years old. Since then, the couple has been steadily growing the operation, including leasing additional ground, to where the farm now supports their family.

Located in Davis City, Iowa, just over the Missouri border, they run approximately 200 commercial cows, as well as doing row cropping. With just the two of them working the farm, it makes for some long hours, but hours they thoroughly enjoy. They have also taken the opportunity of the current high cattle prices to both retire some debt and greatly expand their cow herd.

To grow both their spring and fall calving herds, the Waddells bred 150 heifers this past year to add to the fall herd, and this spring will be breeding 250 heifers to add to the spring calving herd.

They have been using Nichols bulls for the past five years, and made the decision to cull any cattle that didn't trace back to Nichols breeding. All the heifers they are breeding to add to their herd are the result of Nichols genetics. This includes heifers they have retained from their own herd and a group of Nichols three-way cross purchased heifers.

To assist in heifer selection, the Waddells are utilizing genomics to improve the accuracy of their decision making.

They also have a backgrounding yard, and grow their steers to approximately 900 pounds before marketing them in load lots at the local sale barn over a couple month period to spread their risk. They have found their Nichols cattle have less health problems, reach market weight sooner on less feed, and consistently top the market when they are sold. A win-win all the way around. Taylor is also excited about Nichols' **Health Shield** program, which identifies cattle genetically less prone to respiratory disease.

They are just as pleased with the cow herd that is the result of Nichols breeding. Taylor says the Nichols bred cattle stay in better condition, consistently have a 90 percent breed up in a 60-day breeding season, have good dispositions, udders and feet. He also is pulling fewer calves and has better weigh up at weaning.



Taylor and Stephanie Waddell are growing their southern Iowa herd with the help of Nichols Genetics and the Nichols Program.

continued on page 3



Cowboys You Can Count On



Cassidy Bremer began working at Nichols Farms in November 2025. She's no stranger to the area. She grew up near Redfield, Iowa. But the road to Nichols took her through the show ring, a feedlot, and a commercial beef operation in Colorado.

"Raised on Iowa State University" and an Oklahoma State grad, she admits she is sometimes conflicted over which team to root for. "It's a thin line," says Cassidy.

At Nichols she is an Angus herdsman, and is also involved in data collection and organization, working with Neogen on database updates.

Spring means calving and the responsibility of keeping everyone accounted for and healthy, even when the cows don't make it easy.

She says she appreciates Nichols Farms' openness to new ideas and the willingness to teach her whatever she wants to learn.

"They're like family already," says Cassidy. "They appreciate me and trust in me and my abilities. I've seen many aspects of the beef business, but this is unlike anything else I've done. The EPD and data side, new technology, it's all there for the learning and they are willing to teach it."

Cassidy lives in nearby Greenfield and travels back home to help on the family operation when she can.

LETTERS from you

Randie Culbertson, Assistant Professor, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Iowa State University, Ames Iowa.

Thank you for attending the 2025 Iowa Beef Center Genetic Symposium. Next year, in lieu of The Genetic Symposium, The Iowa Beef Center will host the Applied Reproductive Strategies in Beef Cattle (ARSBC) annual meeting in Des Moines on November 10-11, 2026.

... We hope to see you there!

continued on page 4

IGENITY® BEEF



Nick Hammett
Neogen Beef Genomics

The Tide is Turning

It is hard to believe that genomic testing has now been commercially available in the beef cattle industry for 25 years. I still remember the early days, when we believed, "We found the genes for tenderness and marbling." Both of those tests were based on just two genes. Another early example was the Igenity L (Leptin) test, which is still being used and promoted by some companies today.

What we have learned since then is that nearly all production traits are polygenic, controlled by hundreds, if not thousands, of genes. About 15 years ago, we began incorporating genomics into genetic evaluations and building the foundation for the much more accurate commercial products we know today.

Today, products like Igenity Beef® are backed by thousands of genomic markers identified through the comparison of millions of genotype and phenotype data points. Igenity Beef® does an outstanding job of providing commercial cattlemen with genomic predictions for multiple traits without the complexity and labor of recording pedigrees, collecting weights and measurements, and submitting data. Commercial cattlemen are beginning to recognize the value of these tools for replacement selection, mating decisions, and seedstock purchases.

Over the last 10 years, genomic testing at the seedstock level has evolved into a virtual requirement. If a seedstock breeder wants to place a bull in stud, sell elite genetics to other seedstock breeders, or attract the largest and most progressive commercial customers, genomic testing is practically required. Most are now testing all the bulls in their offerings and, in many cases, their entire calf crop.

But in the last five years, I have really seen the tide begin to turn for commercial cattlemen. Once viewed as an expense and tool reserved for seedstock producers, genomics has steadily worked its way into commercial cattle production and, over the last year, has really gained momentum. At first, adoption came from those excited by technology, and some of the largest and most progressive operations. But after years of exposure through articles, Extension education, and trusted genomic sales representatives, more commercial cattlemen are making the investment in genomics. In truth, the current market environment has helped. Using today's profits and reinvesting them into more productive, efficient cattle for tomorrow makes a great deal of sense for many commercial producers.

For those who are still not convinced, I encourage you to talk with someone who is using genomic testing in a commercial operation. Ask them why they started and why they continue to use it. I believe most will tell you they value having objective data to guide selection and mating decisions, and that they have seen measurable benefits in both their cowherds and their bottom line.

If you would like to explore genomic testing or need help connecting with someone who is already using it, just ask Ross. Nichols Farms is building a long list of customers who have made genomics part of their management protocols and are seeing the rewards.



**Nichols Farms is a NEOGEN Genomics
Distribution Partner for Igenity® Beef and Feeder.**

Contact Ross Havens for more information.

**Semen season is right around the corner.
View Nichols bulls that will help you
build a more profitable calf crop at
Nicholsfarms.biz**



Waddell continued from page 1...

Taylor explains, "We don't just want to have a cow herd, we want to be part of a program. Nichols lets us do that. We want cattle that are easy to work with, cattle we can be proud of whether it is when people see our cows or at market time."

He also emphasizes that they just don't have the time and can't afford trouble cattle. "The calves need to have vigor and cows need good udders, because we don't have the labor for problem cattle. I especially like good feet on our cattle. The bulls have to travel and do double duty breeding both the spring and fall calving cows. In addition, we do extensive rotational grazing moving cows every 5 to 15 days depending on pasture size and season. Good footed cattle with calm dispositions makes this an easy job."

Taylor also makes the most of integrating their cropping operation with the cattle. According to Taylor, "My Grandpa had a lot of facilities, so we calve early - starting around January 15 on the cows and February 1 on the heifers. That way the calves are up and going, and we can get them out to pasture before we really have to switch our concentration to farming. It also allows us to turn bulls out before it gets too hot, which we think results in better conception."

The Waddells also use a lot of practices to extend their feed. This includes

planting cover crops - generally a rye, winter wheat mix - that can usually give them 30 more days of grazing. They also graze stalks that are supplemented with a total mixed ration that they feed in tires in the cornfields. Another practice they use is to plant triticale in the fall, which they can chop in the spring, yielding 15 to 20 tons per acre. When combined with the manure they spread, all these practices help decrease erosion, improve soil organic matter and decrease the amount of supplemental fertilizer needed.

Taylor works closely with a nutritionist, as well as the vet clinic where he used to work. He firmly believes that if you skimp on nutrition, minerals and health program, you only hurt yourself. Whether it comes to genetics, health program, pasture management or nutrition, Taylor is quick to quote his grandfather's philosophy on raising cattle, "You have to put into them what you expect to get out of them."

The Waddells are an excellent success story of a young couple making it in the cattle business. They have long range goals, and are making the most of their resources, which includes the genetics and input from the Nichols program.

-- by Bob Hough



Opening Day 2026

Notes from Lillian

2026 - let me say this again - I am so thankful for family, friends, Nichols Farms employees, our customers and the businesses we enjoy doing business with - what a blessing for us all.

Opening Day of Nichols Farms bull sales 2026 was great - sold a lot of bulls to new and former customers. It is a little dry here and we think about our Nebraska neighbors as the grass fires have been terrible for them.

I spent Christmas in London visiting Grandson Nate and his wife, Megan, who live and work there. I had invited myself on the trip with son, Chuck, his wife, Laurie, and family, Natalie (soon to be Dr. Natalie Nichols, optometrist) and Ryan (The Chef). The beef we ate in London's restaurants was just as good as it is here, and Christmas dinner prepared by grandsons Nate and Ryan was wonderful. I enjoyed every minute of the trip except maybe a few minutes of the long plane rides.

The market has been really good, sustained by global demand for beef and the high, consistent quality of our product. Nichols Genetics brings you that reward - putting \$\$ directly into your pocketbook, when you use Nichols Bulls.



K C F BENNETT SOUTHSIDE X NICHOLS LASSIE A66
AAA #19261958

NICHOLS EXTRA F221

CEU	BW	WW	YW	RADG	DMI	SC	HP
+1	+1.8	+82 15%	+140	+27	+1.22	+2.14 2%	+15.1 10%
CEM	MILK	DOC	CW	MARB	RE	FAT	
+12 75%	+24	+37 1%	+59	+61	+58	+0.03	
SM	SW	SF	SG	SB	SC		
+80 20%	+77 25%	+110 25%	+51	+162	+290		

EXTRA emphasizes the reputation of a Nichols Farms Angus herd sire. Power, growth, soundness, and reproductivity. Over 60 head of progeny tested for feed intake. Produce more efficient fertile daughters, talk about reducing our environmental footprint!



BUBS SOUTHERN CHARM AA31 X NICHOLS BLACKBIRD E430
AAA #19594380

NICHOLS STALWART E41

CEU	BW	WW	YW	RADG	DMI	SC	HP
+7	+2.7	+81 20%	+147 10%	+34 4%	+90	+1.89 5%	+12.7
CEM	MILK	DOC	CW	MARB	RE	FAT	
+10	+31 20%	+26 20%	+68 20%	+77	+80	+0.03	
SM	SW	SF	SG	SB	SC		
+93 10%	+79 20%	+124 10%	+60	+185 20%	+333 10%		

Unmatched phenotype, outstanding maternal traits, and top-tier feed efficiency. He's built to perform and bred to improve your herd from the ground up.



DLCC GOLD DUST 64G X NICHOLS CHELSEA DSK074
NASDA 222612 PB SOUTH DEVON (HOMB, POLLED)

NICHOLS GOLD DUST DSM008

CEU	BW	WW	YW			
+4.2	+2.7	+83	+120			
CEM	MILK	DOC	CW	MARB	RE	FAT
+1.3	+19	+11	+13.0	+0.3	+0.57	-0.09

Owned by The Nichols Gold Dust Group, Nichols Farms, Lange Show Cattle (7120 579-5245, and Genetic Hedging Solutions (513) 371-5065



Nichols Farms
Superior Beef Genetics

Semen available through Nichols Farms. Office 641-369-2829 | Ross's Mobile 641-745-5241 | www.nicholsfarms.biz

MANY MORE NICHOLS AI BULLS AVAILABLE.

Nichols Farms bulls are backed by a cowherd of 73 years of selection pressure. We breed for growth, carcass traits, mothering ability, sound feet and good disposition. We've earned the trust of cowmen because these bulls will sire calves that top local feeder calf sales.

Our bull buyers expect success and year after year we deliver.

NICHOLS FARMS HEALTH SHIELD



With BOVINE RESPIRATORY DISEASE GENETIC PREDICTION

ROSS' THOUGHTS

More THOUGHTS ...continued from page 1

with an estimated economic impact exceeding \$3 billion annually. That's why we've invested heavily in understanding and improving BRD resilience within our herd.

Through collaborative research with Texas A&M, University of Nebraska, and Iowa State University, and using advanced technologies like SenseHub™, we've been able to closely monitor cattle health and performance in real time. What we're seeing confirms what many of you experience firsthand - cattle that stay healthy perform better. In our trials, bulls treated for BRD showed significantly lower average daily gain, reduced feed intake, and poorer feed efficiency compared to healthy cattle. Even more telling, cattle treated multiple times took longer to return to the bunk and showed less consistent feeding behavior, all of which adds cost and complexity to feeding programs.

At the same time, our long-term investment in feed efficiency - supported by years of C-Lock data - continues to identify cattle that convert feed more effectively without sacrificing performance. When you combine improved health with better efficiency, the result is cattle that are more predictable, more uniform, and ultimately more profitable. So with AI season right around the corner, you may consider adding one of our Top Nichols Herd Sires to your AI program and put these advantages to work in your operation.

From a broader perspective, the beef industry remains in a strong position. Consumer demand continues to be robust both here at home and abroad, supporting a market that rewards quality and performance even as supplies remain tight.

As always, our goal is simple: to provide genetics that help our customers reduce risk and improve profitability. We appreciate your partnership and look forward to working alongside you in the seasons ahead.

Don't miss a bit of Nichols News!

You can have the Newsletter and e-news blasts sent directly to your inbox. Just let the office know.

641-369-2829

nichols@nicholsfarms.biz



by **Brian Fieser Ph.D.**

Beef Field Nutritionist,
Akralos Animal Nutrition™

Making Changes to Advance the Program

If you are a college football fan like me you will probably be able to relate to this; if you are not, please bear with me and it will circle around to cows in the end! My favorite college football team recently hired a new coach, and in doing so the roster was retooled, as well as nearly all the assistant coaches and support staff, much of the team will also be new. It got me thinking about how this is somewhat like the spring season in our cow herds. While a change in management is probably not as dramatic as hiring a new coach (it may be if you have decided to hire or replace a manager), anyone with cows is always looking for ways to improve their performance, much like a coach would.

The cow herd is like some of the long-time staffers in a program; not a ton of turnover, but productive, long-term assets to the program. The bull battery might be more like the players; easier to come and go and sometimes, despite tremendous potential, changes must be made due to poor attitudes or injuries, for the betterment of the team. Anyone who has sold cattle recently knows we are in unprecedented times with the prices we are getting for our product. There has never been a time when making improvements to the program can have the financial benefits it does right now. While I continually watched social media to see what assistant coaches might have been hired or players might have been recruited, one thing that comes with far less fanfare is the support staff. Often the loyal, dedicated folks that wear the colors and support the team no matter who is in the big office or wearing the uniform.

In cattle production you can separate things into three segments to evaluate the program: management, nutrition, and health. I already pointed out the similarities in management and coaching, and the training staff and strength and conditioning staff have obvious similarities to your veterinarian and health and vaccine protocols. But as a cattle nutritionist, I was intrigued by the importance the new coach placed on the nutrition staff. While clearly less of a focus for many fans, I heard the new coach speak on more than one occasion about how important the nutritional staff was to player development, their health and well-being, and ultimately their performance on the field. Better nutrition going in equals better performance on the field. In my role as a nutritionist this is like discussions I have every day about making sure we get protein intake right and match the energy level to the desired ADG or body condition. Not to mention making sure the vitamins and minerals are right to get the most out of our reproduction and immune systems.

I understand I will never have 50,000 people cheer or jeer me over recommendations for a nutritional program, but when our customers are sending their calves to market, I do appreciate the role we as a nutrition company can play in getting the most out of our customers cattle programs. With the current cattle market a small increase in conception rates, or reduction in sickness, or improved daily gains can add up to huge wins for our customers.



Cowboys You Can Count On



David Williams hails from Bremond, Texas. "That's about halfway between Baylor and Texas A&M, and I can tell you I'm not a Baylor fan," says David. He is becoming a fan of Southwest Iowa and Nichols Farms.

After a year of college, he took time out to save up money, promising his mother he would graduate before he turns 35. He spent some time working in a warehouse with his dad and says, "I can tell you I like working with cattle better."

He says he has been animal oriented his whole life. Most of his spare time is spent working with a friend near Harlan in his show calf business.

As an intern at Nichols, David keeps busy helping calve the Angus cows and pitching in wherever he's needed.

He especially enjoys the focus on genetics, an area he hopes to explore further, along with learning practical skills like AI and how to apply his prior experience to a larger operation. He hopes to eventually have his own herd.

He also enjoys making the personal connections.

David has no doubts about coming to Nichols Farms being the move for him, saying, "I'm in the right place at the right time."

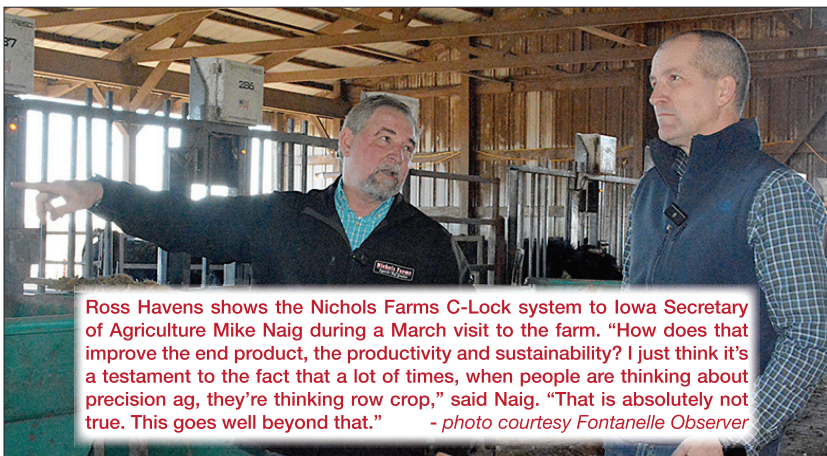
LETTERS ...continued

Bill Reiff - Monticello, Indiana

We made it home safe and sound, got some great bulls and had great weekend! Thanks Ross.

Rick Ayers, Ayers Stock Farm, Green City, Missouri

It is an honor for me to do business with you. All the best to everyone at the farm. (Rick is a Nichols Farms cooperater bull producer supplying Nichols Farms with Angus and SX fall born bulls and Angus spring born bulls.)



Ross Havens shows the Nichols Farms C-Lock system to Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Mike Naig during a March visit to the farm. "How does that improve the end product, the productivity and sustainability? I just think it's a testament to the fact that a lot of times, when people are thinking about precision ag, they're thinking row crop," said Naig. "That is absolutely not true. This goes well beyond that." - photo courtesy Fontanelle Observer

Nichols Farms

Superior Beef Genetics

2188 Clay Avenue
Bridgewater, Iowa 50837-8047
Nichols Bull Barn: 641-369-2829
www.nicholsfarms.biz

NICHOLS GOLD DUST 

DLCC GOLD DUST 64G X NICHOLS CHELSEA DSK074 DSM008
NASDA 222612 PB SOUTH DEVON (HOMB/POLLED)

CEU	BW	WW	YW	CEM	MILK	DOC	CW	MARB	RE	FAT
+4.2	+2.7	+83	+120	+1.3	+19	+11	+13.0	+0.3	+0.57	-0.09

Nichols Farms
Superior Beef Genetics

Semen available through Nichols Farms. Office 641-369-2829
Ross's Mobile 641-745-5241 | www.nicholsfarms.biz

Owned by The Nichols Gold Dust Group: Nichols Farms,
Lange Show Cattle (712) 579-5245, and Genetic Hedging Solutions (513) 371-8065