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Chadrad Communications, Inc.
226 Bordeaux St - Chadron, NE 69337
308-432-5545 fax 308-432-5601
E-mail: kcsr@chadrad.com

(Regional)-Feedlots, Meatpackers Closing With Fewer U.S. Cows

By: Roxie Graham-Marski Posted at: 02/25/2013 07:42 AM

By ROXANA HEGEMAN
Associated Press



WICHITA, Kan. (AP) - Years of drought are reshaping the beef industry as feedlots and a major meatpacking plant close because there are too few cattle left to supply them.

Some feedlots in major cattle-producing states have been dismantled, and others are sitting empty. Operators say they don't expect a recovery anytime soon, with high feed prices, much of the country in drought and a long time needed to rebuild herds.

For consumers, the impact will be felt in grocery and restaurant bills.

Amarillo broker Dick Bretz says most of the bad news is in Texas. That is where there are the most empty feedlots, the most interest in selling and the least interest in buying.

Most experts estimate the cattle feeding industry now has an excess capacity of 20 to 25 percent.