

Burned up pastures mean more calves on the auction block

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
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Drought takes toll on area cattle herds

Fine, brown dust rolls across pens at Gothenburg Livestock, kicked up by the wheels of a four-wheeler on a passageway between corrals.

“I hate to see so much dust,” said Wendell Brott, auctioneer and co-owner of the business along with his wife, Kathy.

This summer hasn’t been good for feeding cattle, period.

Sizzling temperatures and scant rainfall have baked pastures brown, leaving producers little choice but to haul calves and other cattle to sale barns early.

A month to two months early in these parts, Brott said, noting that large calf sales are normally in October and early November.

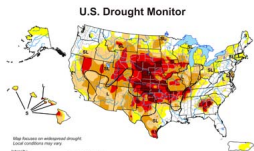
Many of the buyers so far are from out of state where the drought is not as bad.

“Oklahoma, Kansas, Iowa in the last two weeks,” Brott said. “There are certain areas that had a little rain.”

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With the drought in Texas, Oklahoma and Missouri, 500 head of calves are being sold on the auction block each day, up from 300 head a week ago.