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 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Brazilian Beef Scandal**

In the past few days the prices for cattle have gone up significantly. With that said, this may be the biggest reason why. This appeared in the Beef Blog on Monday, March 27, so we will see how this all works out in the coming days and weeks.

April cattle futures exploded this week to the highest level in over a year, nearing \$1.23 per pound. The price rally is a welcome relief for ranchers who have seen prices rise over 25 percent from bankruptcy-inducing levels under \$1 per pound last fall.

Buying was prompted by reports that Brazilian police recently busted two of that country's largest meat producers in an inquiry dubbed "Weak Flesh." The companies are accused of bribing health inspectors and politicians, selling rotten beef, and mixing impurities like cardboard and soybeans into meat to stretch it and boost profits. These allegations have prompted buyers around the world to restrict Brazilian meat imports.

Brazil is the second-largest beef producer in the world after the United States; with the loss of Brazilian exports, foreign buyers may become more dependent on U.S. meat.

However, this rally may be short-lived if the scandal is contained to the 21 Brazilian meat processing plants currently implicated. Furthermore, many nations may not reduce imports for long, opting to increase inspections on imports, which would prevent a sharp increase in demand for U.S. beef. Worse yet, news of the scandal may cause a drop in beef demand, ultimately sending prices lower, which means that U.S. beef producers may need to act fast to capture the current high prices.

## **Control Poison Hemlock and other weeds now**

Poison Hemlock is green and starting to grow rapidly. I have seen some 8 to 10 inches tall recently in Southern Brown Co. I saw some in Northern Highland County a week ago that was starting to grow, too. This weed gets well over your head in height and has white flowers and a pale green stalk with purple blotches. The use of 2,4D or crossbow herbicides at this time will do a number on it. You may want to make a second application for misses in a week or two. If this plant gets very much growth it will become hollow stalked and it becomes more difficult to control.

This past weekend I was in some of my hayfields and noticed some undesirable weeds there. Now is a good time to make a pass over those areas in your fields that you know are weedy patches. You can often see these from the windshield or tailgate of your truck or ATV.

## **Grass Tetany Prevention**

This time of year, and the next few weeks, with cool temperatures and plenty of moisture, grasses grow rapidly. Grasses often grown so fast that they do not take up enough magnesium so the livestock can be deficient. It seems like grass has greened up sooner than normal in 2017. This can be fatal, so it is a good management practice to provide additional



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magnesium in the mineral or other means as we get closer to turn out. This will help the livestock avoid grass tetany, or at least reduce the risk. I will try to have more about this next week, but it might be good to start providing the additional magnesium now, or when you make your next mineral purchase.

### **Dates to Remember**

- April 5 Highland Co. Cattlemen's Annual Banquet
- April 8 Ohio Tobacco Museum Fundraiser/Reverse Raffle at Ripley Elementary School. At the time I am writing this we have less than 25 tickets available, and they are going fast. If you are waiting to buy a ticket you may have waited too long. Call me today at 515-2314.
- April 8 Highland County OSU Extension's Dinner and Auction at the Highland Co. Fairgrounds in the evening.
- April 10 Pesticide Testing at the Old Y Restaurant at noon. Must pre-register at <http://pested.osu.edu> or call 800-282-1955. As always, this test is offered on the second Monday of each month.