

Marketing Mexican Cattle In The United States

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Historically, the United States has been the market for cattle produced in the northern tier of Mexican states. The exportation of such cattle has made a major contribution to the economy of northern Mexico, and the importation of these cattle is important to the cattle feeding industry in the Southwest. In 1959 some 488,000 head were imported to the U.S. from Mexico.

To an increasing extent both Arizona and California are being forced to reach further and further into the South and the Midwest to secure the number of feeder cattle necessary to supply their rapidly expanding cattle feeding industry.

Is Logical Source

Geographically, northern Mexico is the logical area to which to look for increased supplies of feeder cattle. It lies immediately to the south of the major cattle feeding areas in both Arizona and California, and with the ever increasing cost of transportation the locational advantage of northern Mexico cannot be ignored.

The primary area in Mexico from which cattle move to the United States includes the states of Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Durango, Nueva Leon, and Tamaulipas. Three factors serve primarily to make the United States the principal market for cattle from these states. These are: (1) proximity to the United States, (2) their position above the tick line, and (3) the lack of an adequate transportation system for the movement of cattle to the south.

Cattle imported from Mexico vary greatly as to type, age, breed, and weight. However, they are predominately yearling steers of Hereford or mixed Hereford breeding, and most of them weigh between 350 and 500 pounds. About two-thirds of the cattle imported go directly into feedlots and the rest go back on ranges in the southwestern United States.

El Paso Main Route

Approximately 40 per cent of the total cattle imported from Mexico are brought in through the port of El Paso; Nogales,

Ariz., the second in importance, accounting for about 14 per cent. Calexico, Calif. accounts for about 13 per cent of the total; Eagle Pass, Texas, 8 per cent; Douglas, Ariz., 7 per cent; Presidio, Texas, 3 per cent, and the remaining 15 per cent comes in through other ports along the border. The greatest change in the importance of any particular port-of-entry has taken place at Calexico. Prior to the closing of the border in 1946, this port was of minor significance in the importation of these cattle. Since 1955, volume at Calexico has increased rapidly to the point where this port now ranks third.

Shipments of Mexican cattle to the United States originate from a relatively small number of origins in Mexico. Although many of the cattle shipped come from large ranches, and each shipment represents a single ownership, it also appears that these major shipping points act as concentration centers where multiple-owner loads are assembled.

Most Stay in Southwest

While it is difficult to determine the ultimate destination of Mexican cattle imported into the United States, it is apparent that most of these cattle remain in the Southwest. Of the total imported, 85 per cent were indicated as going to destinations in the Southwest. Many of these cattle undoubtedly moved on to grazing and feeding in other states, but the bulk of them probably remained in the area where imported.

The importation of Mexican cattle is of concern to the range cattle industry in the Southwest in that these importations compete with locally produced feeder cattle in the market in this area. Although the number of Mexican cattle imported is relatively small compared to the number of feeder cattle produced in the United States, locally the trade assumes a greater degree of importance since most of the

cattle imported remain in the Southwest for grazing or feeding. These cattle undoubtedly do have some depressing effect on the price of local feeder cattle.

However, the effect of the importation of Mexican cattle on local feeder prices would be no different than the effect of importation of cattle from Texas or any other state. Since Arizona does not produce enough feeder cattle to supply the demand of our own feedlots and of feedlots in southern California, it is necessary that we import cattle from other parts of the United States or from northern Mexico.



JANUARY

- 1- 7—Arizona National Livestock Show. Phoenix
- 11-12—10th Annual Dairy Industry Conference. Tucson
- 16-20—Annual Extension Service Conference. U of A Campus, Tucson
- 25—Annual Meeting of Arizona Poultry Federation. Arizona State University. Tempe

FEBRUARY

- 8- 9—4th Annual Arizona Fertilizer Conference. U of A Campus, Tucson
- 11—Annual Meeting of Arizona Cattle Feeders Assoc. Phoenix
- 27-28—Arizona Egg Quality School. Phoenix

MARCH

- 1—Arizona Egg Quality School. Phoenix
- 5-12—National 4-H Club Week
- 8-12—Southern Arizona International Livestock Show. Tucson
- 18—FFA Field Day. U of A Campus, Tucson

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