

Historical and Projected Kansas Feedlot Net Returns

Glynn Tonsor (gtonsor@ksu.edu)

Kansas State University Department of Agricultural Economics – May 2026

This article presents estimated net returns of cattle finishing operations as of May 21, 2026. The calculation and projection process was updated in July of 2012.¹ **This process reflects a cash market situation without price risk management strategies being implemented.** Each month, given data availability, updates are made to reflect the most recent feedlot closeout estimates and to reflect current market conditions.

Close-out Calculations

The most recent *Focus on Feedlots* survey provides information on lots closed out in March of 2026. As shown in figures 1 and 2, steers and heifers were estimated to be sold in March at -\$173.08/hd and -\$206.51/hd, respectively.

Projected Returns

Given the lag in *Focus on Feedlots* survey information, market information is available for April while realized animal performance data are not yet available. Currently, the net returns projected for closeouts in April are +\$0.11/hd and +\$174.04/hd for steers and heifers, respectively (tables 1 and 2). Tables 1 and 2 also present projected net returns for closeouts over upcoming months based on forecasts of both animal performance and market prices. Included tables also include the projected and breakeven values for cattle prices and cost of gain, which provides further insight into the sensitivity underlying these projections. Producers are encouraged to carefully compare their own costs and prices with those reported here. *While always important, elevated market changes and barometer assumptions made here relative to on-farm situations are extra important currently.* Finally, historical and breakeven values are provided in chart format revealing trends over time in fed cattle sales prices (figures 3 and 4), cost of gain (figures 5 and 6), and feeder cattle purchase prices (figures 7 and 8).

¹ A document describing the specific approach taken in these calculations and projections is available at: <http://www.agmanager.info/livestock-meat/cattle-finishing-historical-and-projected-returns/detail-procedures-estimating-fed>.

Table 1. Projected Values for Finishing Steers in Kansas Feedyards*

Closeout Mo-Yr	Net Return	FCOG**	Fed Price	Fed Futures	Fed Basis	Feeder Price	Breakeven FCOG**	Breakeven Fed Price	Breakeven Feeder Price
Apr-26	\$ 0.11	95.34	246.93	250.04	-3.11	359.55	95.35	246.92	359.56
May-26	\$ 346.36	94.69	260.25	253.28	6.98	344.55	144.62	237.51	386.31
Jun-26	\$ 345.86	97.48	249.71	245.30	4.41	333.55	145.09	226.89	377.37
Jul-26	\$ 220.83	99.61	248.15	245.30	2.85	338.06	130.45	233.78	364.96
Aug-26	\$ 56.09	100.21	237.97	236.78	1.19	345.81	107.72	234.34	352.82
Sep-26	\$ (191.01)	102.81	238.45	236.78	1.67	367.98	76.99	250.58	345.09
Oct-26	\$ (235.68)	108.18	237.54	236.38	1.16	361.79	76.09	252.31	334.41
Nov-26	\$ (106.30)	108.25	239.69	236.38	3.32	361.21	94.26	246.43	348.22
Dec-26	\$ (176.89)	109.99	238.61	236.95	1.66	359.60	86.56	249.57	338.99
Jan-27	\$ (148.56)	108.25	237.48	236.95	0.53	359.30	88.76	246.75	341.62

Table 2. Projected Values for Finishing Heifers in Kansas Feedyards*

Closeout Mo-Yr	Net Return	FCOG**	Fed Price	Fed Futures	Fed Basis	Feeder Price	Breakeven FCOG**	Breakeven Fed Price	Breakeven Feeder Price
Apr-26	\$ 174.04	102.55	246.88	250.04	-3.16	337.95	129.71	234.22	361.65
May-26	\$ 508.93	100.98	266.48	253.28	13.20	318.05	185.29	229.82	382.92
Jun-26	\$ 266.40	110.60	256.72	245.30	11.42	318.87	156.34	237.44	352.19
Jul-26	\$ 134.90	105.53	248.74	245.30	3.44	331.91	127.84	238.96	349.32
Aug-26	\$ (4.87)	108.65	241.77	236.78	5.00	341.32	107.88	242.12	340.68
Sep-26	\$ (49.57)	113.74	238.43	236.78	1.66	339.34	106.01	242.00	332.73
Oct-26	\$ (260.66)	113.70	237.22	236.38	0.84	360.76	73.27	255.53	327.29
Nov-26	\$ 51.40	114.59	243.43	236.38	7.06	337.91	122.28	239.84	344.64
Dec-26	\$ (46.34)	118.49	238.37	236.95	1.42	330.71	111.33	241.58	324.87
Jan-27	\$ 3.64	116.79	244.46	236.95	7.51	338.04	117.35	244.20	338.50

* Net return is \$/head and all other values are \$/cwt.

** FCOG = Feeding cost of gain

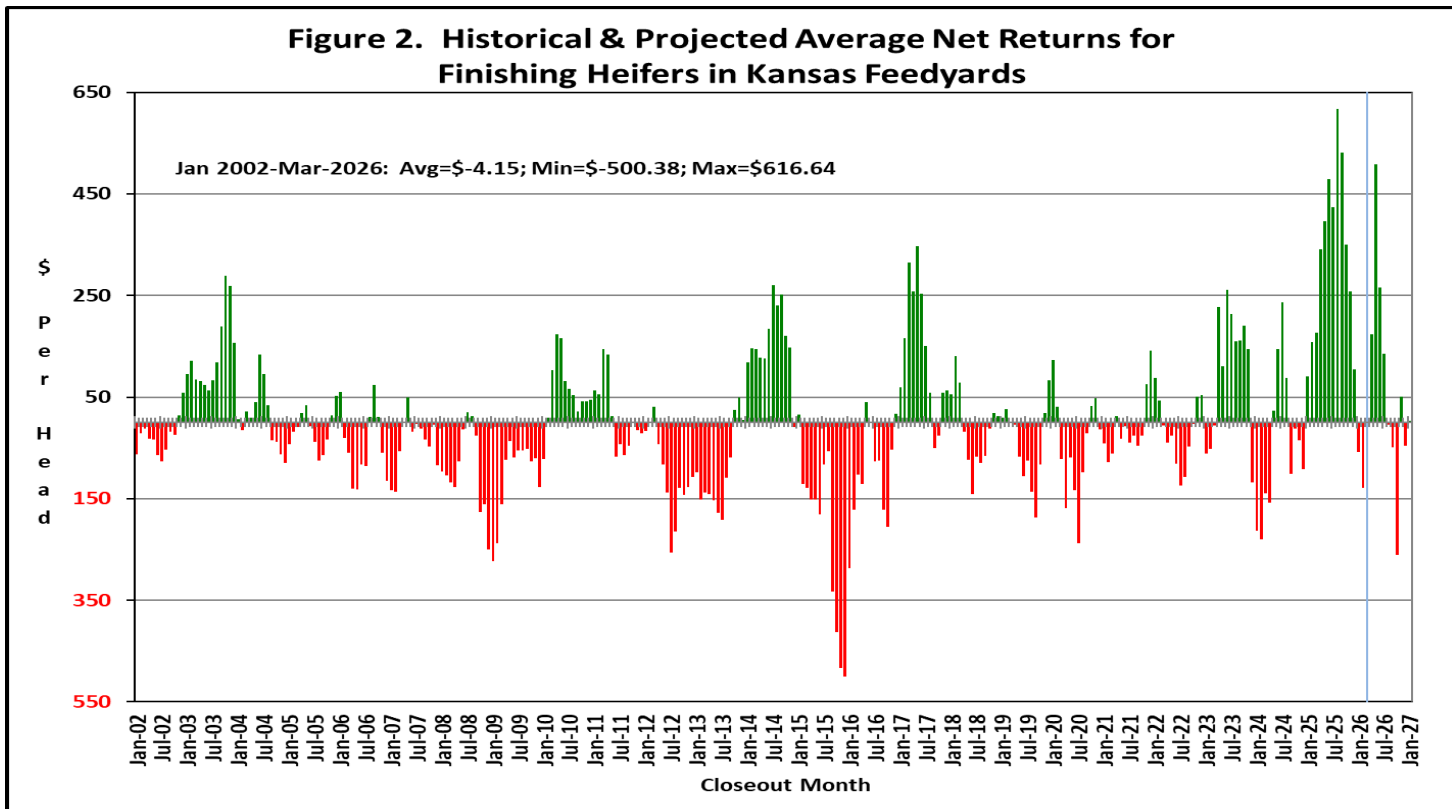
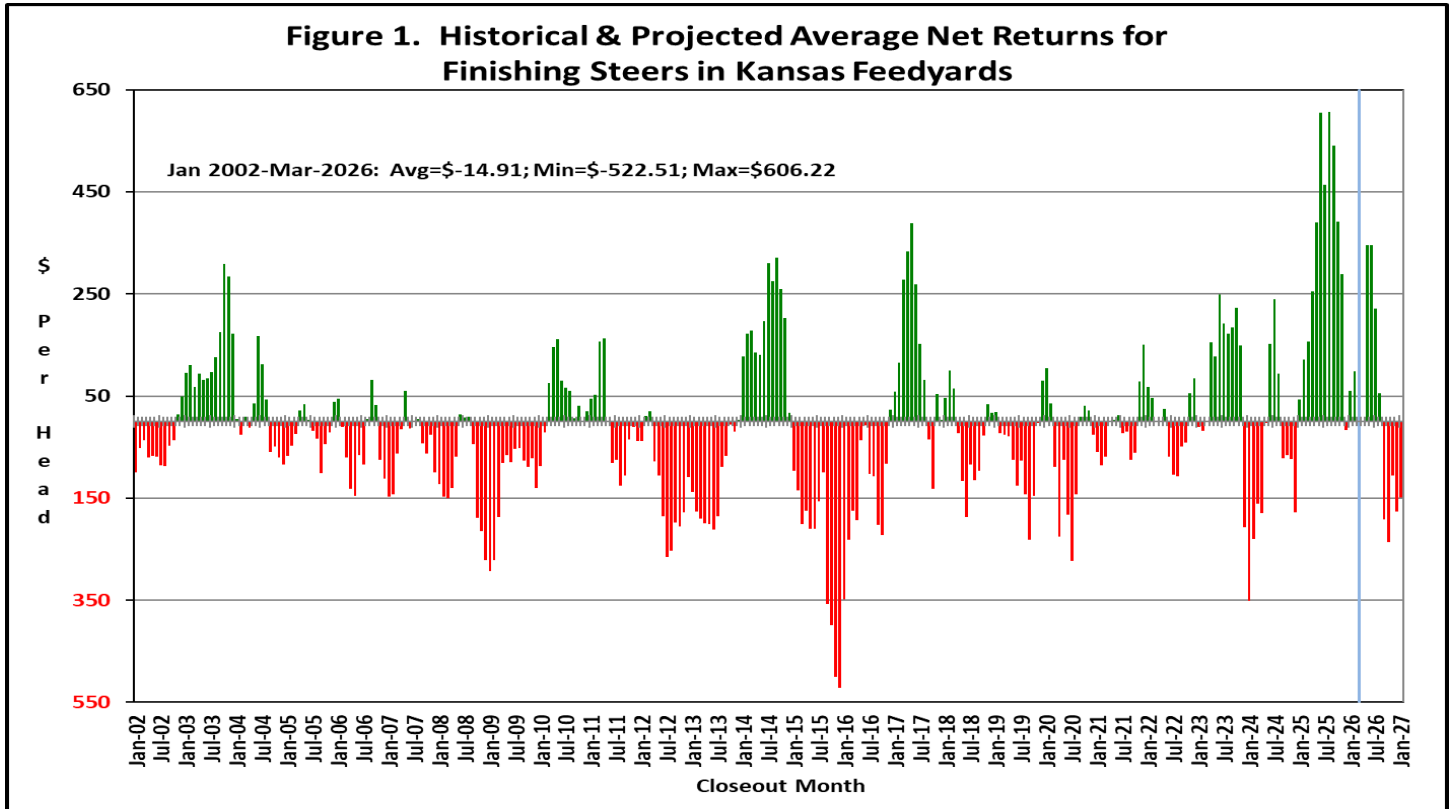


Figure 3. Historical & Projected Fed Cattle Prices and Breakeven Prices for Steers in Kansas Feedyards

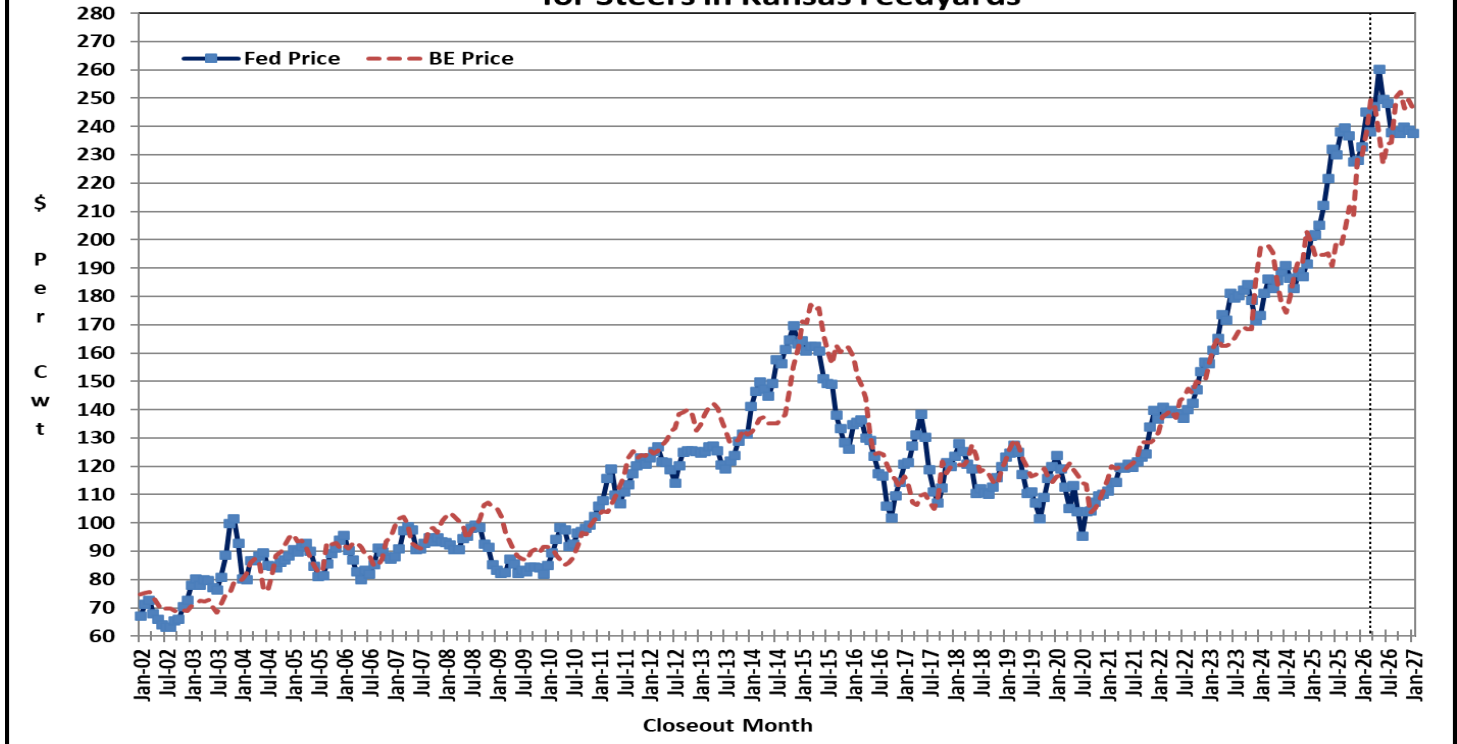


Figure 4. Historical & Projected Fed Cattle Prices and Breakeven Prices for Heifers in Kansas Feedyards

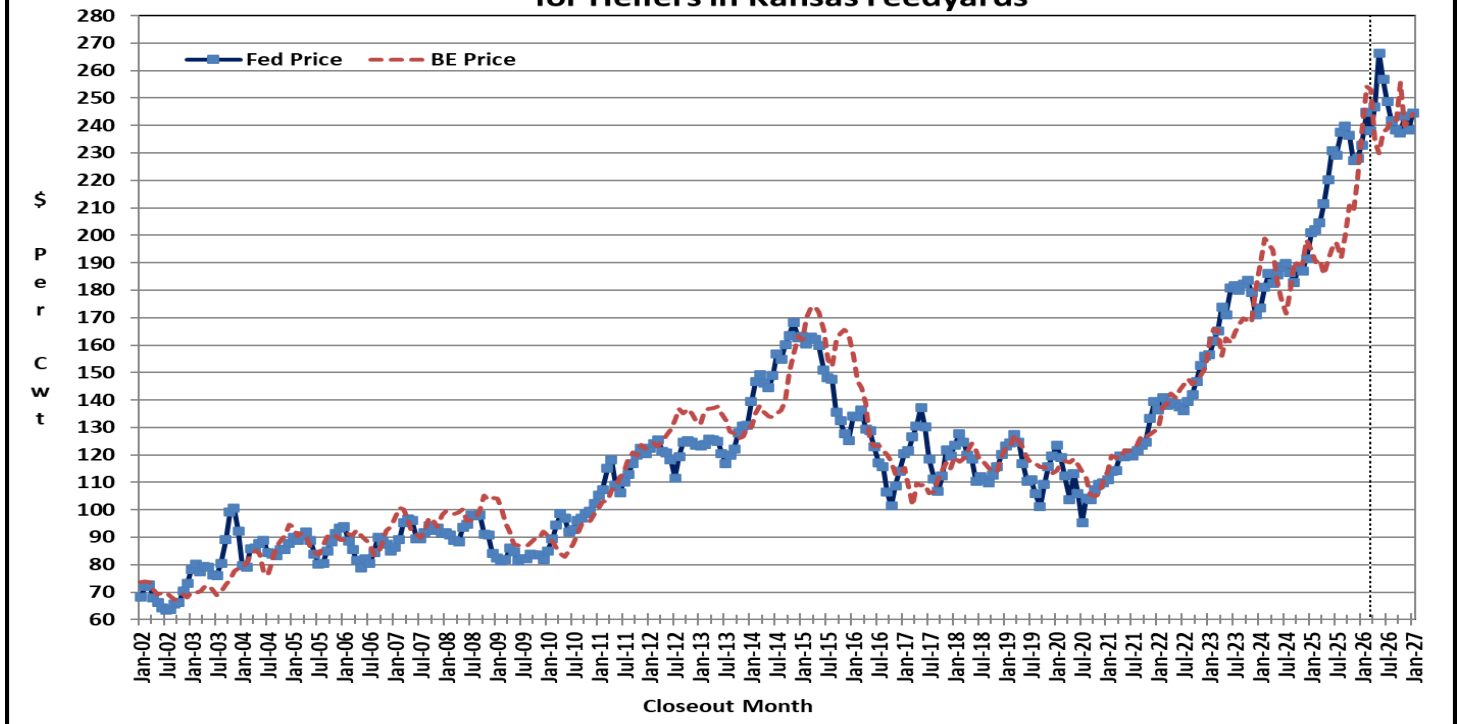


Figure 5. Historical & Projected Feeding Cost of Gain and Breakeven Cost of Gain for Steers in Kansas Feedyards

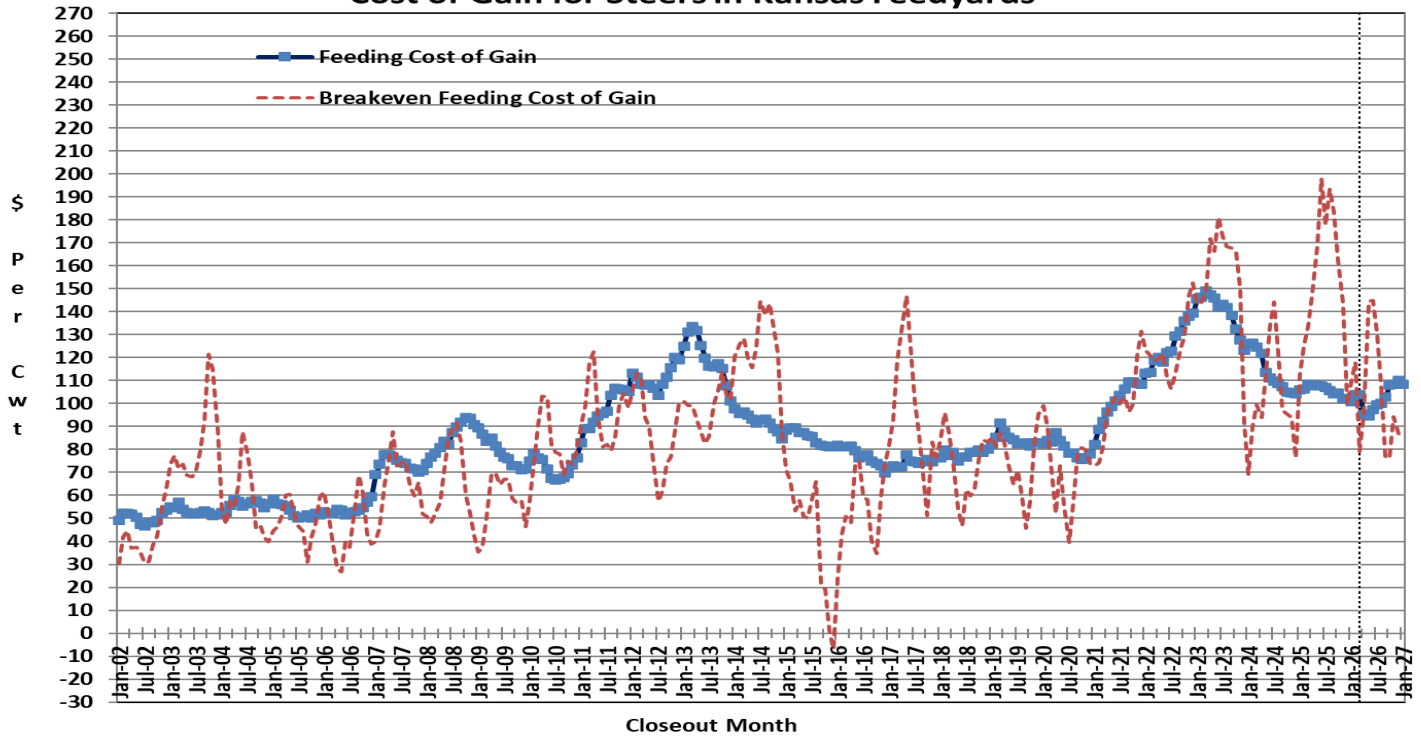


Figure 6. Historical & Projected Feeding Cost of Gain and Breakeven Cost of Gain for Heifers in Kansas Feedyards

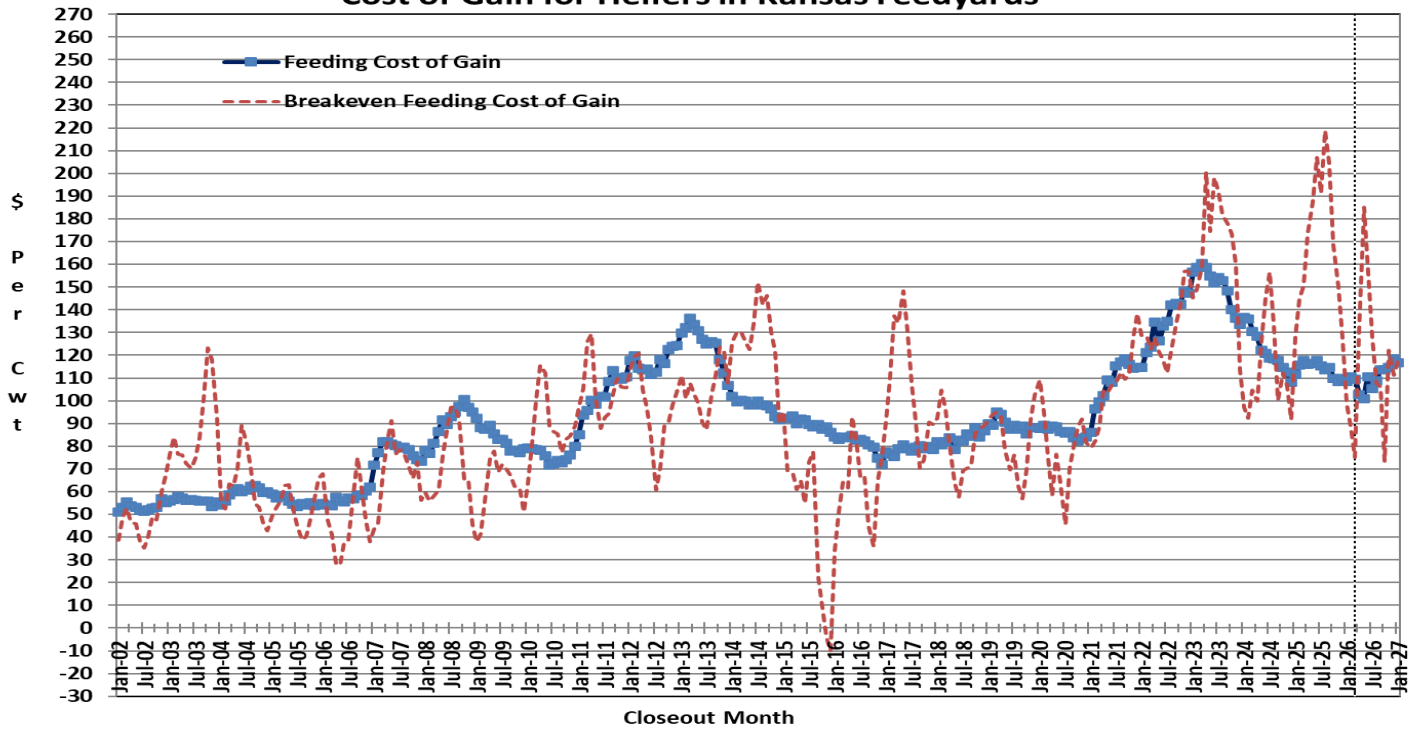


Figure 7. Historical & Projected Feeder Cattle Prices and Breakeven Prices for Steers in Kansas Feedyards

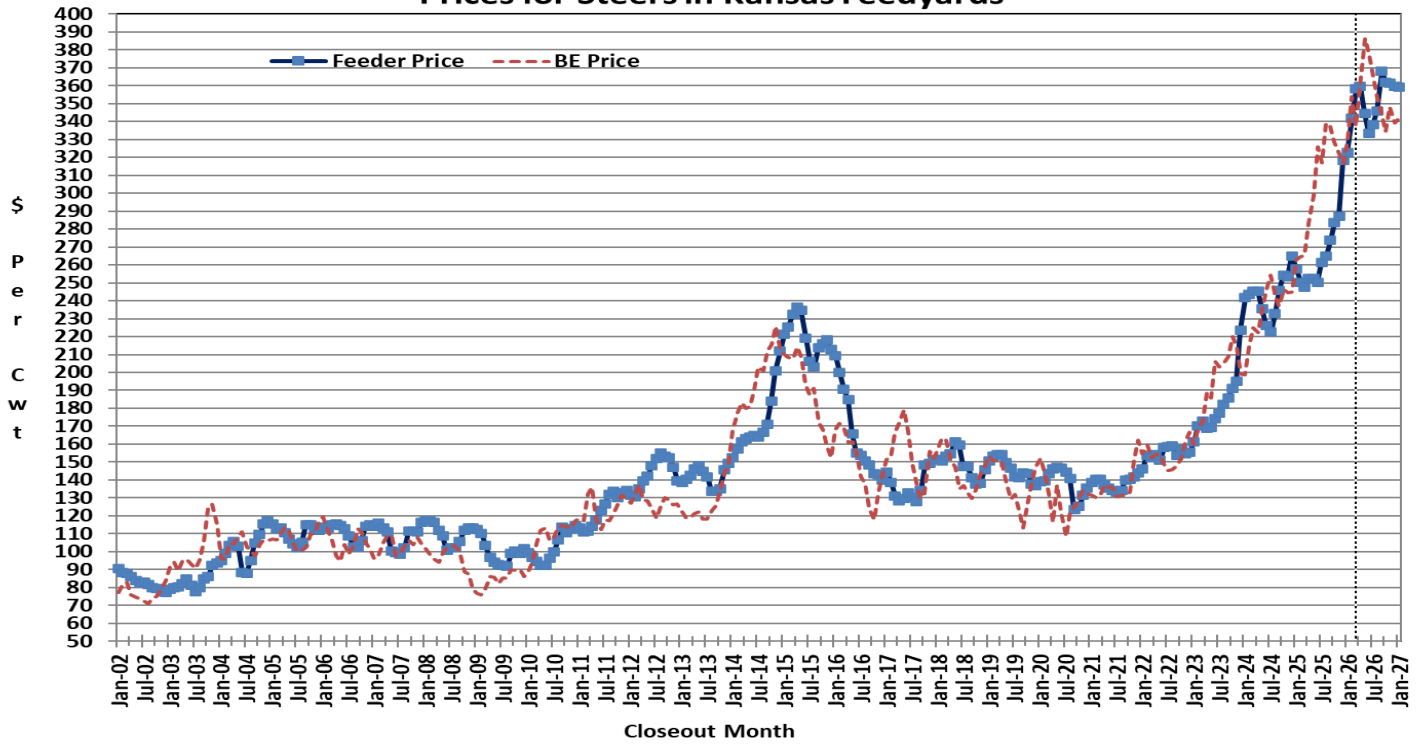
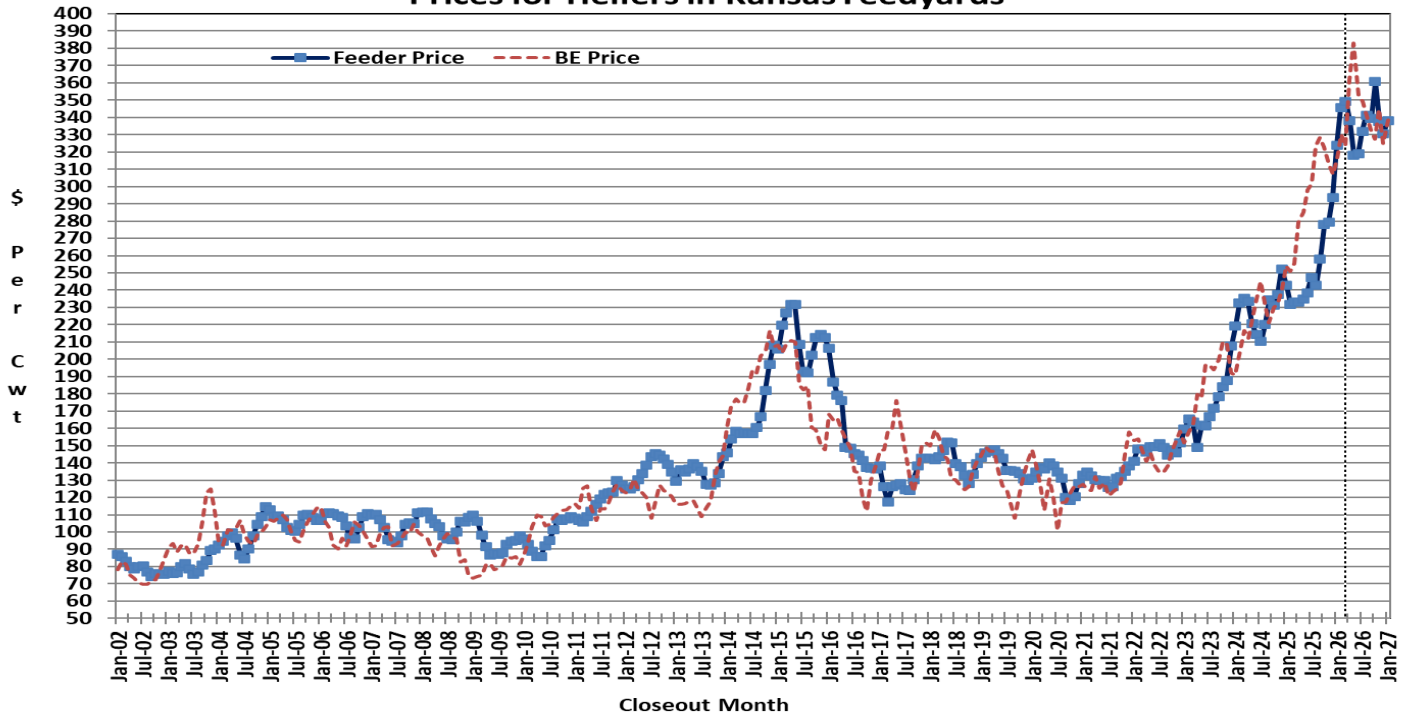


Figure 8. Historical & Projected Feeder Cattle Prices and Breakeven Prices for Heifers in Kansas Feedyards



[View more information about the authors of this publication and other K-State agricultural economics faculty.](#)

For more information about this publication and others, visit [AgManager.info](https://www.agmanager.info).

K-State Agricultural Economics | 342 Waters Hall, Manhattan, KS 66506-4011 | (785) 532-1504 | Fax: (785) 532-6925

Any errors are those of the author and users acknowledge such without recourse

[Copyright 2026 AgManager.info, K-State Department of Agricultural Economics.](#)