

How much should you pay for a replacement heifer?

SUBMITTED BY TJ ADKINS
PULASKI COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT
FOR AGRICULTURE

With cattle prices at historical highs, few investments carry more weight for a cow-calf operation than the decision to add replacement females. A producer has several options: they can buy a bred heifer to add to their herd or retain and develop a heifer calf of their own, delaying her first calf by a year for a lower upfront cost. Current heifer prices have raised the financial tradeoffs of this decision, and the best strategy depends on assumptions that vary by operation and year.

Buying a heifer means paying today’s price to calve next spring. Raising means giving up what a calf could have sold for at weaning, covering a year of expenses, and waiting an extra year for her first calf. Higher heifer prices make buying more expensive up front but also increases the opportunity cost of holding a heifer calf back rather



T.J. Adkins
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than selling her.

The Beef Cow and Heifer Investment Analysis tool was developed to help producers with this decision. The tool is a free online dashboard that allows producers to enter their own data, such as heifer price, annual cow costs, weaning weight, calf crop percentage, cull weight, discount rate, and cost inflation. The dashboard returns net present value (NPV), breakeven heifer price, payback period, and average annual net return, all of which update in real time (Figure 1).

Consider the dashboard’s

default assumptions: a 92% weaning rate, 520-pound weaning weight, \$1,100 in annual cow costs, an 8 percent discount rate, and an 8-year productive life, with calf prices and cost inflation following the USDA calf price forecast (users can also substitute their own price and cost expectations). Under these assumptions, the tool estimates the maximum price a producer could pay for a heifer while maintaining an 8 percent return (\$5,018/hd in this case), as well as the payback period to recover the investment. Changing an assumption can significantly impact the outcome, highlighting how much this decision is operation specific.

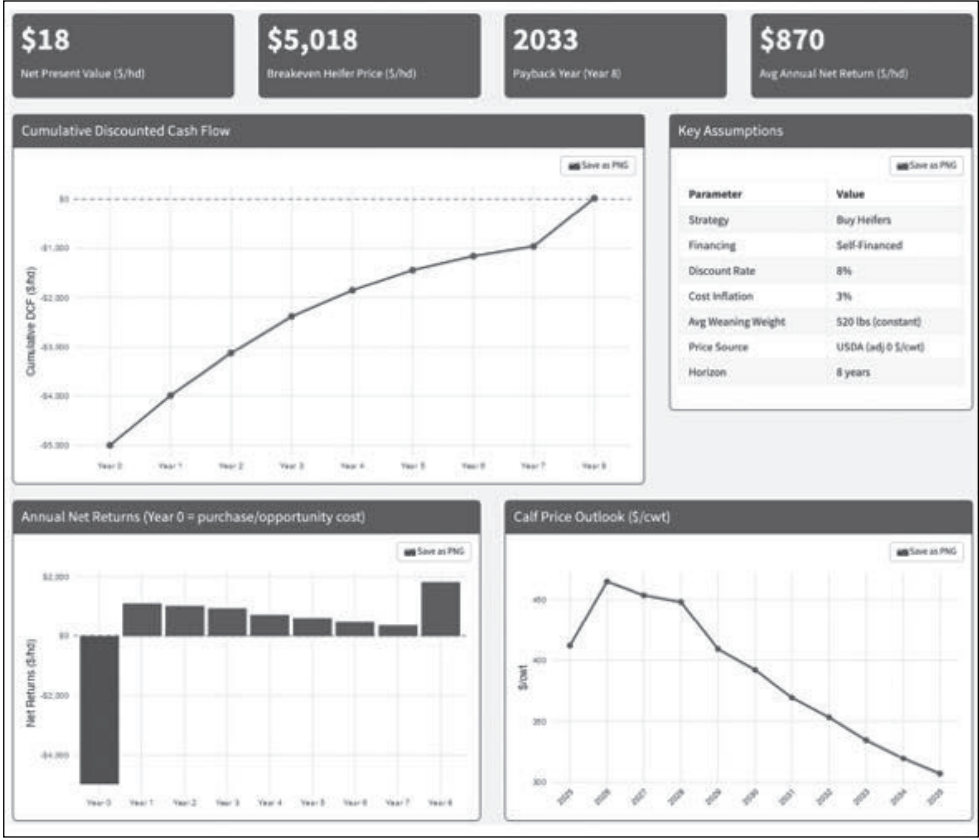
The decision to buy or raise heifers boils down to cash-flow timing and the price paid relative to what a heifer returns over her productive life. The dashboard does not determine which strategy is correct for an operation. However, it provides cattle producers and other agricultural

stakeholders with a framework to evaluate the tradeoffs between these strategies. The Beef Cow and Heifer Investment Analysis Tool is completely free to

use and can be accessed here on any device with an internet connection.

This is part of series of articles on the new Beef Cow and Heifer Investment

Analysis Tool. In forthcoming articles, we will review other features of the tool, the user manual, and interpretation of the results the tool provides.



Misinformation threatens measles elimination status, overall health

BY SARAH LADD
KENTUCKY LANTERN

Louisville’s Maricia Richardson grew up hearing that she didn’t need to get vaccinated.

She didn’t consider herself “anti vax” — more like vaccine hesitant — and much of that resistance was rooted in fear that there was something in vaccines, particularly something aimed at hurting her community.

“(For) my family, it was because we’re Black and we’re not supposed to take those shots,” Richardson, 54, explained. “They’re not meant for us. And no way, no, we shouldn’t do it.”

She finally got the COVID-19 vaccine in 2021 because her employer, Volunteers of America, required it and because her aunt, who she loved like a mother, died from COVID. She also feared contracting the virus because diabetes and high blood pressure put her at risk of worse outcomes.

“I didn’t want to lose my job either — I love VOA — but also, I didn’t want to lose my life,” she recalled.

Still, the fear of getting the shot “had me paralyzed,” she said. Once she realized she was OK — “I haven’t had any extra arms and legs grow,” she realized — she felt “gratitude.”

She later contracted COVID but had mild cases, which she attributed to her vaccines: “If it wasn’t for the vaccine, when I did get COVID those three times, I might not have made it.”

Despite her change of heart with the COVID-19 shot, Richardson still has anxiety about the flu vaccine and has yet to get an annual influenza shot.

The fear Richardson faced isn’t unique to her: Experts say it’s driving larger vaccination trends in Kentucky and beyond.

The United States is seeing a resurgence of measles, a highly contagious disease eliminated in the country

nearly three decades ago, even as Kentuckians die from preventable illnesses like influenza.

Experts blame an ecosystem of technology like artificial intelligence, social media algorithms that put people in information silos and a polarizing political environment.

Reversing course on medical misinformation will not happen quickly or easily, Kentucky experts say. It will take systemic investments of time for the medical community to build trust lost with the public during and as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Meanwhile, as mistrust increases, routine vaccination declines, putting more Kentuckians at risk of bad outcomes from contagious and preventable illnesses.

Fewer kindergarten children in Kentucky got routine vaccinations after the COVID-19 pandemic than before.

Before the pandemic, in the 2018-2019 school year, nearly 94% of kindergarten children in Kentucky got their polio vaccination. By the 2024-2025 school year, that dropped to 87%. Measles, mumps and rubella vaccination also declined from 93% in 2018-2019 to 87% in 2024-2025. (To prevent outbreaks, experts push for measles vaccination rates of 94% and higher).

In their severest forms, these preventable diseases can cause muscle paralysis, neurological damage, infertility, disability and death.

Right before the COVID-19 pandemic, about 84% of students were up to date on all their vaccinations. In 2024-2025, that had dropped to 82%. (Just 2% of roughly 51,000 children had religious exemptions).

The medical community has blamed President Donald Trump’s administration for spreading misinformation about medicine and science and its handling of medical advice.

Last year, the American Academy of Pediatrics filed a lawsuit against Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. after he dismissed all 17 members of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices and replaced them. In March, a federal Massachusetts judge halted enforcement of Kennedy’s vaccine policies.

Dr. David H. Aizuss, the board chair of the American Medical Association, called the ruling “an important step toward protecting the health of Americans, particularly children.”

“Vaccines are one of the safest and most effective tools in medicine,” he said, “and strong, science-based immunization policies save lives.”

Dr. Steven Stack, the secretary of Kentucky’s Cabinet for Health and Family Services, said misinformation at the federal level is “really problematic” because it can sanction mistrust.

“It causes people to have legitimate reason to be doubtful in the truthfulness and accuracy of the information being put out by their governments,” he told the Lantern.

BC and AC — Before COVID, After COVID

Medical misinformation is far from new; even the polio vaccine, which is one of the most effective and trusted, was met with suspicion when arriving on the market in the mid 20th century.

In 1954, Dr. Walter B. Martin, the then-president

of the American Medical Association, told a gathering in Lexington that the relatively-new Salk polio vaccine presented “no real danger” while speaking in response to misinformation about it.

The vaccine, he said, according to an article in The Kentucky Post from the time, could be a “real victory of this immediate time.”

He was right: Polio cases dropped from 58,000 in 1955 to 5,600 in 1957 and 161 cases in 1961, according to the World Health Organization.

By 1994, polio was eliminated in North and South America.

Nearly 30 years later in

YARD SALE

**396 Piney Grove Road
Somerset 42501**
**INSIDE/OUTSIDE
OLD FARMHOUSE**
**FRIDAY JULY 24TH AND
SATURDAY JULY 25TH**
7:30 am to 3:00 pm
Household items, dishes, furniture, washer & dryer, water heaters, gas stove/oven, heats & air conditioner, small appliances, lamps, clothes, blankets & bedding, some antiques, etc

LOST DOG

**Reddish brown
male chihuahua
named Charlie.**
**Missing from
Lincoln St near
Som Cemetary.**
**Please call
606-872-9542**

DESTRUCTION OF RECORDS NOTICE

In accordance with district procedures and records retention guidelines, the following special education records housed at Somerset Independent Schools will be destroyed forty-five days from date of this notice: July 25, 2026. **Special Education Due Process Records** to be destroyed are those for students who attended Somerset Independent Schools prior to August 2020. It is noted that portions of these records may be needed by the student of parent/guardian for future services or benefits. A record of the student’s names, his or her grades, classes attended, grade level completed, and year will be kept permanently. The student (eighteen or older) or parent/guardian may obtain a copy of the records by contacting Becki Hays, Director of Special Education, phone number (606-679-5466), no later than September 8, 2026.

2022 — two years after the COVID-19 pandemic hit the country — it was back.

Experts who spoke with the Lantern said the COVID-19 pandemic shifted general trust in the medical

system and worsened the spread of mis- and dis-information that has caused vaccination rates to decline across the board.

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PUBLIC NOTICE
MASTER COMMISSIONER’S SALE

In order to comply with the orders of the Pulaski Circuit Court, the Commissioner will sell the property described in the following action on **WEDNESDAY, JULY 29, 2026** at the hour of **1:00 p.m.** This sale will be held at **207 S. RICHARDSON DRIVE, SOMERSET, KY 42501, (GODBY AUCTION CENTER BUILDING, PLEASE DO NOT CALL GODBY REALTY WITH QUESTIONS: THEY VOLUNTARILY AUCTIONEER FOR THE MASTER COMMISSIONER).** Said property shall be sold to raise the amounts hereinafter set forth, together with interest and the costs of the action, and (unless otherwise indicated) upon the following terms and conditions:
(A) At the time of sale the successful bidder shall either pay cash or make a deposit of 10% of the purchase price with the balance on credit for thirty (30) days. **In the event the successful bidder desires or elects to credit the balance, he or she will be required to post bond and furnish an acceptable surety thereon.** Said bond shall be for the unpaid purchase price and **bear interest at the plaintiff’s judgment rate per** annum from the date of sale until paid. **IN THE EVENT THAT THE PURCHASER IS NOT PAYING THE FULL AMOUNT OF THE PURCHASE PRICE OF THE PROPERTY ON THE DATE OF SALE, ANOTHER PERSON MUST BE PRESENT ON THE PURCHASER’S BEHALF TO SIGN AS SURETY FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE PURCHASE PRICE.**
(B) Risk of loss of improvements shall be on the purchaser from date of sale.
(C) The purchaser shall be required to assume and pay all taxes or assessments upon the property for the current tax year **(2026)** and all subsequent years. All other delinquent taxes or assessments upon the property for prior years shall be paid from the sale proceeds **if properly claimed in writing and the holder(s) thereof is a party to the foreclosure. The Master Commissioner warrants only such title as is referred by Court order and does not guarantee that all taxes are paid.**
(D) The property shall otherwise be sold free and clear of any right, title and interest of all parties to the action and of their liens and encumbrances thereon, excepting easements and restrictions of record in the Pulaski County Clerk’s Office and such right of redemption as may exist in favor of the United States of America or the defendant(s).

1. 88 TODD BLVD., SOMERSET, to raise the amount of \$176,476.94, PVA # 050-5-2-29
2. 425 HYDEN RIDGE ROAD, SOMERSET, to raise the amount of \$56,170.11, PVA # 128-0-0-25.3
3. 211 BELLEWOOD DR., SOMERSET, to raise the amount of \$6,440.36, PVA # 076-6-0-32
4. 165 KAYLA LANE, NANCY, to raise the amount of \$170,869.47, PVA # 023-2-0-30
5. 80 JACKSON ROAD, SOMERSET, to raise the amount of \$139,544.77, PVA # 075-7-0-09.1

Further information and appraisals are available online @www.pulaskipva.com, (Additional Resources/Master Commissioner Sales).

**JOHN T. MANDT, MASTER COMMISSIONER,
PULASKI CIRCUIT COURT, 203 W. COLUMBIA ST.,
SOMERSET, KY 42501, Phone 606-679-3504**