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Review of *The Kansas Beef Industry* By Charles L. Wood

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harsh environment of the central Great Plains and depressed economic conditions prevented this frontier livelihood from becoming a stable beef-producing industry. Furthermore, by the late nineteenth century, the open range had disappeared, and the days when cattlemen grazed their stock on the Kansas grasslands and herded their cattle to the railhead were long in the past. With decreased mobility, cattlemen were forced to improve their managerial skills to maintain efficient beef production and consistent profits from their herds.

After the turn of the twentieth century, Kansas stockmen began giving increased attention to aspects of the cattle business other than simply grazing and marketing beef. Upbreeding, disease control, regulation of stockyards, packers, and railroads, advanced marketing techniques, drought relief, transportation changes, and organizational needs presented new problems that caused cattlemen to become more sophisticated businessmen than ever before. To help solve those problems, cattlemen organized the Kansas Livestock Association, and the KLA soon became one of the leading cattlemen's organizations in the United States. The KLA served its members by adjusting shipping claims, representing stockmen at rate hearings and market investigations, and negotiating for reduced transportation rates. The KLA also functioned as an effective lobby whenever cattlemen sought state or federal aid. Kansas cattlemen also became leaders in their efforts to improve or upbreed their herds by using purebred stock. Kansas thus became an important state for the production of purebred Hereford bulls, which helped to improve commercial herds nationwide. After World War II, Kansas cattlemen were in the forefront of the industry with quick adjustments to technological and transportation changes. Cattle trucks and irrigation sprinklers decentralized markets and changed feeding practices; both developments made stockmen more efficient beef producers. By the mid-twentieth century, the beef cattle industry was much more complex than it had been during the days of the open range.

The Kansas Beef Industry. By Charles L. Wood. Lawrence: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1980. Illustrations, figures, notes, bibliography, index. xiii + 352 pp. \$22.50.

From the mid-nineteenth century until today, the beef cattle industry has played a major role in the economic development of Kansas. Before the late 1890s, however, the

Charles L. Wood, assistant professor of history at Texas Tech University, has written a detailed account of the Kansas beef industry. Wood traces the development of cattle production and marketing from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century; analyzes the forces that caused change and the relationships between the producing, packing, and transportation industries; and delineates governmental aid programs. Vignettes of past and present cattlemen give this study a sense of immediacy. Although this book primarily treats the Kansas beef industry from 1900 to 1940, it will be useful for anyone studying the general history of the Great Plains. Specifically, however, Wood has made a solid contribution to the history of Kansas and American agriculture.

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