



TEXAS CATTLE FEEDERS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

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U.S. Beef Exports Rose 28% in 2008, according to a new report by USMEF. Exports of beef and beef variety meats totaled 984,712 metric tons (mt.), compared with 771,196 in 2007. The 2008 figure also represents 77% of the export total for the bellwether year of 2003.

Mexico remained the top export market for U.S. beef and beef variety meats as it took in 396,065 mt., a 10% increase over 2007. Canada held onto the number two spot by accepting 154,798 mt. in shipments. Combining the two nation's totals, Mexico and Canada accounted for 56% of all exports – a fact that underscores what could be at stake for U.S. beef producers if tensions over COOL are not soothed.

While export levels to South Korea and Japan are still well below the 2003 standard, there was significant improvement in U.S. beef and beef variety shipments to those two markets. South Korea received 57,267 mt., a 128% increase over 2007. The 74,119 mt. sent to Japan was a 59% increase.

Texas House Committee Assignments: After much anticipation and rampant speculation, House Speaker Joe Straus announced committee assignments for the 81st Legislature. In making the announcement, Speaker Straus said, "When I became Speaker, I vowed to help the members build a House that would operate fairly and help them bring their best talent forward to address the state's most difficult challenges. The committee assignments I am making today will draw upon the House's wisdom and experience and provide an opportunity for new leadership and ideas. We are fortunate to have a House where members want to do what is best and right for Texas, and I am confident that they will succeed."

According to the Speaker, the chairmanships of the 34 committees are divided 18-16 in favor of the Republicans and 15 of the chairs are in that position for the first time in their legislative careers. A few of the committees are listed in this article, and a full list is available through the links below.

Agriculture & Livestock Committee – Yvonne Gonzalez Toureilles, Chair; Charles "Doc" Anderson, Vice-Chair; Betty Brown; Joe Crabb; Rick Hardcastle; Joe Heflin; Tim Kleinschmidt; Tara Rio Ybarra; and David Swinford

Environmental Regulation – Byron Cook, Chair; Warren Chisum, Vice-Chair; Lon Burnam; Jim Dunnam; Jessica Farrar; Kelly Hancock; Ken Legler; Marc Veasey; and Randy Weber

Natural Resources – Allan Ritter, Chair; William "Bill" Callegari, Vice-Chair; Frank Corte, Jr.; Tracy King; Trey Martinez Fischer; John Smithee; Brandon Creighton; Stephen Frost; Jodie Laubenberg; Eddie Lucio III; and Doug Miller

Standing Committee Appointments by Committee:

<http://www.house.state.tx.us/committees/assignments/81/committee.pdf>

Standing Committee Appointments by Member:

<http://www.house.state.tx.us/committees/assignments/81/member.pdf>

Speaker Straus' Announcement:

<http://www.house.state.tx.us/committees/assignments/House-Committee-Assignments.html>

Texas Senate Committee Assignments have also been announced. In releasing the list of committee chairs and members, Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst, who presides over the Senate, said, "Texas is blessed with 31 extremely talented and committed State Senators and I worked to put each of them in positions that will utilize their strengths to meet the challenges facing our great state. I want to thank all members for the hard work they will put in and their commitment to making Texas a better place to live, grow a business and raise a family."

Most committee chairs were filled by the same senators who served in the previous Legislature, according to the *Dallas Morning News*. However Dewhurst did elevate three subcommittees to full committee status including the new Agriculture & Rural Affairs Committee. The other new committees are Higher Education and Economic Development. There are now 18 committees in the Senate. Of the 15 holdover committees, the only new chairman is Tommy Williams, who will head the Administration Committee.

Committee chairmanships are divided 12-6 in favor of Republicans.

Two committees critical to cattlemen's interests are listed in this article, and a full list is available through the links below.

[Agriculture & Rural Affairs Committee](#) – Craig Estes, Chair; Carlos Uresti, Vice-Chair; Glenn Hegar; Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa; and Mike Jackson.

[Natural Resources Committee](#) – Kip Averitt, Chair; Craig Estes, Vice-Chair; Bob Deuell; Robert Duncan; Kevin Eltife; Troy Fraser; Glenn Hegar; Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa; Mike Jackson; Kel Seliger; and Carlos Uresti.

State Senate Committee Listings:

http://www.senate.state.tx.us/assets/pdf/81_sen_cmtes.pdf

Information on State Senate Committees:

<http://www.senate.state.tx.us/75r/Senate/Commit.htm>

Stimulus Bill: The U.S. House of Representatives passed the \$787 billion economic stimulus plan today, and the Senate could follow suit this evening. The bill was just released yesterday and there has not been enough time for full analysis, but TCFA and NCBA were successful on two key issues. Language to permit a government-funded dairy cow buyout was kept out of the legislation. And the final bill does not include a ban on processing of non-ambulatory cattle. To see the bill, go to http://www.house.gov/billtext/hr1_legtext_cr.pdf.

Members Of The Dairy Industry Organization Cooperatives Working Together (CWT) voted this week to continue funding the self-help program for two full years. A CWT news release states the decision is predicated on achieving participation of a 67% supermajority of the nation's milk supply at the current 10-cent-per-hundredweight membership assessment. CWT's members also approved two changes in program policy. First, all members whose bids are accepted in future herd retirement programs will agree and warrant to cease dairy production for one year. This warranty will apply to both the producer and his/her dairy facility. The second change is that farmers who were successful participants in past CWT herd retirement rounds will be permitted to bid in the next herd retirement round that CWT conducts. Consistent with its long-standing policy, CWT says it will not disclose the precise dates when it will initiate future herd retirement activities or any thresholds or targets that the organization may have for how much milk or how many cows it will remove. CWT also says it has not solicited government assistance with the industry's oversupply problem, but the organization indicated that a prominent agricultural lender will be providing a line of credit tied to the level of funding that CWT members are committing to invest in CWT.

Animal Welfare Standards Should Be Part Of Every Trade Negotiation, at least according to animal rights groups and some European Commission members. That is what NCBA Chief Veterinarian Dr. Elizabeth Parker says she heard at last month's Conference on Global Trade and Farm Animal Welfare in Belgium. Several European Commission-member parliamentarians spoke at the conference and HSUS also made a presentation.

In an interview with *Meetingplace.com*, Dr. Parker said the European Commission has "problems within their member states because the cost of animal production in Europe has gotten so high due to non-science-based restrictions. The EU can import meat cheaper than they can raise it in Europe. So they are calling for equivalency. They have done this already in biotech and some other areas. I was interested in how open and upfront they are about it."

Dr. Parker noted that many industry regulations in Europe are based on public opinion surveys.

Meetingplace.com asked Dr. Parker if she would be making recommendations to NCBA based on any best practices presented at the conference. Her reply: "No. There was nothing scientifically based that was presented there."

HSUS Continues To Push Its Political Agenda, both in Washington D.C. and in various state legislatures. The radical animal rights group's proposals for expanding federal government include establishing an animal protection liaison position in the White House and appointment of an assistant U.S. attorney to head an animal protection division in the Justice Department. Meanwhile HSUS is carrying its message to state legislatures around the country – including Texas, Oklahoma and New Mexico – through events billed as "Humane Lobby Days." HSUS President Wayne Pacelle told *Brownfield* the organization helped pass 93 new laws at the state government level last year.

In Oklahoma, Cities And Counties Will Be Prevented From Regulating Livestock under legislation making its way through the state legislature. Sen. Mike Schulz (R-Altus) told the *Associated Press* that his bill will stop laws that interfere with livestock operations when cities annex large areas. He also said his bill is an attempt to "preempt what happened in California," referring to last year's passages of Proposition 2. Schulz's bill and a similar one in the House have both received committee approval and are headed to the floors of the respective chambers.

More Intensive Reviews Of Mergers In Agriculture is the objective of legislation filed recently by U.S. Senators Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) and Herb Kohl (D-Wis.). According to a Grassley news release, the bill proposes creation of an agriculture competition task force to help the Justice Department and the Federal Trade Commission draft agriculture antitrust guidelines and coordinate activities to address anti-competitive practices. The bill would also amend antitrust laws to shift the burden of proof in agribusiness mergers to the defendant to prove that the merger will not substantially lessen competition or create a monopoly.

Brazil, The World's Top Beef Exporter, Saw Its Shipments Fall 35% In January due to the global economic meltdown, the *Associated Press* reported. The Brazilian Beef Exporters Association said the country exported 81.8 million metric tons (mt.) of beef during the month, down from the 124.7 million mt. for January 2008.

The Bad Economy Is Hurting Sales Of Organic Foods, according to a *BEEF* magazine article. Figures from The Nielsen Company show that organic sales grew by just 5.6% in December compared with a 25.6% rise a year earlier. A Nielsen executive attributed the reduced growth rate to the impact of layoffs and declining investment portfolios on middle and upper income families. However, a spokesperson for the Organic Consumers Association suggested any decline is limited to those who buy organics only occasionally, not regular customers.

The Generosity Of Cattle Feeders Will Be On Display This Weekend when the Panhandle Office of the National Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Society presents its 39th annual Beef-A-Thon Sunday from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Amarillo television station KAMR. Viewers can call in and bid on quarters of beef and other items. More than 20 feedyards in the Texas Panhandle area have donated animals to supply beef for the fundraiser. TCFA made a monetary donation. All proceeds benefit the MS Society's Panhandle office.

Calling All Junior Cattle Feeders! The start of the 2009 Junior Fed Beef Challenge is just around the corner. Junior cattle feeders from all over Cattle Feeding Country will be going after more than \$18,000 in scholarships, cash and prizes. Students will compete in four phases of the contest, including carcass merit, record keeping, a written exam and oral presentation or interview. Steers can be validated March 1 through April 1. See the brochure at <http://www.tcfa.org/jfbc/2009JFBCBrochure.pdf> for important dates and contest information or log on to <http://www.tcfa.org/jfbc/jfb.html> to see the official rule book. For questions and to acquire contest ear tags, contact Trent Tyson at (806) 358-3681 or email at trent@tcfa.org.

Need a New Beef Spotter? Cattle Feeding Country can be hard to navigate. If you'd like a little help finding all the feedyards on your call list, contact TCFA to order your 2009 Beef Spotter today. To place an order, log on to www.tcfa.org or call Kaci Barclay at (806) 358-3681.

...Feeders And Feedyards In The News...

Former TCFA Chairman Jim Schwertner has been appointed by Governor Rick Perry to serve on the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents.

Meanwhile **TCFA Member John Huffaker** received a gubernatorial appointment to the Texas Tech University System Board of Regents.

Both appointments must be confirmed by the Senate and their terms will run through January 2015.

Please note: All links are still available at www.tcfa.org under Newsletter links.