



TEXAS CATTLE FEEDERS ASSOCIATION

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Public Believes Beef Is Safe: According to the results of a national survey released this week, consumers are confident in the safety of their ground beef, steaks and roasts despite a rise in their overall concern about food safety in recent months. More than eight in 10 of the respondents agreed that the entire beef industry is working together to ensure safe and wholesome food. The survey results were released in conjunction with the Beef Industry Safety Summit in San Diego.

More than two-thirds of consumers surveyed say they believe the number of food recalls and foodborne illnesses is on the rise, especially on the heels of recall news related to peanut products. Just 49% of consumers answered in the same way in November 2008.

The national survey of 1,023 Americans had a margin of error of +/- 3.1% and was funded by the Beef Checkoff.

"This survey confirms food safety is on consumers' minds, and we want them to know it's on our mind as well," said James O. Reagan, Ph.D., chairman of the Beef Industry Food Safety Council (BIFSCO) and senior vice president of research, education and innovation for NCBA. "That's why leaders from all segments of beef production gather every year at the Beef Industry Safety Summit to share the latest research, improve safety best practices and set a course for the future."

When asked specifically about the beef industry's efforts to improve beef safety, 81% agreed that all sectors of the beef industry are working together to provide consumers with safe, wholesome food. 78% of consumers also agreed that safeguards developed by beef industry scientists have made ground beef safer than ever.

The FDA Is Urged To Postpone Implementation Of The Enhanced Feed Ban in a letter signed by 18 U.S. Senators. The Senators want a 60-day delay of the April 27 effective date — a request supported by NCBA and TCFA. The letter also asks for a re-opening of the comment period for 30 days to allow input on the economic hardships the new rule will cause producers. An effort is being made to obtain a similar letter by Members of the House of Representatives. Nevertheless, the odds of FDA delaying the effective date do not appear favorable.

Stopping The Cow Tax: U.S. Senators John Thune (R-S.D.) and Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) have introduced S.527, a bill that the authors claim "will once and for all prevent the government from imposing an onerous cow tax" on producers. Late last year, the EPA discussed regulating greenhouse gases in its Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking under the 1990 amendments to the Clean Air Act, which could include requiring livestock operators to purchase expensive permits. Although the EPA did not propose moving forward with the permits, Thune and Schumer say they are taking preventive action to protect agriculture.

Endangered Species Act (ESA): President Obama is asking agency heads to ignore a Bush Administration regulation that limited scientific reviews of projects under the ESA, the *Associated Press* reports. TCFA and NCBA support the Bush regulation, which allows agencies to forego consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service whenever proposed federal actions are determined to have no adverse effect on species listed under ESA. For now, that regulation is on hold until the Interior and Commerce departments complete a review.

U.S. Beef Sales To Japan Could Increase By 35% This Year, USMEF President and CEO Phil Seng said this week, *Bloomberg* reports. A key reason for Seng's optimism: the stronger yen. In 2008, the yen jumped 23% against the U.S. dollar. Last year, Japan imported approximately 74,000 metric tons (mt.) of U.S. beef and beef variety meats, a figure Seng believes could climb to about 100,000 mt. in 2009.

Cargill Has Begun Construction On An Expansion Of Its Plainview Beef Plant, the plant's general manager, Jim Rathke, told *Meatingplace*. The expansion adds a finely textured beef operation to the existing facility and beef product that is 93% to 96% lean as an ingredient in the company's ground beef. The new operation should be up and running by August and will staff a manager, two shift supervisors and 17 hourly paid employees. Cargill began work on the project after local officials approved a reinvestment zone that will offer the company several tax incentives.

The Corn-Based Ethanol Industry Is Expanding Its Domestic And International Outreach Efforts, according to *Roll Call*, a Washington D.C. newspaper widely read on Capitol Hill. Growth Energy, the Washington D.C.-based ethanol producer alliance formed in November, is seeking to increase its numbers by adding non-traditional stakeholders such as enzyme producers and contractors and companies that build ethanol plants. A co-chairman of Growth Energy, retired Gen. Wesley Clark, said the group's current ambition is to convince the Obama Administration to lift the ethanol blend limit from the current 10% level to the E-12 or E-15 level. While domestic production is the primary focus of Growth Energy, a new group launched last week — the Global Renewable Fuels Alliance — includes members representing countries responsible for 60% of the world's biofuels production. A spokesperson for the new international group said its agenda will emphasize responding to the industry's critics from the World Bank and the UN.

FDA Would Get New Authorities Under A Proposed Food Safety Reform Bill that has won support from some food industry organizations including the Grocery Manufacturers Association and the National Restaurant Association. The Food Safety Modernization Act is sponsored by U.S. Sens. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.), Judd Gregg (R-N.H.), Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Richard Burr (R-N.C.). The bill would increase the frequency of inspections at all food facilities, give FDA expanded access to records and testing results, and allow FDA to mandate food product recalls if a company fails to recall it at the agency's request, *Meatingplace.com* reports. However, unlike a similar bill introduced in the House by Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.), the Senate measure does not call for creation of a single food safety agency within the Health and Human Services Department.

California Public Schools Would Be Barred From Serving Students Meat From Animals Treated With Antibiotics, under legislation filed by a powerful state legislator, *CattleNetwork* reports. The bill, introduced by Senate Majority Leader Dean Florez, who chairs the Food and Agriculture Committee, would also prohibit non-therapeutic and prophylactic use of antibiotics in any animal raised for the production of human food. Additionally, the legislation would require state and local governments, when making purchases, to prefer meat supplies produced without the use of antibiotics as feed additives. An informational hearing to address this bill is scheduled March 17.

A Lawsuit Filed By The Northwest Animal Rights Network (NARN) seeks to force the Washington state legislature to protect livestock from inhumane treatment and to define what constitutes such treatment. According to *Capital Press*, an agriculture website, the suit names the state of Washington and King County as defendants. Under existing state law in Washington, livestock owners and handlers are exempted from prosecution on animal cruelty charges if "accepted" and "customary" animal husbandry practices are followed. NARN is asking the King County Superior Court in Seattle to declare the exemptions unconstitutional and require the legislature to spell out what animal husbandry practices are approved.

Texas A&M University (TAMU) Has Been Awarded More Than \$400,000 in grant money as part of a USDA effort to support research, education and outreach in animal genomics. The money given to TAMU is a portion of the more than \$11 million being distributed to 15 states. "President Obama understands that to remain globally competitive in the livestock business and to continue to produce safe, nutritious products from livestock requires the application of cutting-edge genetics and breeding programs," Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack said.

March 9 Is The Pre-Registration Deadline For The TSCRA Convention And School. Registering early will save you money. For more information, and to register, go to <http://www.texascatlerraisers.org/09Convention/registration.html>.

The Best Cattle in Cattle Feeding Country will make their way to the historic Amarillo Livestock Auction on Wednesday, April 15 for the 2009 TCFA Fed Beef Challenge. Feedyards from throughout the TCFA area will bring top quality steers and heifers to compete for awards, cash and bragging rights. In addition to the carcass contest to determine the best beef, there will be a live evaluation contest, a steak feed and special activities benefiting the TCFA Education Foundation. Watch future editions of the *Newsletter* or go to <http://www.tcfa.org/FBC/2009Flyer.pdf> for further details. Contact Trent Tyson at (806) 358-3681 or trent@tcfa.org for more information and to enter.

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