



TEXAS CATTLE FEEDERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

5501 I-40 WEST

AMARILLO, TEXAS 79106

806 / 358-3681

Volume 43, Number 14

April 3, 2009

Officers And Members Of TCFA And TSCRA Joined Forces In Austin this week. The delegation of cattlemen met with Texas Governor Rick Perry, Lieutenant Governor David Dewhurst, Attorney General Greg Abbott, Comptroller Susan Combs and several members of the Texas Legislature to discuss eminent domain, renewable energy incentives, increasing truck weights, increasing penalties for cattle theft, funding items and several other important issues. The participants were also introduced in the House and Senate Chambers as the Legislature designated April 1, 2009, as Texas Cattlemen's Day at the Capitol. TCFA participants included Chairman Monte Cluck, Chairman-Elect Mike Engler, Vice-Chairman Bo Kizziar and Legislative and Regulatory Committee Member Jason Peeler. TSCRA participants were President Dave Scott, First Vice President Joe Parker, Second Vice President Clay Birdwell, Past President Dick Sherron and Legislative and Tax Committee Chairman Arthur Uhl.



Click on the picture above for a larger image.

The First USDA Acreage Estimate For New Crop Corn was released Tuesday. The projection for planted corn acres was 84.986 million acres, compared to 85.982 million acres a year ago. Initial reaction to the report among traders was neutral to slightly friendly because the estimate was smaller than a year ago. Uncertainty prior to USDA's release escalated because of an unusually wide range of estimates by various forecasters, who offered guesses ranging from 80 million acres on the low end to 89 million on the high end, with the average estimate at 84.27 million. In light of all the worry about shortages of corn as a result of farmers cutting production, it is important to remember that the current estimate forecasts the third largest corn crop in history. Corn prices were sharply higher for the day Tuesday because of carryover support from soybean prices, which went sharply higher on acreage estimates that were substantially smaller than expected. Survey data for this report was collected during February, and since that time there has been a lot of price balancing between corn and soybeans that makes corn look more attractive to farmers. Also there has been an additional decline in fertilizer prices that makes planting corn more appealing. There are a lot of uncertainties to work through before this week's planted acreage expectations are assured.

Another Dairy Herd Retirement Has Been Announced by Cooperatives Working Together (CWT). All bids must be postmarked by May 1. There is no set target on the number of cows or the volume of milk to be removed in this round, according to a CWT release. This is the seventh herd retirement round since CWT began operations in 2003. Two rounds conducted last year combined to remove 76,000 cows.

EPA Will Host Two Public Meetings to review and discuss the Draft EPA Region 6 General Permit for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations located in Oklahoma. The first meeting is April 20 at 7 p.m. at the Wes Watkins Technology Center in Wetumka. The second meeting is April 21 at 7 p.m. at the High Plains Technology Center in Woodward. The draft permit was proposed by EPA on March 25 and the comment period closes on April 24. Contact Ben Weinheimer at ben@tcfa.org for additional information.

The U.S. Senate Voted 51-48 To Pass The Lincoln – Kyl Death Tax Amendment to the FY2010 Budget Resolution Thursday night. This amendment would raise the exemption levels for the Death Tax to \$5 million per individual and \$10 million per couple. Amendments to the budget do not have the force of law but are guidelines for committees that have jurisdiction over the policies in the amendments. However, the vote

did serve to raise awareness for tax reform. TCFA and NCBA are grateful to members who contacted their Senators and to the Senators who voted for the amendment.

Senators also passed, by a vote of 53-46, the Durbin Amendment to prohibit the further consideration of death tax measures within the FY2010 Budget Resolution unless the amendment provides for tax relief for Americans earning under \$100,000 per year.

TCFA Dues Rebates Available. If you fed 10,000 head or more in 2008, you may apply for a dues rebate. The rebate is based on the cumulative number of cattle fed by a single feeding entity. Rebate applications must be completed and returned to the TCFA office by **April 15**. For more information or to request an application, call TCFA at (806) 358-3681 or contact Trent Tyson at trent@tcfa.org or Kaci Barclay at kaci@tcfa.org.

The 2009 TCFA Fed Beef Challenge is just around the corner! This contest is the chance for feedyards throughout the TCFA area to put their best cattle forward and once again prove that the best beef in the world comes from Cattle Feeding Country. Feedyards and feeders can enter pens of steers or heifers in the contest and vie for awards, prize money and bragging rights. In addition, the live evaluation contest gives feedyard employees the chance to win a custom-made saddle, college students a chance to win valuable scholarships, and everyone else a chance to prove they know their cattle. For more information on the Fed Beef Challenge log on to <http://www.tcfa.org/events.html> or contact Trent Tyson at (806) 358-3681 or trent@tcfa.org.

The 2009 Junior Fed Beef Career & Leadership Program will be held in Canyon June 29-July 1. This program, hosted by TCFA in conjunction with Texas AgriLife Extension Service and West Texas A&M University, educates incoming high school juniors and seniors about the fed beef industry and career options that are available in the cattle feeding business. Students will tour commercial cattle feeding operations and a beef processing facility, interact with feedyard managers and employees, participate in day-to-day feedyard operations, and learn beef carcass anatomy and fabrication. Students also have the opportunity to participate in job shadowing at an area feedyard after the program. Applications for the program must be turned in to TCFA prior to May 1. For more information about the Junior Fed Beef Career and Leadership Program and to obtain an application go to <http://www.tcfa.org/jfbc/FeedyardCamp.html> or contact Trent Tyson at (806) 358-3681 or trent@tcfa.org.

Cargill Has Begun Implementing A Third-Party Video Auditing Program at its U.S. beef plants. According to a Cargill news release, the 24-hour a day monitoring will "further enhance the company's animal welfare protection systems." All of Cargill's U.S. beef plants will have the program in place by the end of 2009. The system was developed in collaboration with Dr. Temple Grandin, one of the industry's foremost experts on animal handling, and is designed to help plant operators teach and monitor performance in animal handling. "Cargill has adopted some of the most rigorous animal care guidelines in the industry," said Cargill Beef President John Keating. "This additional investment gives us the objective input we need to effectively train our people and improve our processes."

Legislation Against The Processing Of Horses has been filed by U.S. Senators Mary Landrieu (D-La.) and John Ensign (R-Nev.). A Landrieu news release said the bill would "prohibit the shipping, transporting, moving, delivering, receiving, possessing, purchasing, selling or donation of horses and other equines" for processing for human consumption. Thirteen Senators have signed on as co-sponsors including Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), Robert Byrd (D-W. Va.), Ben Cardin (D-Md.), Tom Carper (D-Del.), Susan Collins (R-Maine), Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), John Kerry (D-Mass.), Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.), Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), Carl Levin (D-Mich.), Joe Lieberman (I-Conn.), John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Robert Menendez (D-N.J.). Similar legislation, H.R. 503, was introduced in the U.S. House in January. Both bills have been named the "Prevention of Equine Cruelty Act."

A Mandatory Livestock Traceback System May Prove Necessary, Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack told *Reuters*. But before he would go the mandatory route, Vilsack said he would need to get insight from opponents of the idea. "There is very serious dissatisfaction with the current system" among lawmakers who are convinced the voluntary process is not working as well as it should be, Vilsack said. "What I'm hoping to do is get a system, whether it's voluntary or mandatory ... that works." Whichever course is chosen for traceback, Vilsack said the system must protect the country from market disruptions and homeland security

threats. He also said the system must be supported by a majority of the people who are willing to comply rather than find a way around it.

Two Grain Grading Workshops will be offered by Texas AgriLife Extension Service in Amarillo. Those interested can choose to attend either Tuesday, May 5 or Wednesday, May 6. The workshop will be held at the Texas AgriLife Research & Extension Center in Amarillo. For more information and to register for the workshop go to <http://www.tcfa.org/events.html> or contact Jane Planchon at (806) 677-5600 or japlanchon@ag.tamu.edu.

Addressing Trade Barriers is the subject of a report U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) Ron Kirk sent to Congress Tuesday. Kirk said USTR is:

- Beginning a review of the implementation of existing trade agreements, including the enforcement of the labor and environment provisions
- Initiating a process to prioritize trade barriers and address the most significant
- Identifying new cases where market access for U.S. goods and services is in jeopardy because of disregard for the rule of law, costing our workers and businesses export opportunities and jobs
- Planning to prosecute those cases through multilateral and bilateral dispute resolution, so that American workers can trust that their trading system yields results; and
- Working with Congress to improve trade enforcement.

PETA Kills Pets: The Center for Consumer Freedom (CCF) has published documents online showing that PETA killed 95% of the adoptable pets in its care during 2008. A CCF news release said, PETA kills an average of 5.8 pets every day at its Norfolk, Va. headquarters. According to public records from the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, PETA killed 2,124 pets last year and placed only seven in adoptive homes. Since 1998, a total of 21,339 dogs and cats have died at the hands of PETA workers.

Despite having a \$32 million budget, PETA does not operate an adoption shelter. CCF Research Director David Martosko said, "Since killing pets is A-OK with PETA, why should anyone listen to their demands about eating meat, using lab rats for medical research, or taking children to the circus?"

If you would like to see the documents, go to <http://www.petakillsanimals.com/downloads/PetaKillsAnimals.pdf>.

VeraSun Energy Corp. Has Closed On The Sale Of Assets To Valero Renewable Fuels that included five ethanol production facilities and a development site. The production facilities are located in Aurora, S.D.; Fort Dodge, Charles City, and Hartley, Iowa; and Welcome, Minn. The development site is in Reynolds, Ind. A VeraSun news release said these assets were sold for a total of \$350 million. Meanwhile, Valero has also successfully bid \$72 million for a VeraSun facility in Albert City, Neb. and \$55 million for a facility in Albion, Iowa. Closing on the Albert City and Albion facilities is expected in the near future.

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