



TEXAS CATTLE FEEDERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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Texas Legislature Update: The Senate passed the \$182.3 billion state budget this week, and the House is expected to pass the bill late Friday or early Saturday. Of specific interest to TCFA members, the bill includes \$850,000 to continue distiller's grains feeding research and \$525,000 for ongoing air quality research related to livestock production by Texas AgriLife Research in Amarillo. A more detailed summary of the appropriations bill will be posted at <http://www.tcfa.org> as soon as the legislation is finalized.

In addition to the budget, lawmakers are working hard to reconcile the differences between House bills and Senate bills, hoping that they can be passed and sent to Governor Perry prior to the June 1 adjournment of the Legislature. The Governor has 20 days after adjournment to veto or approve (with or without his signature) any legislation. There is also growing speculation that the Governor will call the Legislature back into special session this summer to consider important legislation (including eminent domain reform) that was not finalized during the regular session because of procedural timelines.

Japan Is Receiving "Controlled Risk" Status From The OIE, a designation that means Japan's beef industry has sufficient safeguards against BSE. *Reuters* reports that analysts believe the OIE decision will add pressure on Japan to allow more U.S. beef imports, which are currently limited to product from cattle 20 months of age or younger. A Japanese news service, *Nikkei*, reported this week that Japanese government officials have begun exploring the possibility of raising the age of domestic cattle subject to BSE inspection to 30 months and older. An easing of the restrictions on Japan's own cattle could lead to relaxation of the age limit on U.S. beef. The U.S. received Controlled Risk status two years ago.

Pushing For More Justice Department Involvement In Agriculture, U.S. Senator Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) sent a letter this week to Christine Varney, the Assistant Attorney General for the Antitrust Division. Grassley's letter said he was prompted to write by a news report that the Justice Department "will be paying more attention to competition in the agricultural sector."

"You should know that I am fully supportive of any plans to step up the Justice Department's oversight of mergers, acquisitions and business practices in agriculture to ensure that these transactions do not harm competition," Grassley said in his letter. "I welcome any plans by the Justice Department to make agriculture a priority for the Antitrust Division."

Grassley also wrote that he believes "the agriculture industry has consolidated to the point where family farmers, independent producers and other smaller market participants do not have equal access to fair and competitive markets. Large agribusinesses are in a far better position to engage in anti-competitive and predatory business practices."

Study Finds No Link Between Red Meat And Breast Cancer. The study by the National Institutes of Health and the American Association of Retired Persons followed 120,755 post-menopausal women who responded to questions about their food selections and methods of cooking. Although 3,818 cases of invasive breast cancer were ultimately identified among the women in the study, there was no evidence of a connection to red meat consumption. The researchers concluded "results of this large prospective cohort of post-menopausal women do not support the hypothesis that a high intake of meat, red meat, processed meat, meat cooked at high temperatures, or meat mutagens is associated with increased risk of breast cancer." The research was led by Geoffrey C. Kabat at Albert Einstein College in New York and reported in the *International Journal of Cancer*. You can read more about the study by going to <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/fulltext/121545204/PDFSTART>.

USDA Has Announced Six More Listening Sessions On NAIS, including one June 16 in Albuquerque. The time and place for the session has not been announced. When that information is available, it will be posted at <http://animalid.aphis.usda.gov/nais/feedback.shtml>.

Although it is not mandatory, participants are asked to pre-register by e-mailing NAISSessions@aphis.usda.gov or calling (301) 734-0799. If you pre-register by e-mail, please use the subject line to indicate your name (or organization name) and the location of the meeting you plan to attend. If you wish to present comments during one of the meetings, please include your name (or organization name) and address in the body of the message.

A Religious Sect Claims That Meat Consumption Is Tied To Global Warming in television commercials airing in several markets around the country. The public service announcement, which ends with a call-to-action to visit the website <http://www.LetsActNow.org>, appears to be an effort of [Supreme Master Television](#), a free-to-air satellite broadcasting channel run by a self-described spiritual teacher, Ching Hai. Supreme Master Television operates out of its Los Angeles studio and features programs that "support a modern lifestyle that is green, healthy and compassionate."

If you see one of these commercials airing on a station in your area, please contact TCFA Communications Director James Hunt at james@tcfa.org or (806) 358-3681. Also, if you would like to contact a station running these commercials, NCBA offers the following suggestions:

- Supreme Master Television is a vegetarian activist group. Allowing this group to disguise its business advertisements as public service announcements does a disservice to your viewers. Supreme Master Television's current line-up of shows includes titles such as "Vegetarianism: The Noble Way of Living" and "Vegetarian Elite." Additionally, the group runs a chain of vegan restaurants.
- Cattlemen are committed to leaving the environment in better shape for the next generation. Preserving, conserving and restoring this country's natural resources like open space, grasslands, wetlands, clean air and wildlife habitat are as important to us as they are to you. More than half the agricultural land in the United States is unsuitable for crop production. Grazing animals on this land more than doubles the land area that can be used to produce food in this country.
- Beef contributes significantly to a healthy diet and minimally to total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the United States. According to EPA, the entire U.S. agricultural sector contributes just 6% of total U.S. GHG emissions. Raising cattle serves a valuable role in the ecosystem by converting the forages humans cannot consume into a nutrient-dense food. Just one 3-oz. serving of beef supplies 10 essential nutrients to your diet. Beef is nature's best-tasting multivitamin!

President Obama Would Like Ethanol Producers To Move Beyond Corn but concedes that is not possible in the short term. In a letter to the Governor's Biofuels Coalition, Obama wrote, "My administration is committed to moving as quickly as possible to commercialize an array of emerging cellulosic technologies so that tomorrow's biofuels will be produced from sustainable biomass feedstocks and waste materials rather than corn. But this transition will be successful only if the first-generation biofuels industry remains viable in the near term." Obama's letter also touted the perceived economic development benefits of biofuels development and production and said that, along with energy efficiency, "biofuels are the primary near-term option for insulating consumers against future oil price shocks and for lowering the transportation sector's carbon footprint."

U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk Says Growing International Markets For Beef and other U.S. red meat is important to the Obama Administration. In remarks made to USMEF, NCBA and other meat industry leaders in Washington, D.C. last week, Kirk said, "Progress for the U.S. meat industry is progress for the American economy, progress for American families and progress in the global marketplace."

Kirk saluted the fact that more than 60 countries now accept all U.S. beef and beef products consistent with OIE guidelines, but added, "We still have more to do."

"Too many of our trading partners – especially Japan, Taiwan, China, and Hong Kong – maintain unscientific restrictions on U.S. beef," said Kirk, adding that the Administration is reviewing such restrictions as it develops "a policy and approach to achieve meaningful and sustainable market openings for U.S. meat products."

At 2.13 Billion Lbs., U.S. Beef Production In April Was Down 5% when compared to the same month a year ago, according to a USDA report. The 2.77 million head harvested was a 6% drop from April 2008. The average live weight of 1,276 lbs. was up 17 lbs. from the previous year.

USDA also reported beef stocks in cold storage in April were down 3.5% from March and 1.3% lower than April 2008. Some analysts offered optimism that a drawdown in boneless product will help support prices for beef producers as the dairy herd buyout announced two weeks ago begins.

Applications For The Second Annual National Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) Award are now being accepted. The award will recognize two producers – one each from the beef and dairy industries – that best demonstrate animal care and handling principles as part of their day-to-day activities. Contest entrants must have a strong desire to continually improve BQA on their operations while encouraging others to implement the producer education program. The award winners will be selected by a committee of representatives from universities, state beef councils and affiliated groups. Nominations can be submitted by any organization, group or individual on behalf of a U.S. beef producer. Individuals and families may not nominate themselves. However, the nominees are expected to be involved in the preparation of the application.

The deadline for applications is July 1. For more information or to download the application, go to <http://www.bqa.org/progNationalBQAAward.aspx>.

Life After CRP: Texas AgriLife Extension Service is sponsoring two conferences about opportunities and alternatives available to landowners with expiring CRP contracts. The conferences will run from 8 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. on June 17 at the AgriLife Research and Extension Center in Amarillo and on June 18 at the AgriLife Research and Extension Center in Lubbock. For more information and to register, go to <http://agnews.tamu.edu/showstory.php?id=1209>.

Hen Housing Study: McDonald's USA will participate in commercial-scale research of housing alternatives for egg-laying hens in the U.S., including cage-free housing. *Feedstuffs* reported McDonald's announcement of its involvement brought mixed results from animal rights organizations, with the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) saying it is simply a stall tactic and the American Humane Association (AHA), a participant in the study, saying such research is needed to determine if differences do exist in laying hen production systems in regard to welfare implications for the birds. The study will also look at environmental, food safety and economic issues related to laying hen production systems.

The research is being led by Michigan State University and the University of California-Davis. Along with McDonald's, the coalition advising the study includes AHA, the American Veterinary Medical Association, the USDA-ARS, Cargill Inc. and the Center for Food Integrity.

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