



# TEXAS CATTLE FEEDERS ASSOCIATION

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# NEWSLETTER

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**President Obama To Delay Free Trade Deals Until Fall.** According to the *Washington Post*, President Barack Obama is putting off sending final legislation on three key free trade agreements to Capitol Hill until September because of the protracted talks over raising the nation's debt limit.

Obama aides were ready to send the trade deals with South Korea, Colombia and Panama to lawmakers this week, but congressional leaders from both parties asked the administration to delay the agreements until after Congress returns from its August recess. Sources spoke on the condition of anonymity because the delay has not been formally announced.

The White House said Wednesday it was still committed to finalizing the free trade agreements as well as a retraining assistance package, known as Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) for American workers displaced by trade.

The White House has insisted that lawmakers pass TAA alongside the trade deals, but Republicans oppose the administration efforts to link the retraining assistance program to the pacts. Even if the administration had been able to send the trade deals to Congress this summer, it is unclear whether there would have been a clear path to passage given the disagreements on TAA.

**Ag Organizations Apply Pressure To Complete Debt Deal.** The U.S. House has passed the Cut, Cap and Balance bill mostly along party lines, *Farm Futures* reports. The Senate is expected to begin debating the bill this week. And while the White House continues its meetings on the debt limit, the bipartisan Senate "Gang of Six" has offered a plan that would trim \$3.7 trillion in federal spending over the next decade. This bill would include \$11 billion in cuts for agriculture over the next 10 years.

The "Gang's" members insist their goal is a long-term deficit reduction deal, not a solution to the standoff over raising the \$14.3 trillion debt ceiling. A spokesman for House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) said the plan shares many similarities with the framework the Speaker discussed with the President but also appears not ready for consideration.

The American Soybean Association, National Corn Growers Association and National Association of Wheat Growers are part of the coalition urging President Obama and Congressional leaders to resolve the continuing impasse on raising the ceiling on the national debt.

While the U.S. debt ceiling continues to dominate debate in Washington, D.C., a great deal of the discussion hinges on job creation and fiscal responsibility. However, NCBA Vice President of Government Affairs Colin Woodall said more attention should be given to curbing the administration's onslaught of "burdensome, costly and scientifically unfounded" regulations as a way to cut spending and prevent further job loss in rural America.

"There are so many factors being overlooked inside the Beltway that could stimulate the economy, create jobs and assist in reducing wasteful, unnecessary spending. The administration would minimize, if not eliminate, the risk of pushing farmers, ranchers and small businesses out of business if needless, costly regulations were never proposed. This is a real threat and one that needs to be addressed during spending debates," said Woodall.

To view the video, "Obama's Regulatory Train Wreck," visit <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DlycP6R-Nh8&feature=email>.

**New Groundwater Management Rules Were Adopted This Week** by the High Plains Underground Water Conservation District No. 1 (HPWD). The new rules are intended to implement a 50/50 management plan—having 50% of the water in the Ogallala Aquifer available after 50 years (2010-2060).

Some of the key requirements in the new rules include:

- Establish Allowable Production Rates to be phased in over five years, which would allow for 21 inches of water per contiguous acre per year in 2012 and 2013; then to 18 inches of water per contiguous acre

per year in 2014 and 2015; and then to 15 inches of water per contiguous acre per year in 2016 and every year thereafter.

- Allow owners/operators to carry forward all or a portion of a current year's Allowable Production Rate for use in any of the following three calendar years.
- Require water use reports to be filed with the District on March 1 of each year, beginning March 1, 2013. For calendar years 2012-2015, reports can be filed based on metered water use or by means of an alternate measuring method (to be published by the HPWD later this year).
- Require meters to be installed on all wells or well systems beginning Jan. 1, 2016.

As reported in previous *Newsletters*, many of TCFA's concerns were addressed. The HPWD provided two rounds of public meetings/hearings and opportunities for both oral and written public comment.

"Our policy supports the rule of capture and believes that groundwater is the real, vested property of private landowners with limited, reasonable regulation, based on sound scientific principles, by locally elected groundwater conservation districts to ensure beneficial future use," said **TCFA Chairman Bo Kizziar**. "This process has been a good example of the importance of maintaining control of groundwater at the local level."

To view the final rules, go to the HPWD website at <http://www.hpwd.com>. For more information, contact TCFA Vice President Ben Weinheimer at [ben@tcfa.org](mailto:ben@tcfa.org) or (806) 358-3681.

**The Initial Reaction To The July 1 Cattle Inventory Report** was neutral to slightly bearish, since the rate of liquidation on the breeding herd was not as severe as was anticipated. Beef replacement heifers were well below the expected level, showing less than expected beef expansion plans and reflecting the strong demand for feeder cattle. The number of available feeder steers and cattle on feed were both in line with expectations.

All **Cattle and calves** are 99% of a year ago at 100 million head, **Cows and heifers** that have calved 99% at 40.6 million, **Beef cows** 99% at 31.4 million and **Milk cows** 101% at 9.2 million. All **Heifers** 500 lbs. and over are 99% at 16 million, **Beef replacement heifers** 95% at 4.2 million and **Dairy replacement heifers** 104% at 4.2 million. **Other heifers** are 98% at 7.6 million.

**Steers** weighing 500 lbs. and over are 99% of a year ago at 14.2 million head. **Bulls** weighing 500 lbs. and over are 95% at 2 million, and **Calves** under 500 lbs. are 99% at 27.2 million.

**Calf crop** are 99% of a year ago at 35.5 million head and **Cattle on feed** at 103%.

**NCBA And TCFA Oppose *Meat Eaters Guide To Climate Change And Health***. The Environmental Working Group (EWG), a non-profit organization based in Washington, D.C., released the *Meat Eater's Guide to Climate Change and Health*, a multi-featured tool which includes a website, quiz, interactive lifecycle graphics and other resources intended to demonstrate to consumers how food choices impact their environmental footprint and health. According to the report, beef ranks second as having the highest environmental footprint, following lamb, according to a "cradle-to-grave" lifecycle assessment that the group conducted with CleanMetrics, an environmental analysis and consulting firm.

The calculations of the report claim that if everyone in the U.S. ate no meat or cheese just one day a week, over a year, the effect on emissions would be the equivalent of taking 7.6 million cars off the road.

"By eating and wasting less meat, consumers can help limit the environmental damage caused by the huge amounts of fertilizer, fuel, water and pesticides, not to mention the toxic manure and wastewater, that goes along with producing meat," said Kari Hamerschlag, EWG senior analyst and author of the report. "Choosing healthier, pasture-raised meats can also help improve people's health and reduce the environmental damage associated with meat consumption."

NCBA and TCFA strongly question the lack of science in the *Meat Eater's Guide to Climate Change and Health*. Many experts agree the way livestock is produced in the U.S. is environmentally sustainable meaning U.S. farmers and ranchers can raise more beef, more affordably and more consistently with a smaller cattle herd while using fewer natural resources. TCFA urges Masters of Beef Advocacy (MBA) graduates to comment in online articles regarding this report. Consumer-friendly fact sheets and information are available on the Explore Beef website at <http://www.explorebeef.org/>.

**USDA To Launch Feedlot 2011 Study**. Selected feedlot managers/owners will be contacted by representatives from USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) during August to begin the first phase of *Feedlot 2011*, a national study of beef feedlots in the U.S. TCFA recommends that feedyards participate to help develop an accurate database of industry information.

Conducted by USDA's National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS), *Feedlot 2011* will provide the industry with an update of critical information last collected 12 years ago during the NAHMS Feedlot '99 study.

Five objectives for the study include:

1. Describe changes in management practices and animal health in feedlots.
2. Describe the management practices in feedlots that impact product quality.
3. Identify factors associated with shedding of potential foodborne pathogens or commensal organisms by feedlot cattle.
4. Describe antimicrobial usage in feedlots.
5. Describe biosecurity practices and capabilities in feedlots.

The information that feedlot producers provide will be used to estimate the use of certain management practices—such as those related to beef quality assurance—and to identify potential risk factors associated with disease in U.S. feedlots. Understanding the risk factors for disease can improve prevention strategies and help pinpoint areas where additional research may be needed.

From August 1 through 30, NASS representatives will administer the study questionnaire to participants on large feedlots (1,000 head or more) in 12 states and to participants on small feedlots (less than 1,000 head) in 13 states. For large feedlots, the questionnaire will be completed on-site, while the questionnaire for small feedlots will be completed by telephone. In addition, owners/operators of large feedlots will have the opportunity to participate in phase two of the study, information for which will be collected by representatives from USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service from October through December.

Participation in the *Feedlot 2011* study is voluntary, and links between NAHMS data and participating operations are not included in national databases. For additional information on this topic, contact Lyndsay Cole at (970) 494-7410 or [lyndsay.m.cole@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:lyndsay.m.cole@aphis.usda.gov).

**CBB Nominees Sought.** TCFA is a certified nominating organization and is in the process of identifying potential nominees for appointment to the Cattlemen's Beef Board. Please email names and bios of qualified and interested individuals to [ross@tcfa.org](mailto:ross@tcfa.org). To see the USDA letter to nominating organizations which outlines required considerations for diversity of nominees, visit [http://www.tcfa.org/Newsletter/2011\\_links/2011-03-11-advance\\_cpo\\_memo.pdf](http://www.tcfa.org/Newsletter/2011_links/2011-03-11-advance_cpo_memo.pdf).

**FSIS Launches "Ask Karen" Program As A Mobile App For Smartphones.** The USDA Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) has launched a web-based smartphone app based on its "Ask Karen" food safety service.

According to *Meatingplace.com*, "Ask Karen" offers consumers access to a database of nearly 1,500 answers to food safety questions through a website featuring a virtual representative named "Karen." Topics include safe food preparation, foodborne organisms, food storage, additives and irradiation. Users also can search for information about food by product, such as venison, bacon, dairy, beef, rabbit and fish. The information is available in both English and Spanish on the site as well as through the mobile app.

To visit the website, go to [http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Food\\_Safety\\_Education/Ask\\_Karen/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Food_Safety_Education/Ask_Karen/index.asp).

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