

**Food Safety:** Beef safety is the #1 priority for cattle producers. As an industry, we're proud of the strong systems we have in place to ensure a safe, high-quality product for consumers, and we're constantly looking for ways to improve upon those processes. As the House and Senate continue to work out details of a food safety bill, we'll be working to make sure it meets our common goal of increasing food safety, without creating unintended consequences for industry or agriculture.

**Antibiotic use in livestock:** Congress is considering the Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act (PAMTA), which would phase out the use of non-therapeutic antibiotics in animals. The judicious use of antibiotics is a necessary and important tool to prevent, control, and treat disease in cattle. Prohibiting all low-level applications of antibiotics used in livestock will reduce our ability to address disease in cattle. All antibiotics used in beef cattle production go through a rigorous testing process before being approved by the FDA. In multiple studies, no connection has been found between antibiotic use in cattle and antibiotic-resistant foodborne or other pathogens. It's important that any decisions about the use of antibiotics are based on science, and not politics.

**Climate change:** The Cap and Trade bill—as passed in the House—could significantly increase energy prices. Increased energy prices would mean increased fuel, electricity, feed, fertilizer, equipment, and other input prices for cattle operations. Some economists estimate that the Cap and Trade bill could decrease farm income by \$8 billion in the short term and over \$50 billion long term. NCBA opposed the House bill because of concerns about increased operating costs and potential regulation, and is working with the Senate to improve the legislation.

**Death Tax:** This year, estates valued at more than \$3.5 million, or \$7 million for a couple, are taxed at a 45% rate. If Congress doesn't act to reduce the estate tax, in 2011 it will revert to a staggering 55% tax on estates worth only \$1 million or more. Most cattle producers have businesses that have been passed down through the generations for more than 50 years, and their families want to continue these traditions. Specific agricultural relief would benefit the American public through greater food security, maintenance of important open space and environmental resources while also helping to preserve valued traditions and lifestyle. According to the USDA Economic Research Service, one in ten farm estates (farms with sales of \$250,000 or more annually) are likely to owe estate taxes in 2009. NCBA is asking Congress to support H.R. 3524, the Family Farm and Conservation Preservation Act, sponsored by Congressmen Thompson (D-CA) and Salazar (D-CO), and support additional estate tax relief for agriculture operations in tax extender legislation.

**Transportation Reauthorization:** Agriculture and cattle production are unlike the manufacturing industry. During busy seasons, our transportation needs don't comply with normal working schedules. For that reason, cattle producers need Congress to increase the allowable truck weight limits for certain agricultural vehicles, which will increase productivity and make us more competitive with Mexico and Canada, which allow 97,000 lb trucks. Additionally, because of the varying conditions needed for pasturing cattle versus feeding cattle, livestock must frequently be transported across state borders. Uniform standards are critical for a smooth flow of commerce. NCBA is supporting H.R. 1799—The Safe and Efficient Transportation Act of 2009—would allow states to permit vehicles to haul agricultural products up to 97,000 pounds with the addition of a third axle; HR 1220—the Farm Truck Bill—which would exempt agricultural haulers from federal

commercial motor vehicle and operating regulations and raise the federal definition of commercial vehicles from 10,001 pounds to 26,000 pounds; and S.639, a Senate bill which would provide similar measures.

**Clean Water Restoration Act:** NCBA is working to defeat this Act. The existing Clean Water Act has been highly successful thanks to the strong partnership that exists between the federal and state governments which allows states flexibility to manage their own land and water in a way that makes sense. According to legal experts, there is ample authority under current statutes to regulate clean water. The proposed Clean Water Restoration Act is not about clean water; it's about total watershed control by the government. At a time when our resources are already stretched thin, it makes no sense to expand the government's responsibility to mud holes and other wet areas with little to no environmental value to the public.

In addition to meetings on Capitol Hill, members also participated in meetings with key officials at the Agriculture Marketing Service, Food Safety and Inspection Service, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Foreign Agricultural Service, Global Change Program, Marketing Regulatory Programs, Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, Food and Drug Administration, Environmental Protection Agency, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, Bureau of Land Management, and Fish and Wildlife Service.