

Full length version of articles abbreviated in TCFA Newsletter print edition.

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Cattlemen Oppose Proposed Changes To Clean Water Act

A bill that would expand the federal government's jurisdiction over water was the subject of a hearing by the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works. NCBA, TCFA and other livestock groups oppose this bill because it would subject cattle producers to unprecedented and unwarranted federal regulatory intrusion into their private business operations.

S. 1870 would strike the word "navigable" from the Clean Water Act's definition of "waters of the United States." By deleting one critical word, the Act's reach would be expanded to include even the smallest and most isolated bodies of water.

Montana rancher Randy Smith testified on behalf of NCBA at the hearing.

"It is one thing to regulate navigable waters and wetlands that have a 'significant nexus' to those waters, because they have true environmental value," Smith told the Committee. "It is another thing to regulate every wet area, or potentially wet area simply because it is wet, regardless of the fact that these areas provide very little if any environmental value. To think that a rancher would be forced to get a Section 404 permit whenever a cow stepped in a dry wash or a puddle is nothing less than shocking."

U.S. And South Korea Revive Trade Talks on Beef Trade

A delegation of U.S. trade negotiators is in Seoul for discussions on beef trade a week ahead of a scheduled U.S. visit by South Korea's new president. Talks on the issue have been stalled since October when an agreement could not be reached on import standards.

The delegation to South Korea is headed by President Bush's nominee for the post of Chief Agricultural Negotiator in the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, Ellen Terpstra, who is currently the USDA under secretary for farm and foreign agricultural services.

South Korean President Lee Myung-bak is scheduled to hold meetings with President Bush at Camp David April 17-18. Resolving the beef trade issue is considered critical to the effort to complete the U.S./South Korean Free Trade Agreement.

Lee has given indications that he will be more receptive to U.S. overtures than was his predecessor. If so, then it was good news this week when elections in South Korea gave Lee's party a parliamentary majority.

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APHIS Has Downgraded Minnesota's bovine tuberculosis status as four TB-infected herds have been detected recently in the state. The reclassification means restrictions for interstate movement of Minnesota cattle, including increased testing and certification requirements, except for animals headed to processing or originating from accredited herds.

FSIS Held a Public Meeting On E. coli issues April 9-10 in Washington, D.C. NCBA's Executive Director of Research Dr. Mandy Carr presented data from Checkoff-funded research and a statement was submitted by Dr. Dean A. Danilson, Vice President, Food Safety & Quality Assurance Tyson Foods, on behalf of members of the Beef Industry Food Safety Coalition (BIFSCo). "The best course of action is for industry and government to continue targeting E. coli O157:H7 with validated interventions and appropriate testing since this is the serogroup that is

most virulent,” the BIFSCo statement said. “Broad spectrum interventions currently in place will have a correlated effect on other serogroups beyond O157.” Additionally, BIFSCo’s statement discourages FSIS from broadening its adulteration policy to include intact products that have rarely shown prevalence of the pathogen, and have not been implicated in food borne illness. It also discourages labeling non-O157 Shiga Toxin-Producing E. coli (STECs) as adulterants because FSIS has no published, validated and accepted laboratory protocol for determining pathogenic STECs in beef and not all STECs cause illness in humans. The public comment period for this meeting remains open for 30 days after the date of the meeting. More information is available at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Frame/FrameRedirect.asp?main=http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OPPDE/rdad/FRPubs/2008-0011.htm>.