



TEXAS CATTLE FEEDERS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

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TCFA Files Comments Opposing Rule to Permit Brazilian Beef Imports

Late last year, the USDA Animal and Plant Inspection Service (APHIS) published a proposed rule to allow the importation of fresh, matured, deboned beef from a 14-state region of Brazil into the U.S. While the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) recognizes the region as “free of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) where vaccination is practiced,” the region, other Brazilian states and bordering countries have had a recurrent history of FMD outbreaks, raising serious concern regarding the potential risk of spreading FMD to the U.S. through the importation of Brazilian beef.

Given the seriousness of the concern, NCBA contracted with a third-party team of scientific experts from the Center for Animal Health and Food Safety at the University of Minnesota to analyze the proposed rule and supporting risk analysis and other supporting documents. The experts determined that the risk assessment was incomplete with regard to the necessary steps and requirements outlined in international standards. Additionally, the process lacked transparency and failed to adequately account for the potential economic impact of an FMD outbreak in the U.S.

TCFA and NCBA both filed comments opposing the proposed rule. TCFA’s comments stated, “Brazil’s history of noncompliance with food safety equivalency standards and international animal disease reporting requirements strongly suggests an inability to consistently implement and enforce risk management measures to prevent the reemergence of FMD within the Region and mitigate the risk of exporting FMD to the U.S. through fresh beef from the Region.

Additionally, APHIS must develop an ongoing oversight protocol to monitor Brazil’s compliance with risk mitigation beyond the usual port of entry testing. We cannot comfortably rely on a self-reporting system in Brazil. The risk to our members and other U.S. livestock producers is far too great and the economic and animal health consequences far too significant to move forward with this proposed rule without absolutely establishing that Brazil has corrected these deficiencies in management, enforcement and infrastructure.”

You can read all of TCFA’s comments at <http://tinyurl.com/braz-imports-comments>.

TCFA Files Comments Raising Concerns Regarding Risk Analysis for Patagonia, Argentina

In January, APHIS published a notice regarding the evaluations of FMD and Rinderpest status for a region of Patagonia, Argentina. While TCFA agrees that scientific evidence supports the finding that South America is free of Rinderpest, there are serious concerns regarding the FMD risk analysis and its development. As with the Brazil rule, NCBA contracted with a third-party team of scientific experts from the Center for Animal Health and Food Safety at the University of Minnesota to evaluate the Patagonia FMD risk analysis.

The experts identified problems with the risk analysis that demonstrated a failure to follow international risk assessment standards and inadequate supportive data and methodology to demonstrate completion of all of the risk assessment steps. Additionally, the process lacked transparency and failed to adequately account for the potential economic impact of an FMD outbreak in the U.S.

TCFA and NCBA both filed comments raising issues of concern with the risk analysis. TCFA’s comments stated, “Prior to any rulemaking, APHIS must conduct additional, scientifically-sound risk, mitigation, compliance and economic analyses to ensure the health and well-being of U.S. livestock, livestock producers and the economy.”

You can read all of TCFA’s comments at <http://tinyurl.com/patagonia-comments>.

Texas Cattle Organizations File Comments Opposing Cattlemen’s Beef Board Reapportionment

The Cattlemen’s Beef Board (CBB) recently approved a plan developed by the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service to eliminate four Board seats: two in Texas, one in New Mexico and one from importer representation. The plan is based on analysis of average cattle inventories in each state and unit during the last three years and will apply to the nomination process in 2014 and affect the number of Board members appointed or reappointed by the Secretary to serve on the Board beginning in 2015.

The Independent Cattlemen's Association, Southwest Meat Association, Texas & Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association, Texas Association of Dairymen, Texas Cattle Feeders Association, Texas CattleWomen, Texas Farm Bureau and Texas Purebred Alliance jointly authored comments opposing the reduction of Board seats for Texas.

"We believe the proposed reduction is premature and unnecessarily penalizes Texas producers and the Texas beef industry, based on the current drought and resulting short-term herd liquidation," the group stated. "Given the timing of the current drought and the fact that 2011 was the driest year on record for the state of Texas, we believe that the 2011-2013 average biases the calculation and should be modified when considering the reapportionment of board seats." Additionally, the group points out that even using the 2011-2013 average of 12,166,667, Texas should receive 13 seats instead of 12.

Supporting the argument that reapportionment is premature, the group also drew attention to the Jan. 1, 2014, cattle report that signals faster growth in the Texas herd (7.5 percent increase in replacement intentions from the previous year), as compared to national growth projections of less than one percent.

You can read the Texas cattle organizations' comments at <http://tinyurl.com/cbb-seats>.

TCFA and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Completed BQA Trainings

Sessions on the Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) Cattle Care & Handling program for member feedyards were held in the TCFA membership area on Tuesday and Wednesday this week. Almost 200 people participated in the trainings, and 40 feedyards were represented.

"We were very pleased with the level of interest and participation in the trainings by feedyard owners, feedyard managers, feedyard employees, nutritionists, veterinarians and custom processing crews," TCFA Vice President Ben Weinheimer said. "That clearly demonstrates a commitment to beef safety, beef quality and cattle care and handling by our members."

TCFA Regulatory Manager Brady Miller said training employees at feedyards is an on-going process. "The requirements for annual training of every feedyard employee, documented in the employee training logs, helps to ensure that employees understand their responsibilities under the BQA program and also demonstrates to beef consumers that all employees have been trained on the BMPs," he said.

Additional BQA and Safety trainings for feed department and yard department employees are set for May 19-22. For more information, view the brochure at <http://tinyurl.com/may-2014-bqa-sem>, or contact Ben Weinheimer at ben@tcfa.org or (806) 358-3681.

Vote Yes for the New Texas Beef Checkoff

The TCFA Board of Directors supports the new \$1-per head Texas Beef Checkoff and respectfully requests TCFA members in Texas join them in voting yes in the referendum June 2-6.

The "uniquely Texas" checkoff, controlled by Texans, would complement and extend current research, promotion and education programs of the Texas Beef Council by more aggressively confronting critically important beef industry challenges. Among these challenges are misleading food safety and animal care claims, anti-meat activists, shifting consumer beef attitudes, as well as competition for export markets.

TCFA Board Member and Former Beef Promotion and Research Council Member Jason Peeler explained that with the federal checkoff, relationships with retail and food service partners have been developed in more than 80 countries, and with more checkoff resources, new opportunities will become a reality.

"Ninety-six percent of the world population lives outside of the United States," he says. "And with my additional Texas beef checkoff dollar, we will continue to open doors all around the world."

Texas producers can vote in person beginning on June 2-6 at any Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service county office during regular business hours. If an eligible producer is unable to vote in person, a mail-in ballot may be requested from the Texas Department of Agriculture between May 19 and June 2 and postmarked no later than close of business Friday, June 6.

For more information, and to view the Texas beef checkoff video, visit www.texasbeefcheckoff.com, or contact a TCFA board or staff member.

Runners Fueled by Beef at 2014 Boston Marathon

The national beef checkoff partnered with the South Dakota Beef Industry Council to ensure that runners fueled up with beef prior to the 118th Boston Marathon on Monday.

According to the *Oklahoma Farm Report*, during the three-day event, an estimated 110,000 health-conscious athletes and supporters had the opportunity to learn about lean beef's role in a heart-healthy diet. More than 36,000 of the world's most elite athletes ran the Boston Marathon on Monday morning. Additional participants were allowed to register this year to help mark the one-year anniversary of the Boston bombings at

the finish line of the marathon on April 15, 2013.

National Beef Ambassador Team members Tori Summey, Justana Von Tate and Sierra Jepsen were on site to distribute about 3,000 lean beef sticks, recipe brochures and beef nutrition information to expo participants. Ambassadors talked with athletes about how cattle are raised and the ways to incorporate lean beef into their diet. The event, in total, brought out about 1 million spectators.

On Team BEEF, 13 runners from Kansas, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia and Wisconsin participated in this year's marathon. Team Beef runner profiles are available at <http://tinyurl.com/run-profiles>. Read the full story at <http://tinyurl.com/ofr-boston-marathon>.

Grass-Fed Vs. Grain-Fed Ground Beef – No Difference In Healthfulness

Is ground beef from grass-fed cattle healthier than that from conventionally raised ground beef? Texas A&M University (TAMU) research says no. According to Beef magazine, TAMU researchers published the only two studies that actually compare the effects of ground beef from grass-fed cattle and traditional, grain-fed cattle on risk factors for cardiovascular disease (CVD) and type II diabetes in men.

In the studies, men consumed both types of ground beef for five weeks in randomized crossover trials. In older, mildly hypercholesterolemic men, ground beef from grass-fed cattle decreased HDL-cholesterol. In men with normal cholesterol levels, only ground beef from grain-fed cattle increased HDL-cholesterol. Neither ground beef type increased LDL-cholesterol in men.

Additionally, plasma insulin was decreased by ground beef from both grass-fed and grain-fed cattle, indicating that ground beef in general reduces this important risk factor for type II diabetes. Thus, neither type of ground beef had negative effects on risk factors for CVD or type II diabetes, but the ground beef from the grain-fed cattle provided more positive health benefits by increasing HDL-cholesterol.

According to the research, there is no scientific evidence to support the claim that ground beef from grass-fed cattle is a healthier alternative to ground beef from conventionally raised, grain-fed cattle. Read the full story at <http://tinyurl.com/grass-grain-ground-beef>.

Retailer First to Launch USDA Certified Very Tender Beef Program

North Carolina-based Harris Teeter has become the first retailer in the country to offer USDA Certified Very Tender beef. According to *Meatingplace*, the Kroger-owned subsidiary began labeling its Reserve Angus beef brand with the USDA Certified Very Tender label in its stores this week.

In October 2012, USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) launched its industry standards for tenderness marketing claims. AMS developed the standards by which meat processors may receive USDA certification for "tender" or "very tender" product through third-party verification.

Cargill Meat Solutions was the first processor to have its tender program certified by USDA and will provide Harris Teeter with the cuts eligible for certification. These cuts include ribeye, strip loin, short loin, tenderloin and top blade. Although four other retailers – Safeway Inc., Homeland Stores, Country Mart Stores and United Supermarkets – are marketing USDA Certified Tender Beef, Harris Teeter is the first to market its products under the Very Tender label. Find the full story at <http://tinyurl.com/very-tender>.

New Finding in Drought-Related Plant Research

DuPont Pioneer announced Tuesday that its scientists have made a significant advancement in developing corn plants that successfully withstand drought stress. According to *Feedstuffs*, in an upcoming edition of the scientific publication, *Plant Biotechnology Journal*, Pioneer scientists reveal a new finding that higher yielding corn plants succeed under drought conditions when naturally occurring ethylene stress hormone levels in the plant are reduced through a transgene.

"This advancement is particularly crucial at a time when the U.S. is experiencing a historic drought in places like California, and much of the world is worried about the continued availability of water to grow food crops," said Jerry Flint, vice president for Biotech Affairs and Regulatory at DuPont Pioneer. "The new advances in drought-tolerant corn reflect the DuPont Pioneer commitment to identifying sustainable solutions to increase food availability to meet the needs of the people today, without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same." Read the full story at <http://tinyurl.com/drought-plant>.

Grain Grading Workshops – Last Call for Registrations!

The deadline to register for the Grain Grading Workshop, sponsored by TCFA and Panhandle Grain and Feed Association, is Friday, May 2, 2014. Two, one-day, grain grading workshops will be held May 6 and May 7 at

the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center in Amarillo. Each workshop will begin with registration at 8:30 a.m., followed by the program from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

A registration fee of \$70 per person is required to cover the costs associated with instruction, lunch, materials and equipment. Pre-registration is required, as each workshop is limited to 60 participants. Register online today at <http://tinyurl.com/reg-grain-grading>. View the brochure at <http://tinyurl.com/gg-brochure>, or contact Steve Amosson at samosson@ag.tamu.edu.

TCFA Says Goodbye to Dave Hopper and Ray Snead, Jr.

Past TCFA Board and committee member Dave M. Hopper, 81, of Hereford, passed away Easter Sunday, April 20. Many knew Dave as a mainstay in the cattle feeding industry during his days as long-time manager of Champion Feeders from 1971 to 1999. His resume also included college and professional rodeo championships and, in later years, an avid tennis player until failing health forced him to hang up his racket. View his obituary at <http://tinyurl.com/obit-hopper>.

Former TCFA Board and committee member Ray Snead of Dalhart passed away on Tuesday, April 22. He was 85 years old. Snead, a long-time farmer and rancher, also served on several other boards, including the XIT Rodeo and Reunion, Dalhart Independent School District and the Amarillo Area Foundation. View his obituary at <http://tinyurl.com/obit-snead>.

Please join us in keeping the Hopper and Snead families in your thoughts and prayers.

2014 Feedyard Camp Application Deadline

TCFA, in conjunction with the Texas AgriLife Extension Service and West Texas A&M University, will host the 2014 Junior Fed Beef Career and Leadership Program, better known as Feedyard Camp, June 23-25 in Canyon. The program is open to any incoming high school juniors and seniors with an interest in pursuing a career path in feedyard management and the fed beef industry.

If you know of a student who would be interested in this program, please pass along the information. The deadline to apply is Thursday, May 1, 2014. For more information and to find the program application, visit <http://tinyurl.com/fy-camp>. Contact Kayla Lanford at (806) 358-3681 or kayla@tcfa.org for more information.

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