



TEXAS CATTLE FEEDERS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

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Walmart Sustainable Product Expo

While Walmart recently held an inaugural Expo to focus attention on the sustainability of many items, beef was spotlighted in a separate meeting attended by TCFA, NCBA and other cattle groups. "I believe the growing focus placed on sustainable beef production by Walmart, McDonalds and our other customers demands that we engage in these discussions to represent TCFA member interests. However, we must ensure common sense drives decisions about beef production, focusing not only on environmental and social responsibilities but never losing sight of producer profitability," commented TCFA Chairman-Elect Tom McDonald after attending the meeting. TCFA Vice President Ben Weinheimer presented an industry overview of NCBA and state affiliate efforts to identify sustainable production practices. Walmart's goal for the three-day collaboration in Bentonville, Ark. was to expand the availability of products that "sustain people and the environment."

Meanwhile, Walmart Gains Sustainability Commitments from Suppliers, as CEOs from more than a dozen of Walmart's suppliers signed commitments Tuesday to boost the sustainability of the products they sell, the global retailer said in a news release. Together, the participating suppliers represent more than \$100 billion in sales at Walmart. Executives taking part include Greg Page, executive chairman of the board at Cargill, which is one of the founding organizations of the Global Roundtable on Sustainable Beef. Through collaboration with Cargill, Walmart is developing a small-scale pilot program focused on investigating the best ways to communicate information about farm-to-fork sustainability to consumers, part of Walmart's goal to source 15 percent of its beef supply with environmental criteria by 2023.

Also expected to launch by the end of the year is a "sustainability store" on Walmart.com that will allow customers to identify brands that are making efforts to lead sustainability within a category by identifying them with a special icon. Read Walmart's full news release at <http://tinyurl.com/walmart-secures-suppliers>.

Texas Producers Strongly Support a New State Beef Checkoff Program

"It infuriates me when I hear people in the media and on the street accepting the propaganda of the animal rights, environmental and dietary activist groups as fact. Checkoff-sponsored research helps tell our story and fight misinformation with sound science," states former TCFA and NCBA President Bob Josserand of AzTx Cattle Company in Hereford, TX.

Join Bob and other cattle feeders in voting "Yes" for a Texas beef checkoff June 2-6. The program could generate an additional \$8 million to help fight misinformation about beef, expand research efforts, develop additional new products and increase domestic and export demand for beef.

Texas producers are urged to vote June 2 through June 6 at any Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service county office during regular business hours. If an eligible producer is unable to access an Extension Service office, 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.

If approved, the assessment will be collected at each point of ownership in Texas, and the program would be managed by Texas cattlemen and women serving on the Beef Promotion and Research Council of Texas.

Find more information at www.texasbeefcheckoff.com.

Meanwhile, Georgia Cattlemen Recently Approved Their State Beef Checkoff. Ballots were counted Wednesday, and the \$1 per head assessment passed by a 76 percent affirmative vote.

Conservation Practices for Producers Green-Lighted in Five Lesser Prairie-Chicken States

The USDA and the Department of the Interior today announced that farmers, ranchers and landowners implementing Farm Service Agency (FSA) Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) practices intended to protect and increase lesser prairie-chicken populations will not be subject to additional regulations as a result of the species' listing as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

Today's announcement provides that producers who voluntarily engage in practices to protect the lesser prairie-chicken will not be subject to additional regulations related to protecting the species.

FSA and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service worked together to develop a Biological Opinion to ensure CRP compliance with Endangered Species Act provisions. This Biological Opinion gives predictability to CRP participants who voluntarily apply protective conservation practices for the lesser prairie-chicken so additional regulations may be unnecessary in the future. This gives agricultural producers using proactive conservation practices confidence that they can maintain traditional farming and ranching activities.

The final rule for listing the lesser prairie-chicken as a threatened species and the special rule limiting regulatory impacts on landowners and businesses because of this listing will be effective May 12, 2014.

CRP participants and prospective participants should consult their local FSA officials and seek advice from USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service in developing conservation compliance plans. Visit the FSA office at the local USDA Service Center, or go to www.fsa.usda.gov for more information.

Committee Approves Legislation to Update and Improve the Endangered Species Act

Earlier this week, the House Natural Resources Committee approved four targeted bills that would improve and modernize the Endangered Species Act (ESA) by promoting data and cost transparency and species recovery. The four pieces of legislation are:

H.R.4315, The 21st Century Endangered Species Transparency Act introduced by Chairman Doc Hastings (R-Wash.) would require data used by federal agencies for ESA listing decisions to be made publicly available and accessible through the Internet. The bill would allow the American people to actually see what data is being used to make key listing decisions.

H.R. 4316, The Endangered Species Recovery Transparency Act introduced by Rep. Cynthia Lummis (R-Wyo.) would require the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to track, report to Congress, and make available online: 1) funds expended to respond to ESA lawsuits; 2) the number of employees dedicated to litigation; and 3) attorney's fees awarded in the course of ESA litigation and settlement agreements.

H.R. 4317, The State, Tribal, and Local Species Transparency and Recovery Act introduced by Rep. Randy Neugebauer (R-Texas) would require the federal government to disclose to affected states all data used prior to any ESA listing decisions and require that the "best available scientific and commercial data" used by the federal government include data provided by affected states, tribes and local governments.

H.R. 4318, The Endangered Species Litigation Reasonableness Act introduced by Rep. Bill Huizenga (R-Mich.) would prioritize resources towards species protection by placing reasonable caps on attorney's fees and making the ESA consistent with the Equal Access to Justice Act, which limits the hourly rate for prevailing attorney fees to \$125 per hour.

"There is widespread support for conserving endangered species, but that doesn't mean there isn't room for improvement. This is a 40-year-old law that was last reauthorized in 1988; certainly there are ways to bring this law into the 21st century and make it work better for both species and people. These are four common sense bills that are very narrowly focused and make targeted improvements to the law in the areas of transparency and species recovery," said Chairman Hastings.

TCFA, NCBA and several other agriculture groups support these bills.

House Subcommittee Holds Hearing on State of Livestock Industry

The House Agriculture Subcommittee on Livestock, Rural Development and Credit hosted a hearing this week to review the state of the livestock industry. The Committee heard from two panels of witnesses that ranged from the Chief Economist at USDA to an array of experts representing the animal agriculture industry. Together, they highlighted issues, such as regulatory burdens, feed costs, drought, animal disease and trade, that are impacting this sector of the agricultural economy.

Mike Smith of California testified on behalf of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association and Harris Ranch and discussed a number of issues that are negatively affecting the cattle industry, including country-of-origin labeling, the EPA rule to assert more control over surface water, transportation issues, the Endangered Species Act, tax issues and the proposed APHIS rule to allow imports of fresh beef from Brazil. The witnesses' written testimony and an archived webcast of the hearing are available at <http://tinyurl.com/lvst-hearing>.

Majority of House Backs Effort to Block EPA Overreach on Clean Water Act

Congressman Chris Collins (R-NY) and Kurt Schrader (D-OR) authored a bipartisan letter telling the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps.) to back off their plan to increase federal control over surface water by the expanding overly broad definition of 'navigable waters' under the Clean Water Act (CWA). The letter outlined strong concerns about the negative impact the proposed rule will have on farms all across the country and contained 231 signatures from both Republicans and Democrats,

representing more than half of the U.S. House of Representatives. The TCFA-area was well represented, with 34 of 44 Representatives signing the letter. Read the letter at <http://tinyurl.com/cwa-letter>.

One of the signatories, Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-Clarendon), has also introduced the Defense of Environment and Property Act (H.R. 3377) to tighten the definition of navigable waters, limit the authority of the EPA and the Corps. and provide landowners with additional protections.

Imports to Play Larger Role in China's Beef Supply

A report by Rabobank titled, "China Beefing up Imports to Supplement Domestic Production," indicates that to cover a supply gap caused by a declining domestic herd and growing beef demand, China will need to increase beef imports, which are expected to increase by 15 to 20 percent each year for the next five years.

"China became a huge importer of beef in 2013," explained Rabobank Analyst Chenjun Pan. "According to official statistics, China's beef cattle stock has been in continual decline since 2004, due to a lack of government support, low productivity, and the lack of farmers willing to invest in beef production, deterred by high costs and a shortage of labor."

Rabobank expects rising urban income levels and government support to spur a slow recovery, but not fast enough to catch up with accelerating demand. The structural supply deficit will force an increase in beef imports of nearly double the current import volume by 2018. Find the full report at <http://tinyurl.com/china-beef>.

2014 Fed Beef Challenge Winners

The 2014 Fed Beef Challenge was a success, thanks to participation from 25 feedyards. The contest featured 50 pens of some of the best fed cattle in the region, and the Amarillo Livestock Auction was bustling with more than 160 people in attendance. The new Holstein Steer division added excitement to the contest.

Contest cattle were harvested by Tyson Fresh Meats in Amarillo, and transportation of the cattle was provided by Dee King of Amarillo. Individual carcass data was collected by the Cattleman's Carcass Data Service at West Texas A&M University and converted to the Fed Beef Challenge index that has a base score of 100 points, which takes into account key industry factors that include ribeye area, fat thickness, quality and yield grade. The following are the results of this year's Fed Beef Challenge:

Grand Champion Carcass – JBS Five Rivers Cattle Feeders – Cimarron –	Score: 118.80 points
First Place Steers: Bovina Feeders, Inc.	Score: 304.62
Second Place Steers: Hart of Texas Cattle Feeders, LLC	Score: 273.08
Third Place Steer: Cargill Cattle Feeders – Dalhart	Score: 268.77
Fourth Place Steer: Dawn Custom Cattle Feeders, Inc.	Score: 266.95
First Place Heifers: Littlefield Feedyard	Score: 303.30
Second Place Heifers: F-Troop Feeders	Score: 292.09
Third Place Heifers: Hart of Texas Cattle Feeders, LLC	Score: 275.11
Fourth Place Heifers: Southwest Feedyard	Score: 254.89
First Place Holstein: Dean Cluck Feedyard	Score: 270.77
Second Place Holstein: Quality Beef Producers	Score: 264.18
Third Place Holstein: Quien Sabe Feeders	Score: 263.25
Fourth Place Holstein: Dean Cluck Feedyard	Score: 249.70

Robby Kirkland is the winner of the Live Evaluation Contest and is the new owner of a custom handmade saddle sponsored by Wells Fargo. He is also this year's winner of the Managers "Judge Your Own" Contest and is the proud owner of a Kenneth Wyatt artwork piece.

In the collegiate division of the contest, Makayla Bed won first place, followed by Clayton Goodwin in second and Courtney Wingate in third. The top three students attend Clarendon College. The winner of the public evaluation contest is Johnny Treichel of Clarendon, followed by Michael Jenkins of Amarillo.

Thank you to all who were able to participate in the 2014 Fed Beef Challenge, and congratulations to all of our winners. For more on contest results, please contact Jason Slane at (806) 358-3681 or jason@tcfa.org.

Less Cattle on Feed; Seasonal Slaughter Increases Ahead

The April Cattle on Feed report showed feedlot inventories as of April 1 were at 10.86 million head, 99 percent of inventories one year ago. March placements were down 3.7 percent from last year, a surprise compared to the pre-report expectations for placements to be up slightly year over year, reports Derrell Peel, Oklahoma State University Extension livestock marketing specialist.

USDA estimates total cattle slaughter for the year to date is down 6.4 percent, leading to a cumulative

decrease in beef production of 5.8 percent so far this year. Actual slaughter data for the first 12 days of April shows total cattle slaughter decreased year over year by 12.3 percent, including a 5.8 percent decrease in steer slaughter and a 19 percent decrease in combined heifer and cow slaughter.

Both feedlot marketings and cattle slaughter will seasonally increase into May and June, Peel says. However, if current reductions in cow slaughter persist, the seasonal increase in cattle slaughter will be muted. At this time last year, cow slaughter was averaging about 10 percent higher than the previous year while cow slaughter in recent weeks has been running 10-15 percent or more below year earlier levels.

Read the full report at <http://tinyurl.com/ofr-peel-rpt>.

Area Students Complete TCFA Feedyard Technician Program

Twelve area high school students completed the Cattle Care & Handling portion of the TCFA Feedyard Technician Program on Wednesday at West Texas A&M University (WTAMU). The program, presented by TCFA, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and WTAMU, is designed to prepare students for gaining employment in a feedyard and to be an asset to the operation. Students earned certification by participating in hands-on pharmaceutical training, which included problem solving through scenarios and physically administering vaccinations. They were then interviewed and tested on their knowledge of program curriculum.



Pictured (L-R): Luke Tiller, Sudan; Cole Helton, Sudan; Dex Baker, Sudan; Dr. Lance Kieth, West Texas A&M University; Bayle Harris, Dimmitt; Colton Bural, Canyon; Todd Padilla, Friona; Cutter Smith, Hereford; Ruben Silva, Dimmitt; Blas Cadena, Dimmitt; Jose Hernandez, Friona; Arturo Marquez, Dimmitt; Cody Green, Canyon; Robert Devin, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service; and Matt Davis, Texas Cattle Feeders Association.

“Farmland” Movie Now Playing in Theaters

Put this on your to-do list: go see “Farmland,” which opened in select theaters nationwide yesterday. The film features six young farmers who come together to tell just a few of the many stories of American agriculture. According to *Drovers-CattleNetwork*, film director James Moll hopes urban audiences can learn just as much from “Farmland” as he did while making it.

“I grew up in a city, and I never stepped foot on a farm. Now I have had that opportunity. I wondered who it was growing our food, and I now know,” he said. “If other people can come away from this film feeling they have now stepped onto a farm, then I feel really good about it.” Find a list of theaters at www.farmlandfilm.com.

Sponsor Spotlight

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