



TEXAS CATTLE FEEDERS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

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Vote Yes for the New Texas Beef Checkoff

Texas cattle producers have the opportunity to approve a state beef checkoff program that could generate an additional \$8 million to promote beef in Texas, the U.S. and international markets. The program will enhance current research, promotion and education programs of the Texas Beef Council (TBC) while strengthening beef demand in the marketplace.

“Consumers are remote from beef production and are open to false ideas about beef and cattle,” says former TCFA Chairman Jay O’Brien of JA Ranch in Amarillo. “I am proud of the checkoff’s work in educating them about beef production, nutrition and safety, and would gladly invest another dollar in the knowledge and confidence of our consumers.”

If approved, the dollar-per-head assessment will be collected at each point of ownership change in Texas, and the funds will be managed by the Beef Promotion and Research Council of Texas (BPRCT), whose board is comprised of Texas cattle producers nominated by the industry and appointed by the Texas agriculture commissioner. The same producers who serve on the Texas Beef Council will serve on the BPRCT to provide coordination of funding and expenditures, and the staff of the TBC will implement the program to avoid the need for additional administrative overhead.

The new program will supplement the national checkoff program, which producers approved in 1988. For every dollar invested by farmers and ranchers into the beef checkoff, the industry receives a return of \$5.55; however, the purchasing power of one dollar today compared to the 1980s is only 44 cents. Unlike the federal checkoff, the Texas beef checkoff provides a refund upon request.

Any individual or business who has owned cattle in Texas between June 6, 2013 and June 6, 2014 is urged to vote for the Texas beef checkoff June 2-6 at any Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service county office during each office’s regular business hours. In addition, a mail-in ballot may be requested from the Texas Department of Agriculture between May 19 and June 2. Mail-in ballots must be postmarked no later than June 6, 2014.

For further information, visit www.texasbeefcheckoff.com.

2014 Texas Primary Runoff Elections – Early Voting Starts Monday

Early voting for the 2014 Texas Primary Runoff Elections begins on Monday, May 19 and runs through Friday, May 23. Election Day is Tuesday, May 27. If a voter cast a ballot in the primary election, the voter must vote in the same political party runoff election. If a voter did not cast a ballot in the primary election, the voter may still vote in the runoff election and for the party of their choice.

Registered and eligible voters may vote at any early voting location located in their county of residence. Early voting locations will be available through the Texas Secretary of State’s Online Voter Central on May 19. You may also contact the early voting clerk for state and county elections in your county for early voting locations. Polling place hours vary at each early voting location.

BEEF-PAC of TCFA supports the following candidates in the 2014 Texas Primary Runoff Elections:

- Attorney General – Dan Branch (R-Dallas)
- Agriculture Commissioner – Sid Miller (R-Stephenville)
- Congressional District 4 – Ralph Hall (R-Rockwall)
- Congressional District 36 – Brian Babin (R-Woodville)
- Senate District 2 – Bob Deuell (R-Greenville)

A complete list of statewide candidates in the Democratic and Republican primary runoff elections is available at www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/primary-runoff.shtml. Please contact Josh Winegarner at (806) 358-3681 or josh@tcfa.org with questions about these candidates or to find out more information about the candidates from your area in primary runoff elections for the U.S. House of Representatives, Texas House of Representatives and Texas Senate.

GRSB Released Draft Principles and Criteria

The Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (GRSB) released its draft Principles and Criteria document in March. Those principles and criteria provide a basic framework for defining beef sustainability without setting standards or creating a “one-size-fits-all” approach to how beef should be produced. The sustainability principles and criteria contained within the document represent a year-long, multi-stakeholder process which included participants from around the world, including industry representatives.

“GRSB defines global sustainable beef as a socially responsible, environmentally sound and economically viable product that prioritizes planet, people, animals and progress,” said Cameron Bruett, president of the GRSB and head of corporate affairs, JBS USA. “Our membership has worked in a collaborative fashion to boldly confront the challenges in every segment of the beef value chain. The core principles for global beef sustainability seek to balance a broad range of issues including natural resources, community and individual development, animal well-being, food, and efficiency and innovation.”

TCFA submitted comments yesterday on GRSB’s sustainability principles and criteria saying, “While the sustainability conversation includes environmental stewardship and community responsibility, without economic viability and profitability, there would be minimal resources to address environmental or social issues. For decades, TCFA members have maintained a strong focus and commitment to environmental stewardship and our communities. The focus in recent years on the term “sustainability” is not a new concept to our members.”

The public comment period is open until May 16. After that time, the comments will be reviewed and incorporated into the draft document. The revised final draft will be reviewed and voted upon at GRSB’s annual meeting later this year. Find GRSB’s draft principles at <http://tinyurl.com/grsb-beltwaybeef>.

HSUS Pays \$15.75 Million in Settlement with Feld Entertainment

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), along with their co-defendants, have paid Feld Entertainment, Inc., the parent company of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, \$15.75 million to settle cases stemming from a lawsuit they brought against Ringling Bros. over the care of its Asian elephants, ending nearly 14 years of litigation between the parties.

“This case was a colossal abuse of the justice system in which the animal rights groups and their lawyers apparently believed the ends justified the means. It also marks the first time in U.S. history where a defendant in an Endangered Species Act (ESA) case was found entitled to recover attorneys’ fees against the plaintiffs due to the Court’s finding of frivolous, vexatious and unreasonable litigation,” said Feld Entertainment’s legal counsel.

In the original lawsuit, Feld Entertainment discovered the animal rights groups and their lawyers had paid over \$190,000 to a former circus employee to be a “paid plaintiff” and that the animal rights groups and their attorneys “sought to conceal the nature, extent and purpose of the payments” during the litigation. Their abuse of the judicial system included the issuance of a false statement under oath by the plaintiff, assisted by his counsel, who the Court found was “the same attorney who was paying him” to participate in the litigation.

“We hope this settlement payment, and the various court decisions that found against these animal rights activists and their attorneys, will deter individuals and organizations from bringing frivolous litigation like this in the future,” said Kenneth Feld, chairman and chief executive officer of Feld Entertainment.

In December 2012, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), a former co-defendant in the case, settled its share of the lawsuits by paying Feld Entertainment \$9.3 million. Today’s settlement brings the total recovered by Feld Entertainment to more than \$25 million in legal fees and expenses, which the company actually spent in defending the ESA case.

Additional information on this settlement can be found at www.ringlingbrostrialinfo.com.

Upcoming BQA and Safety Seminars

TCFA, in conjunction with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, will host four Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) & Safety Seminars May 19 at Cactus Feedyard in Cactus; May 20 at Wheeler Land & Livestock in Wheeler; May 21 at Dimmitt Feedyard in Dimmitt; and May 22 at Quality Beef Producers in Wildorado.

Seminars include presentations and hands-on training tailored to employees in yard and feed departments of member feedyards. Don’t miss out on these educational opportunities. For more information and to register, visit <http://tinyurl.com/may-bqa-brochure>.

2014 Safety Awards

The 2014 TCFA Best Safety Practices Awards contest is just around the corner. Submit your safety idea in this contest by June 9, and you could win \$1,000. The purpose of the program is to encourage member feedyards to continuously look for innovative ways of keeping employees safe on the job.

Any employee of a TCFA member feedyard is eligible to submit safety tips used by the feedyard. Feedyard managers must sign the applications. There is no limit on the number of applications a feedyard may submit. The ideas will be shared with TCFA members for improvement to safety programs.

Find the flyer at <http://tinyurl.com/sa-flyer> and the application at <http://tinyurl.com/saf-aw-app>. For further information on the TCFA Safety Awards Contest, contact Brady Miller at (806) 358-3681 or brady@tcfa.org.

Hard Work Required to Stop EPA Water Rule

As the Waters of the U.S. rule proposed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) advances, Ashley McDonald, environmental counsel for NCBA, says it's time for agricultural producers to stand up and be counted by submitting comments to the EPA.

"That's really the only hope that we have for getting a change to this rule," McDonald says. "Ultimately, we would like to see them withdraw the rule. We think there are too many problems for them to individually fix every single one. Ultimately, what we think they've done here is to expand their jurisdiction to every wet spot in the country. We think that goes against Supreme Court rulings. That goes against common sense, frankly."

McDonald says that pushing through this EPA rule seems to be a priority for the Obama Administration. She says that the EPA has long wanted to expand their jurisdiction over every drop of the country's water, but Congress voted down every attempt to grant the agency that power.

McDonald says the faults with the proposed rule are too numerous to keep up with. It would regulate ditches and ponds, some as far as 20 miles from any moving source of water. She adds that the EPA's philosophy seems to be that since everything is somehow connected, they should be allowed to regulate practically everything.

Record U.S. Corn Crop Forecast for 2014/15

The March 31 Prospective Plantings report indicates that U.S. farmers intend to plant 91.7 million acres of corn for the 2014/15 marketing year, 4 percent less than was planted for 2013/14. Assuming normal mid-May planting progress and summer weather, production is forecast at 13.9 billion bushels, just 10 million bushels over last season. With increased carryover stocks, projected supplies in 2014/15 are 2 percent higher than in 2013/14. Exports are forecast down 200 million bushels to 1,700 million bushels due to expected competition from South America.

Exports, in combination with unchanged food, seed and industrial (FSI) use, and lower feed and residual use, result in a higher carryout and support a price range of \$3.85 to \$4.55 per bushel for 2014/15, down from the \$4.50 to \$4.80 projected for 2013/14. For 2013/14, higher projected exports and FSI use this month reduce projected ending stocks, raising the projected price range 10 cents on the low end of the range.

World coarse grain production for 2014/15 is projected down 1 percent from 2013/14, but higher beginning stocks support a small increase in supplies. Global coarse grain use is projected to grow more slowly in 2014/15 than in the previous year, as pork and poultry diseases limit meat production growth. World ending stocks are projected up slightly, with most of the increase in the United States. Read the full report at <http://tinyurl.com/ers-may2014>.

Torrential Rain Benefits Crops in Texas

Much of the state received much-needed rain Monday and Tuesday of this week – torrential in some cases – greatly benefiting all crops, according to the National Weather Service and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service personnel. In the last week, east of Interstate 45, the state received from 3 to 6 inches of rain, according to the service. West of I-45, many areas received substantial rain, more than 2 inches, but the Panhandle, parts of the South Plains and Far West regions remained largely dry.

More information on the current Texas drought and wildfire alerts can be found on the AgriLife Extension Agricultural Drought Task Force website at <http://tinyurl.com/agrilife-drought>. Find summaries of weather and agricultural activity in each of the AgriLife Extension districts at <http://tinyurl.com/dist-summs>.

Five Trends to Affect Meat Industry

The meat industry is poised to benefit from five food trends, Nancy Kruse, the founder of Leading Food Consultants, told participants at the Animal Agriculture Alliance Stakeholder Summit, *Meatingplace* reports.

The first is “protein power.” Kruse notes that product claims about protein content have increased by 54 percent in the past five years. While so far top beneficiaries have been Greek yogurt and energy bars, she sees this trend as an opportunity for animal-based proteins.

The second trend is one she called “snackification” to describe the millennial trend toward snacking more than eating distinct meals. To appeal to the young consumer, she said meat producers must rethink their center of the plate mentality. “Food activism” is the third trend, in which she says meat producers must “get into the conversation” and enlist appropriate advocates and spokespeople outside their immediate industry to address issues such as antibiotic-free and animal husbandry practices.

“Veggie chic” is the fourth trend, in which she explained that vegetable innovation does not mean increased vegetarianism. Rather, meat producers should embrace the trend with entrees that include vegetables.

With microwave cooking giving way to crock pots and toaster ovens as both baby boomers and millennials embrace cooking real food, the final trend Kruse identified is “real foods.” This she sees as a real opportunity for protein providers. Find more at www.meatingplace.com/Industry/News/Details/50027.

From the Ranch to the Big Screen

Brad Bellah, 27-year old of Throckmorton, earns his living in the cattle industry and made his big-screen debut earlier in May as one of six producers featured in the Hollywood-produced film, *Farmland*, telling his story and educating consumers about their food choices.

This Texas Tech University graduate is the sixth generation to live and work on his family’s ranch, the R.A. Brown Ranch, looking after a stocker operation, a conventional commercial Angus cow-calf herd, a purebred Angus cow-calf herd and an All-Natural Angus cow-calf herd for his parents, Jody and Betsy Bellah. For him, success does not involve the red carpet or receiving awards; it goes back to the ranch and his family.

“I hope to not only maintain but also build upon everything that my parents, grandparents and generations before them were able to leave to me,” he says. “I hope my kids will be able to live their lives doing exactly what they want while still having an appreciation and understanding of agriculture and what it takes to grow and produce food.” For more information about the *Farmland* film, visit www.farmlandfilm.com. The film was made possible with the support of the U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance. For the full story from *Drovers CattleNetwork*, visit <http://tinyurl.com/bellah-farmland>.

TCEQ Chairman Bryan W. Shaw Appointed by EPA to Border Environmental Committee

TCEQ Chairman Bryan W. Shaw, Ph.D., P.E., has been named to the EPA’s Good Neighbor Environmental Board (GNEB) by EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy.

Shaw was appointed this month as the Texas representative for the term ending March 9, 2015. The GNEB is an independent federal advisory committee with the mission to advise the President and Congress on good neighbor practices along the U.S. border with Mexico. Its recommendations are focused on environmental infrastructure needs within the U.S. states contiguous to Mexico.

Created in 1992 by the Enterprise of the Americas Act, the GNEB issues an annual report to the President and the Congress on U.S.-Mexico border environmental and infrastructure projects, with the goal of improving the quality of life of residents in U.S. border states.

“I am humbled and honored to represent the State of Texas on the GNEB as it provides advice to the federal executive and legislative branches on addressing environmental infrastructure issues along our 1,950-mile border with Mexico,” Shaw said. In addition to serving on the GNEB, he also leads the TCEQ’s Border Initiative and is the U.S. state co-chair of two Border 2020 Regional Work Groups under the La Paz Agreement for the protection of the U.S.-Mexico border environment.

Shaw serves on the Executive Committee of the Environmental Council of the States. He received a bachelor’s and master’s degree in agricultural engineering from TAMU and a doctorate degree in agricultural engineering from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.