



TEXAS CATTLE FEEDERS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

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The Polls Have Closed: Texas Beef Checkoff Referendum Ends

Today marks the end of the voting period for the Texas Beef Checkoff referendum. We appreciate all those who took the time out of their busy schedules to make sure their ballots were cast. The Texas Department of Agriculture will count the votes later this month. TCFA will publish the results as soon as the votes are certified.

Please Submit Comments: Tell EPA to Stop Their Land Grab and Ditch the WOTUS Rule

The Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recently proposed a rule to redefine “Waters of the United States” (WOTUS), placing essentially all surface waters across the country under federal jurisdiction and subjecting landowners to increased federal regulation and the potential for fines of up to \$27,500 per day. Likewise, the increase in liability will hinder landowner participation in conservation activities by making the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service a regulatory compliance agency. Take a minute to listen to what 2014 TCFA Chairman Jason Hitch has to say about the proposed rule at <https://vimeo.com/97557180>.

TCFA encourages all members to submit comments at <http://tinyurl.com/epa-landgrab-submit-comments>, an easy to use, web-based system developed by NCBA. Simply fill in your contact information and click submit to pull up prepopulated comments that can be personalized with your thoughts or sent as is. The entire process should take less than five minutes.

The comment period closes on July 21, 2014.

Food Influencers Visit TCFA Feedyard and Learn Pasture-to-Plate Process

Fifteen top-tier food influencers participated in the “Live Well 2014: Experiencing the Beef Lifecycle” event, which was coordinated by NCBA. The individuals who participated in this three-day immersion experience are credentialed national media spokespeople (dietitians, fitness professionals, nutrition and health communicators, sports nutritionists) as well as food, parenting and lifestyle bloggers.

The purpose of this program is to provide the opportunity for a deeper understanding of how beef is produced with the goal of creating a stronger understanding and appreciation of the beef lifecycle via first-hand exploration of the farm-to-plate process.

On Thursday morning, Hale Center Feedyard provided an all-inclusive tour of their operation, providing an open and direct dialogue with the participants about how and why their food is produced the way it is. Prior to the feedyard tour, they toured the National Ranching Heritage Center, saw the screening of *Farmland*, and engaged in Q&A with ranchers and film subjects Brad and Molly Bellah. Following the tour, they headed to the Matador Ranch. This morning, they discussed topics such as cattle nutrition, grass-fed vs. grain-fed beef, sustainability, labeling and the evolution of lean beef.

Confirmed Variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease Case in Texas

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported on Monday that laboratory tests confirmed a diagnosis of variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD), a fatal brain disorder, in a patient who recently died in Texas. The confirmation was made when laboratory results from an autopsy of the patient’s brain tested positive for variant CJD.

First described in 1996 in the United Kingdom, variant CJD is a rare, degenerative, fatal brain disorder in humans. It is believed to be caused by consumption of products from cows with BSE.

Worldwide, more than 220 variant CJD patients have been reported, with a majority of them in the United Kingdom (177 cases) and France (27 cases). This case is the fourth to be reported in the United States. In each of the three previous cases, infection likely occurred outside the United States, including the United Kingdom (2 cases) and Saudi Arabia (1 case). The history of this fourth patient, including extensive travel to Europe and the Middle East, supports the likelihood that infection occurred outside the United States.

A classic form of CJD, which is not caused by the BSE agent, occurs worldwide, including in the United States. Annually, for every one million people in the United States, one or two develop classic CJD. More information about variant CJD, including how it differs from classic CJD, is available in the Variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease Fact Sheet at <http://tinyurl.com/vcid-factsheet>.

Last Chance to Enter the 2014 TCFA Best Safety Practices Contest

The deadline to submit entries to the TCFA Best Safety Practices contest is Monday, June 9. You could be the winner of \$1,000, a jacket and a recognition luncheon for all employees held at the feedyard. View the English and Spanish versions of the flyer at <http://tinyurl.com/sa-flyer> and <http://tinyurl.com/sa-flyer-spanish>. Find the application at <http://tinyurl.com/saf-aw-app>. Submit your entries via fax (806) 352-6026, email brady@tcfa.org or by mailing to Brady Miller, Texas Cattle Feeders Association, 5501 I-40 W., Amarillo, TX 79106.

Beef Exports Continue Growth Trend

U.S. beef and pork exports continued their positive growth trend in April, increasing by double digits in volume and by an even healthier margin in value, according to statistics released by the USDA and compiled by the U.S. Meat Export Federation.

Higher prices commanded in the global market have driven up per-head export values for both U.S. beef and pork, as international customers have, so far, been willing to pay higher prices for larger volumes. The U.S. exported 99,297 MT of beef in April valued at \$537.4 million, increases of 15 and 24 percent, respectively. Year to date, beef exports are up 10 percent in volume and 17 percent in value to 376,377 MT valued at \$2.05 billion.

“Even with a plentiful supply of EU pork products in the marketplace and large volumes of Australian beef, we are still seeing demand grow in most of our key markets and remain steady in others,” said Philip Seng, USMEF president and CEO. “It is encouraging to see solid growth in sales to markets where the U.S. industry has made the biggest commitment in resources. A good example would be Korea, where export volumes have struggled since 2012, but as Korea’s domestic supply levels of beef and pork normalize, we are seeing a robust rebound in demand for U.S. products.”

Beef exports in April accounted for 14 percent of total U.S. beef production and 11 percent of muscle cuts alone, increases from 12 and 9 percent, respectively, last April. Export value per head of fed slaughter equated to \$262.41 for the month, up from \$207.70 a year ago.

Find more information at <http://tinyurl.com/beef-exports-growth-trend>.

Facebook Vital in Reaching Older Millennial Parents with Beef Message

Michele Peterson Murray, consumer influence leader for NCBA, says it is imperative that beef producers embrace digital marketing to reach consumers. Right now, she says, Facebook is a very effective medium for the beef industry to reach its target audience.

In an interview with The Beef Buzz, Murray explains that the beef industry’s target consumer is on Facebook 10 to 20 times a day looking for information and posting several times a day about their own lives. Murray says Facebook is a natural vehicle for the industry to go where the consumer is. The beef industry uses the whole gamut of social media tools, from Pinterest, to Facebook, to Youtube and Twitter to reach consumers where they are right now. Murray says they are always looking at new ones when they come up. Currently, Snap Chat is on an uptrend, and marketers are looking to capitalize.

“The challenge that we have as a beef community is being in connection and making sure we don’t respond aggressively or respond in a defensive way. Many of these consumers just want to know, ‘How does this decision impact my family’s health.’ And we have good answers about all those things. It’s just making sure we’re coming together and not starting a food fight on social media.”

Find the full story and hear Murray’s interview at <http://tinyurl.com/fb-millennials>.

Making Schmacon: Beef Cut Gets New USDA Product Classification

Some say that Schmacon is beef’s answer to bacon, but creator Howard Bender sees it as a brand new beef product from a new cut of beef and has big plans to market it for breakfast and beyond, reports *Meatingplace*. This product is so new that it warranted its own USDA product classification, “smoked and cured glazed beef slices.”

“It is coming from what you or I would call the belly,” he says. “About 10 to 20 percent of this cut is currently considered trim. So, when you think about the machinery we use to slice a nice consistent piece, we are

cutting a very long almost rectangular kind of cut of meat, which if you look at the Meat Buyer's Guide, there's no number that really matches to this."

In terms of yield, Bender says a normal pound of pork bacon (16 ounces) may yield about 4.5 ounces of good bacon. A one pound package of Schmacon will yield 10 to 12 ounces. For foodservice, the advantage is timeline and yield. The typical burger, chicken sandwich or club may take three slices of bacon. Because its yield is so high, Schmacon is a two-slice topper.

Bender plans to have the product in grocery stores by the end of the third quarter. It will be packaged at 12 ounces, with 18-22 slices per pound. Find more information at <http://tinyurl.com/schmacon>.

Kansas Steps Up Fight Against Lesser Prairie Chicken Listing

Rather than mandating conservation regulations on Kansas farmers, ranchers and energy producers, Governor Sam Brownback is urging the federal government to take a different approach in its efforts to stop the population decline of the Lesser Prairie Chicken (LPC).

In March, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) announced plans to list the Lesser Prairie Chicken as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. The listing will affect the LPC's range, which includes land in Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas.

According to *Drovers CattleNetwork*, Brownback sent a letter this week to U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewel and U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack requesting the agencies suspend all current regulatory actions until all proposed plans are reviewed and considered. He asked that they take into consideration the role that precipitation, or lack thereof, plays in the shifting population patterns of the Lesser Prairie Chicken and to consider opportunities available through existing conservation programs.

"The listing of the Lesser Prairie Chicken is just one more example of the federal government disregarding state's rights," Brownback says. "We will protect the rights of Kansas landowners and businesses. We can do that and protect the Lesser Prairie Chicken at the same time."

Find more information at <http://tinyurl.com/kansas-lpc>.

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