



TEXAS CATTLE FEEDERS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

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Texas Beef Producers Approve Beef Checkoff Program

The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) announced Wednesday that Texas beef producers have voted to establish a state-level Beef Checkoff program, which was approved by a 67 to 33 percent vote. TDA conducted this referendum upon petition by cattle industry organizations under the authorities designated by the Texas Legislature.

“Texas is the largest cattle producing state in the nation, and our beef is among the highest quality in the world,” says Agriculture Commissioner Todd Staples. “As Texas ranchers continue to grow and raise the bar to meet consumers’ tastes and preferences, it is my hope these funds will be used in a manner to enhance our producers’ profitability and sustainability of food production. The Lone Star State is a national leader in agriculture, and I’d like to keep it that way.”

TCFA leaders serving as members of the Beef Promotion and Research Council of Texas (BPRCT) share their excitement in response to the passage of the Texas Beef Checkoff and what it means for the future of beef in Texas. “It’s great to see the willingness of producers to support the Texas Beef Checkoff and its efforts to promote and create a larger demand for beef,” says Ryan Moorhouse, General Manager of Hartley Feeders.

“I am so excited for the cattle industry,” says Susie O’Brien, cattle producer from Amarillo. “The extra dollar will be put to good use in spreading the positive message about beef and how important it is for a healthy lifestyle.”

“This is a move in the right direction for our industry within our state,” says Katsy Cluck, cattle rancher from Boerne. “In my time serving on the Beef Promotion and Research Council of Texas, I have been so impressed, and I am fully confident that the extra dollar invested by producers is in great hands and will be well spent.”

The Beef Checkoff program will be used for the promotion, marketing, research and educational efforts of beef and beef products for prospective consumers of Texas beef around the world. Texas beef producers will pay a refundable assessment of \$1 per head of cattle they sell. Collection of the assessment will begin Oct. 1, 2014 by the BPRCT. Voting on the measure took place June 2-6, 2014.

Coalition Asks for COOL Suspension if Found in WTO Violation

In an effort to prevent billions of dollars in retaliatory tariffs against the U.S., a new coalition of industries is urging Congress to take action on the U.S. Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) dispute with Canada and Mexico. This comes in anticipation of a World Trade Organization decision, which will decide whether or not the COOL law is compliant with trade obligations.

The new coalition, which includes nearly 60 organizations, including livestock groups like the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association, the National Pork Producers Council and the North American Meat Association, as well as broader industry groups like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers and more, sent a letter this week to leadership on the House and Senate Agriculture Committees asking Congress to step in and direct USDA to “suspend indefinitely the revised COOL rule if it is found to be in violation of U.S. international trade obligations.”

Following a 2011 WTO ruling that certain COOL requirements discriminated against foreign livestock and are not consistent with U.S. WTO trade obligations, USDA revised the law and implemented a new set of COOL requirements in May 2013. The new labeling requirements for covered meat products require details of each production step, including where the animal is born, raised and slaughtered, to be on the MCOOL label. Additionally, the final rule prohibited the use of the multi-country label and eliminated the mixed-origin label.

Just one day after the final rule went into effect, Canada and Mexico objected to the WTO saying the final rule will not bring the United States into compliance. The WTO is expected to issue its final report on the revised U.S. COOL law in late July. Canada and Mexico have indicated they will retaliate against the U.S. if it is found noncompliant by imposing tariffs and duties on a vast array of U.S. products.

In the letter to Congress, the groups said a finding of non-compliance would result in serious economic harm to the U.S. and that it would be "intolerable for the United States to maintain, even briefly, a rule that has been deemed non-compliant by the WTO."

A late July ruling out of the WTO leaves Congress little time to take action due to the August break and light congressional schedule this fall leading up to the midterm elections in November, which is why the groups are asking Congress to authorize and direct the Secretary of Agriculture to indefinitely suspend the law if the WTO finds it is not compliant. Find more information at <http://tinyurl.com/coalition-cool>.

TCEQ Renews CAFO Rules and General Permit

On Wednesday, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) adopted environmental permitting rules for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs). In addition to adoption of the CAFO rules, the TCEQ also issued a General Permit for CAFOs in Texas.

"We appreciate the efforts of the TCEQ Commissioners, management and staff to adopt the CAFO rules and General Permit in a timely manner that allows for the new permit to go into effect July 20, 2014, which is the date of expiration for the existing permit," says Ben Weinheimer, TCFA vice president. "Existing, permitted feedyards will have 180 days to submit a renewal application for coverage under the General Permit. For feedyards enrolled in the TCFA Environmental Services Program, renewal applications will be prepared by TCFA staff."

The adopted rules and General Permit implement changes that EPA adopted in 2003 and 2008 to the federal regulations for CAFOs. TCEQ was required to make those changes in accordance with the Memorandum of Agreement with EPA, regarding delegation of the federal CAFO permitting program.

Some of the key changes include: (1) a nutrient management plan to be included with permit applications; (2) review of the NMPs by TCEQ staff; (3) incorporation of the terms of the NMP into each CAFO's permit; and (4) TCEQ establish a list of changes to the NMP that would constitute a substantial change, which would require a permit amendment and public notice. View the adopted CAFO rules at <http://tinyurl.com/2009-1016-RUL> and the CAFO General Permit at <http://tinyurl.com/2014-0093-MIS>.

AMA Seeks Ban on Antibiotic Use for Growth Promotion

The American Medical Association (AMA) is calling for federal action to ban antibiotic use in food animals for growth promotion purposes to slow the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria, reports *Food Safety News*.

"Use drives resistance, and overuse drives resistance to happen even faster," says David Wallinga, a physician on the Keep Antibiotics Working steering committee. Wallinga notes there is also overuse in hospitals, but he says, "As much as 70 percent of the use in agriculture is unnecessary or overuse."

Resolution 513, which was adopted earlier this month at AMA's annual meeting, also calls for members to support regulatory and legislative measures requiring that antibiotic prescriptions for animals be overseen by a veterinarian within a valid context and for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to expand its surveillance and data collection of antibiotic use in agriculture.

Infectious disease doctors are "quite freaked out by the fact that their antibiotics are not working a lot of the time now," Wallinga notes. "The AMA policy is a reflection of the increasing level of crisis that these doctors feel, but there's still a disconnect in the general public at how serious a problem it is."

This new, more stringent AMA policy replaces the earlier one that opposed the use of antimicrobials at non-therapeutic levels in agriculture and urged that such uses be terminated or phased out. Read more on this story at <http://tinyurl.com/ama-seeks-ban-antibiotic-use>.

Meanwhile, FDA secures full industry support on antimicrobial strategy. The FDA says all 26 drug manufacturers affected by its initiative to phase out the use of human medically important antimicrobials for production purposes in food animals have agreed to follow the agency's recommendations, including increased oversight of a veterinarian for the remaining therapeutic uses of such drugs.

In a progress report on the strategy, FDA says that while drug manufacturers have until December 2016 to complete the recommended changes to their antimicrobial products, some companies have already begun to implement them. The changes include 31 drug approval withdrawals, meaning those products can no longer be sold in the United States.

Also, two changes to product labeling have been made, one to withdraw a production claim and one to change a drug's marketing status from over-the-counter to available by prescription only. One additional drug label change, from over-the-counter marketing status to prescription status, is pending.

FDA said it would provide updates on its antimicrobial initiative every six months. Find the full story at <http://tinyurl.com/fda-industry-support-strategy>.

Bill Introduced to Resolve Red River Land Dispute

Representative Mac Thornberry (R-Texas) introduced a bill on June 26 to protect private property along the Red River from federal ownership claims. The Red River Private Property Protection Act (H.R. 4979) seeks to end any questions about the federal government's ownership of disputed land along the Red River by providing legal certainty to landowners. The bill was also introduced in the Senate by Sens. John Cornyn (R-Texas) and Ted Cruz (R-Texas).

"This uncertainty threatens the value of privately-owned land and has made it more difficult for property owners to make decisions," says Thornberry. "It is essential that this issue be firmly and finally resolved so that landowners can be sure of their title. The bill contains the authority to make that happen."

Concern arose last December when the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced it was beginning the process to revise its Resource Management Plan (RMP) for lands it manages. At the time, the agency said there are thousands of acres along the Red River on the border between Texas and Oklahoma, in the counties of Wilbarger, Wichita and Clay, that may be considered public domain.

The bill, H.R. 4979, provides legal certainty to property owners along the Red River by:

- Directing the BLM to relinquish and transfer by quit claim deed any land in Texas along the Red River to a landowner who can prove through official state or county records that they fully own the land;
- Requiring the BLM to issue a public notice of the process and accept all legitimate claims of ownership;
- Establishing a 120-day time period in which the BLM must act on a request; and
- Preventing the BLM from including any privately owned acres in a Resource Management Plan.

Thornberry has asked the House Resources Committee, which oversees the BLM and all public land issues, to hold a hearing on the legislation at the earliest possible date.

Find more information at <http://tinyurl.com/bill-red-river-land-dispute>.

Study Shows Lean Beef Helps Lower Blood Pressure

As families prepare to fire up the grill to celebrate Independence Day this weekend, they should feel even better about their choice to include lean beef in the grilling lineup. *Drovers CattleNetwork* reports on a study conducted by Pennsylvania State University that shows the inclusion of lean beef in a DASH-like (dietary approaches to stop hypertension) diet could help the 82 million Americans suffering from cardiovascular disease reduce their blood pressure.

The study was published in the *Journal of Human Hypertension* and follows a 2012 study that concluded the Beef in an Optimal Lean Diet (BOLD), which included lean beef in a DASH-like diet, reduces total levels of LDL, or bad, cholesterol. DASH is the 'gold standard' for heart health and is a dietary pattern that includes fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy and protein mostly from plant sources. The authors suggest that the latest report indicates that it is total protein intake, not type of protein, that is important in reducing blood pressure as a part of a DASH-like diet.

According to the study's authors, "Individuals are often advised to avoid or restrict beef, because it is a source of saturated fatty acid (SFA) in the diet. However, many Americans enjoy beef, commonly choosing cuts deemed lean by United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and report better adherence to dietary advice that includes some lean beef. In addition, beef's contribution to SFA in the American diet is often overstated in that it is not one of the top five contributors of SFA for Americans."

The full study is available online at <http://tinyurl.com/dash-blood-pressure-beef>.

Celebrating Beef and Independence

As we approach the Fourth of July holiday – one of the strongest beef-buying weekends of the year – beef producers who invest in the Beef Checkoff Program have a lot to be thankful for, with a thriving market and robust prices that reflect strong consumer preference for beef. In celebrating our freedom this weekend, fire up those grills and treat your family and friends to BEEF! Take a look at just a few key accomplishments of the Beef Checkoff at <http://tinyurl.com/beef-independence>.