



TEXAS CATTLE FEEDERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

5501 I-40 W. • AMARILLO, TEXAS • PHONE (806) 358-3681 • www.tcfa.org • info@tcfa.org

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2014 TCFA Junior Fed Beef Challenge

The cattle feeding industry's future rests in the hands of the next generation of leaders, who continue to show their dedication and passion through a high level of competition and engagement in TCFA youth programs, such as the TCFA Junior Fed Beef Challenge. This year, 40 students traveled from all over Texas, New Mexico and Oklahoma to compete in the contest at West Texas A&M University in Canyon on Saturday, July 26.

Seth Hale of Throckmorton was named the Overall Champion in the junior division. He received a \$200 prize, a plaque and a trophy buckle sponsored by Merck Animal Health. In the senior division, the First Runner-Up and winner of a \$2,000 scholarship, a plaque and trophy buckle sponsored by Merial, Ltd. was Luke Hale of Throckmorton. Reserve Overall Champion and winner of a \$3,000 scholarship, a plaque and trophy buckle sponsored by Zoetis was Dawson Dittrich of Schulenburg. The Overall Champion and winner of a \$5,000 scholarship, a plaque and trophy buckle sponsored by Micro Beef Technologies was Corie Ritter of Weimar. Congratulations to the winners and all participants in the contest.

This annual contest allows 4-H and FFA students the opportunity to gain industry knowledge and practical experience in commercial cattle feeding through feeding a pen of three steers and competing on their knowledge of the industry through a written test and an interview or presentation. Cattle performance points are also figured into the score to determine the winners of more than \$20,000 in prizes, premiums and college scholarships. Find more information, including pictures and a complete list of results, at www.tcfa.org/news-events/junior-fed-beef-challenge.html or on TCFA's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/texasattlefeedersassociation.



Hutch Reed of Norbrook, Inc., chairman of the 2014 TCFA Junior Fed Beef Challenge, congratulates the winners of the contest (L-R): Corie Ritter, Weimar; Dawson Dittrich, Schulenburg; Luke Hale, Throckmorton; Seth Hale, Throckmorton

Cattle Producers Gather in Denver to Help Establish Direction for Industry

More than 650 cattle producers have gathered at the Cattle Industry Summer Conference in Denver this week to help set direction for industry programs. The conference began Wednesday and will end Saturday.

The event includes meetings of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, Cattlemen's Beef Board, American National CattleWomen and National Cattlemen's Foundation. Among the purpose of the yearly

conference is to create a framework for checkoff and policy efforts on behalf of U.S. cattle producers for the 2015 fiscal year.

“We’re seeing unprecedented conditions in our industry, and the producers who understand all of the factors for how we got here will be best positioned for success in the future,” says Bob McCan, a beef producer from Victoria, Texas, and NCBA president. “The working sessions at the Summer Conference will not only help provide that understanding, but will give participating producers a chance to play a leadership role in determining where we go from here.”

Joint Committees and Subcommittees met to develop proposals for 2015 checkoff-funded research, education and promotion programs. Also, NCBA policy committees met to determine priorities and discuss strategies for 2015. The NCBA Board will hold a session on Saturday, as will members of the Cattlemen’s Beef Board.

WTO Finishes COOL Compliance Report

The chief parties involved in the continuing dispute over the latest iteration of the U.S. country-of-origin import labeling (COOL) law received a final World Trade Organization compliance report Wednesday, *Washington Trade Daily (WTD)* reported late Wednesday. The panel report changes little from what was in a June dispute settlement panel finding directing the U.S. to make some changes.

Mexico and Canada had charged that the labeling requirements are more burdensome than necessary and unfairly disadvantage their own producers. The report will be formally released in September, *WTD* noted.

Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.) said in a news release Wednesday that he, Rep. Rick Crawford (R-Ark.) and 110 other members of the House had written Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack that if the WTO works against the U.S., he should rescind the final COOL rule while Congress works to resolve the issue. Crawford is chairman, and Costa is ranking member on the House Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development and Credit Subcommittee. Farm groups are split on the COOL issue. Several members from the Texas, New Mexico and Oklahoma congressional delegation signed the letter.

Meanwhile, on Tuesday, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia upheld the Agriculture Department’s authority to issue rules implementing the country-of-origin labeling law for meat and poultry products and denied a request for a preliminary injunction to block implementation of the USDA’s May 2013 final rule for the labeling law.

Texas Railroad Commission Proposed Rule Could Provide More Eminent Domain Protection

The Texas Railroad Commission has proposed a rule that would require pipeline companies to provide in their permit application documentation regarding a pipeline’s use, which the commission can use to determine whether a pipeline is given rights as a common carrier, according to the *Dallas Morning News*. Common carrier pipelines provide access to their line to other companies for a market-rate fee, and thus are said to be for the public good and have the authority to take private property through eminent domain.

The suggested changes aim to address concerns raised in the 2011 Denbury case. In a landmark ruling, the Texas Supreme Court determined a pipeline company did not have the right to use eminent domain to build across a Beaumont rice farmer’s property, despite holding a common carrier permit.

The court said then that the agency’s method for determining whether a pipeline is indeed a common carrier – a process that simply requires pipeline companies to check a box on their application – is too shallow to give pipeline operators unchallengeable eminent domain power. It also reasserted that landowners have the right to dispute private property takings in court.

“Private property cannot be imperiled with such nonchalance, via an irrefutable presumption created by checking a certain box on a one-page government form,” the decision said.

TCFA and other agriculture and landowner groups are reviewing the proposed rule to ensure that their private property concerns are adequately addressed. While the proposed rule would afford landowners the opportunity to dispute a property taking in court, it’s not clear what type of information the pipeline company will need to provide to prove that it will truly operate as a common carrier. In addition, the rule doesn’t require that potentially affected landowners be alerted of a permit application that could traverse their land, a major concern of the groups.

The deadline to file comments on the proposed rule is Aug. 25.

House Passes Bill to Modernize Endangered Species Act

The House passed H.R. 4315, the *Endangered Species Transparency and Reasonableness Act*, by a vote of 233 to 190 on Tuesday. The legislation combines four bills previously marked up by the House Natural Resources Committee and will be helpful in updating and improving the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973.

H.R. 4315 will require data used by federal agencies for ESA listing and proposed listing decisions to be made publicly available and accessible. The bill also requires the Interior Secretary to report and comprehensively track all litigation costs associated with the Act. Furthermore, the bill caps hourly fees paid to attorneys that prevail in cases filed under ESA, consistent with current law.

Finally, the federal government will be required to disclose to affected states all data used in the ESA decision making process. It also ensures that “best available scientific and commercial data” used by the federal government will include data provided by affected states, tribes and local governments.

Anti-GMO Proposal Rejected at Safeway Shareholder Meeting

This past Friday in Pleasanton, Calif. at the annual meeting of Safeway shareholders, the majority followed the advice of the National Center for Public Policy Research to reject an anti-scientific shareholder proposal that would have forced the grocery store chain to brand products containing genetically-modified organisms (GMOs) with labels, according to the *Oklahoma Farm Report*.

“Safeway’s shareholders sent a loud message to the GMO activists and lobbyists that represent them – science trumps baseless fear-mongering campaigns,” says National Center Free Enterprise Project Director Justin Danhof, Esq. In speaking out against a proposal submitted by the Green Century Equity Fund that sought to require the company to identify and label all of its products that “may contain genetically engineered ingredients,” Danhof countered by noting that it is unscientific and unnecessary for Safeway’s business purposes and would increase food prices, disproportionately harming lower-income customers.

Danhof’s full statement against the proposal, as prepared for delivery, can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/danhof-full-statement>. Read the full story at <http://tinyurl.com/gmo-safeway>.

Oklahoma Attorney General Keeps Pressure on HSUS

In March, Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt issued a consumer warning against the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), cautioning Oklahomans of the group’s solicitations and advertisements made in the wake of the May 2013 tornado outbreak.

He’s back at it again with an inquiry into HSUS’ fundraising campaigns after Quadriga Art, a charity fundraiser for HSUS and other nonprofit organizations, recently agreed to a \$25 million settlement. The New York attorney general says it is the largest settlement ever reached in the U.S. on deceptive fundraising, which led Pruitt to issue subpoenas to HSUS.

“We believe what happened in New York potentially has happened in Oklahoma,” Pruitt told the radio show, *All Around Oklahoma Agriculture*. “The documents and information we are seeking [in the subpoenas] will be objectively measured. When you raise literally hundreds of millions of dollars and all we see so far is less than 1 percent of those monies going into what are considered local shelters, it is a very fair and right question to ask this organization nationally – are they being deceptive and unfair in their communications as they raise money from citizens from state to state?”

Pruitt says he intends to “bring enforcement actions to prevent them from doing this in the future and seek to recover damages.” Listen to Pruitt’s interview at <http://tinyurl.com/pruitt-int-ok-ag>.

Herd Rebuilding Will Be a Slow Process

The latest USDA data provides some indication that herd expansion may be beginning but more clearly shows that herd rebuilding will be a slow process, at least initially, says Derrell Peel, Oklahoma State University Extension livestock marketing specialist.

So far this year, heifer slaughter is down 7.9 percent, a significantly larger decrease than steer slaughter, which is down 2.9 percent for the year to date. These decreases in female slaughter strongly suggest that herd expansion is beginning.

The record high feeder cattle prices that will eventually stimulate herd expansion may increase the temptation to sell heifers rather than retain them for breeding, which is particularly true for producers still recovering financially from drought and other economic difficulties. For some older producers who are considering retirement, current market prices may provide the incentive to sell out and exit the industry.

Herd expansion will start slow from the current low herd base under the best of circumstances. It appears that herd expansion is being further restricted at this time in some regions due to producer age and expectations; financial limitations; regional shifts in cow-calf production; continuing drought conditions; and recovering pasture/range conditions.

Find all of Peel's comments on herd rebuilding at <http://tinyurl.com/peel-herd-rebuilding>.

Panhandle Ranch Management

The Panhandle Ranch Management program will be presented Aug. 18 by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service offices in Potter, Randall, Armstrong and Oldham counties. The program will focus on beef, range and economic issues facing producers and agri-businesses in the region. This free program will be held at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center, 6500 Amarillo Blvd. West, and will begin with registration at 9 a.m., include lunch and conclude by 3 p.m. Those planning to attend should RSVP to (806) 373-0713 by Aug. 14. Find more details at <http://tinyurl.com/prm-agrilife>.

Enter to Compete in National Anthem Singing Contest

Entries for the 2nd Annual National Anthem Singing Contest, hosted by NCBA, are being accepted from now until Oct. 17. The winner will sing the National Anthem at the Opening General Session at the 2015 Cattle Industry Annual Convention Feb. 4-7 in San Antonio, Texas. Find more details at www.BeefUSA.org.

Sponsor Spotlight

TCFA is proud to recognize its top sponsors whose efforts help deliver top-notch service.

This week's spotlight shines on



Bayer HealthCare

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