



# TEXAS CATTLE FEEDERS ASSOCIATION

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# NEWSLETTER

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## **WTO Again Rules U.S. COOL Violates Treaty Obligations**

The World Trade Organization (WTO) on Monday publicly released the official findings of a dispute resolution panel convened to review complaints by Mexico and Canada that the revised U.S. country-of-origin labeling (COOL) rule continues to discriminate against cattle and pork imports from those countries. The WTO panel agreed with Mexico and Canada that the U.S. COOL rule is discriminatory and constitutes a technical barrier to trade in violation of treaty obligations.

“In particular, the compliance panel concluded that the amended COOL measure increases the original COOL measure's detrimental impact on the competitive opportunities of imported livestock in the U.S. market, because it necessitates increased segregation of meat and livestock according to origin; entails a higher recordkeeping burden; and increases the original COOL measure's incentive to choose domestic over imported livestock,” a summary of the WTO findings stated. “The detrimental impact caused by the amended COOL measure's labeling and recordkeeping rules could not be explained by the need to convey to consumers information regarding the countries where livestock were born, raised and slaughtered.”

“This announcement was not surprising,” said TCFA Chairman Jason Hitch. “We all know that mandatory COOL is bad policy that discriminates against cattle from Mexico and Canada and has had no measurable return to U.S. producers or consumers. In fact, the policy actually has had a negative financial impact on many U.S. producers that raise and feed these animals.”

The U.S. has 60 days to appeal the ruling. If an appeal is filed, a new panel will be convened to review the case and issue a final WTO ruling on compliance – which could take an additional 6 months. If Mexico and Canada prevail, they would be authorized to seek compensation through retaliatory tariffs on U.S. products. Both countries have stated that they would avail themselves of these retaliatory measures, which would likely impact other commodities and products in addition to beef and pork.

“It's obvious that mandatory COOL can't be fixed through regulatory means and should be repealed,” said Hitch. “I hope the U.S. government will finally accept that mandatory COOL is a failed policy that violates our treaty obligations and will not continue to waste taxpayer money on a pointless appeal.”

## **Convention! Convention! Convention!**

The TCFA office is buzzing as the final preparations for the 2014 TCFA Annual Convention are made. Have you checked everything off your list?

\_\_\_ **Register** – Your packet will be available at the Registration Desk at Convention.

\_\_\_ **Check out the outstanding line-up of speakers and events** – <http://tinyurl.com/tcfa-pocket-program>

\_\_\_ **Prepare for your tour** – The tour of Lopez Foods and Express Ranches is full, but there is still availability on the tours of the Oklahoma City Bombing Memorial and Overholser Mansion or the U.S. Olympic Training Center, Devon Boathouse and Bricktown.

\_\_\_ **Shine your golf clubs** – Golf Tournament, Tuesday, Oct. 28, SilverHorn Golf Club.

\_\_\_ **Polish your shotgun** – Sporting Clays Tournament, Tuesday, Oct. 28, Quail Ridge Sporting Clays.

TCFA members will be able to reach TCFA staff at Convention by calling the Registration Desk at (405) 228-8041. Stay connected with Jason at the Market Desk by calling (405) 228-8042. Also, for the latest while at Convention, be sure to follow TCFA on Facebook and join the conversation on Twitter at [#tcfaconv14](https://twitter.com/tcfaconv14).

## **Don't Forget to Vote – Elections Have Consequences**

Early voting for the 2014 General Elections begins Monday, Oct. 20 and ends Friday, Oct. 31. Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 4. Requests for a ballot by mail must be received in the county clerk's office by Oct. 24.

In addition to the executive, judicial and legislative elections, Texas ballots will include a constitutional amendment election that would divert half of the general revenue derived from oil and gas taxes from the Rainy Day Fund to the State Highway Fund for the purpose of providing transportation funding for repairs and maintenance of public roads. It

is anticipated that this would result in approximately \$1.7 billion per year going toward transportation funding. If approved, the measure would take effect immediately and apply to transfers the comptroller made after Sept. 1, 2014.

A list of candidates supported by BEEF-PAC of TCFA is available at <http://tinyurl.com/beefpac-supported-candidates>. Please contact Josh Winegarner ([josh@tcfa.org](mailto:josh@tcfa.org)) with any questions.

### **NCBA Not Backing Down From WOTUS Proposal**

The deadline for submitting comments to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) was supposed to be Monday, but the deadline has been postponed again to Nov. 14. The 25-day extension is meant to allow more time for government agencies to finalize and release their report on connectivity of streams and wetlands, a report that EPA has sited on several occasions in the Waters of the U.S. proposed rule.

If you have not already done so, TCFA urges you to help "Ditch the Rule" by submitting comments to EPA and the Corps opposing the proposal. Simply go to [www.tcfa.org](http://www.tcfa.org) and click on the WOTUS banner at the top of the page. Fill in your contact information and click submit to pull up pre-populated comments that can be personalized with your thoughts or sent as is. The last day to submit comments is Nov. 14.

### **Don't Hijack the Beef Checkoff**

For more than three years, NCBA has been working with numerous industry stakeholders to enhance the Beef Checkoff to add greater value for producers without compromising the grassroots support of the program.

On Sept. 30, the Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack informed members of the Beef Checkoff Enhancement Working Group of his intention to create a supplemental beef checkoff under the 1996 Commodity Promotion Act, which would amount to a second beef checkoff, with a referendum to be held within three years of implementation.

Grassroots producers have been the cornerstone of the Beef Checkoff program since it was first enacted in 1985. There is no required element of the 1996 Act that increases grassroots influence in national checkoff efforts. Plus, the 1996 Act assures no protection to state beef councils and gives much greater power to the federal government.

TCFA encourages you to sign an online petition opposing Sec. Vilsack's proposal for a supplemental checkoff under the 1996 Act that would diminish the currently successful program and strip the Checkoff from hands of America's cattlemen and women. Sign the petition today at <http://tinyurl.com/checkoff-petition>.

### **TCFA Members, Staff Participated in Agriculture Roundtable with Sen. Cornyn**

U.S. Senator John Cornyn (R-Texas) was in Amarillo last Thursday meeting with Texas agriculture groups on federal policy issues. Most of the discussion focused on EPA's "Waters of the U.S. Rule" and USDA's delay, and apparent unwillingness to implement the new crop insurance programs authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill. Concerns over railroad backlogs and grain shipments were also discussed by a number of livestock and grains groups, including TCFA. Country-of-origin labeling, the Beef Checkoff, taxes and trade were also major topics of discussion.

The meeting was hosted by Western Equipment and included the current class of the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership program.

### **Second Round of Farm Bill Meetings Coming to the Panhandle**

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will be conducting a second round of informational meetings covering the 2014 Farm Bill. The meetings will take place from Nov. 3 through Dec. 19. All the meetings are free and open to the public. They will start at 10 a.m. and conclude at noon.

The USDA Farm Service Agency staff will be available to discuss Farm Bill provisions and sign-up requirements and deadlines, according to Dr. Steve Amosson, AgriLife Extension economist in Amarillo.

In addition to the Farm Service staff, each meeting will include AgriLife Extension specialists demonstrating a decision-aid tool developed by the Agricultural and Food Policy Center at Texas A&M University to help producers economically evaluate program choices. Each location will also offer an optional "hands-on" afternoon session for producers wanting assistance in entering their data into the decision-aid tool.

For more information and meeting dates and locations, visit this link. <http://tinyurl.com/agrilife-farmbill-mtgs>.

### **Managing Farm Health for Public Health Conference**

OSU and TTU Animal Science Departments and the Oklahoma Beef Quality Assurance Program have teamed up to offer a one-day conference that will focus on practical aspects of zoonotic diseases as it relates to people working with animals and agricultural events that involve the public. It will cover the prevalence of E.coli strains in cattle, management of pathogens in cattle, controlling spread of pathogens at agri-events and perceptions of the public. The conference is free and will be held Nov. 12 at the Grand Hotel and Casino in Shawnee, Okla.

View the conference program at <http://tinyurl.com/farm-hcp>, and register online at <http://tinyurl.com/fhcop-reg>.

## Area Students Earn Feedyard Technician Certification

TCFA, West Texas A&M University (WTAMU) and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension presented 21 area high school students a certificate and jacket for completing the Equipment Operation and Maintenance portion of the Feedyard Technician Certification Program on Oct. 21 at the WTAMU Stanley Schaeffer Agriculture Education Learning Lab.

Students in the program are identified by their Ag Science Teacher, feedyard managers or have expressed interest to be accepted into the program. These students represented six area high schools including Adrian, Booker, Dimmitt, Friona, Springlake-Earth and White Deer.

WTAMU students who are obtaining a degree in Ag Education tested the participants on welding techniques, oxyacetylene torch cutting methods and setup and shut down safety. The students were trained on safety and operation of the equipment through driving a skid loader and a wheel loader at the Warren CAT facility in Amarillo on Sept. 23-24.

To complete the certification process, the students were tested over their skills with a written exam. They were also interviewed by TCFA officials on topics covered in the training.



## McKnight Leader Scholars Program

The first round of student nominations and applications for the McKnight Scholarship, an OSU scholarship given to 50 students from rural Texas who demonstrate leadership potential, are due Oct. 31. McKnight recipients receive a full out-of-state tuition waiver for all four years, plus \$5,000 for each of their first two years at OSU. Visit

[www.osugiving.com/McKnightScholarship](http://www.osugiving.com/McKnightScholarship) for more information, or contact Cassi Rash at [cassi.rash@okstate.edu](mailto:cassi.rash@okstate.edu).

## Feeders and Feedyards in the News

Multiple TCFA members were highlighted in a story published in *National Geographic* titled, "Carnivore's Dilemma," in which Senior Environment Editor Robert Kunzig provides his insight on experiences he gained while tracking steers from the finishing phase to a packing plant, all the way to restaurants. He included his perspective on how eliminating communication barriers with consumers can serve the beef industry well.

Featured members include **Cactus Feeders'** CEO **Mike Engler**; **Paul Defoor**, Chief Operations Officer; **Kendall Karr**, nutritionist; **Carter King**, veterinarian; **Armando Vargas**, feedyard manager; **Walt Garrison**, feedyard manager of **Wrangler Feedyard**; and founder, **Paul Engler**. Others highlighted include **JA Ranch** of Amarillo; **Edes Custom Meats** of Amarillo; **Andy Cole** of USDA Agriculture Research lab in Bushland; **Steve Amosson**, Texas A&M economist; and **Trevor Caviness**, president of **Caviness Beef Packers** in Hereford.

Kunzig shared with *National Geographic* readers, "At Wrangler I asked the veterinarian, Carter King, how it felt to ship cattle he had watched over. 'I tell you what,' he said, 'every time I drive down the interstate and pass a truck that has a load of fats in it, I silently say thank you – thank you to the cattle for feeding our country.'"

Read the full story at <http://tinyurl.com/nat-geo-carn-dil>.

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