



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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TCFA Urges EPA & Corps to Withdraw WOTUS Rule

In comments filed this week, TCFA opposed implementation of the proposed rule, published by EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on April 21, to change the definition of “Waters of the U.S.” The proposed rule would place new federal regulatory requirements on farmers, ranchers and other land owners and have a significant, detrimental impact to the entire U.S. cattle industry. TCFA and many other organizations have spent the past several months analyzing the rule and have worked to encourage everyone to submit comments in opposition.

“This has been a lengthy process that is far from over,” stated TCFA Chairman Tom McDonald. “With the comment period closing today (Nov. 14), EPA and the Corps will now work through thousands of comments, many of which are comments in opposition to the rule that were submitted by livestock and crop producers across the U.S. And, while there is not a timeline on when the agencies will issue a final rule, TCFA will continue to challenge the agencies and oppose any additional expansion of their regulatory over water and land use.”

TCFA’s comments, signed by McDonald and Jason Hitch, immediate past chairman of TCFA, stated, “The proposed rule places no discernible limit on the federal government’s authority over water, violating the CWA [Clean Water Act] as articulated by the Supreme Court in 2001 and 2006. The exclusions and exemptions in the proposal are unclear and provide cattle feeders with zero certainty, making the proposed rule a real threat to our member’s continued viability. TCFA strongly urges the agencies to withdraw the proposed rule redefining “waters of the U.S.”

To read the complete set of comments, visit <http://tinyurl.com/TCFAcomments>

Solid Results for Beef Exports Through September

With strong numbers in September, U.S. beef exports broke the \$5 billion value mark during the first three quarters of the year, according to statistics released by USDA and compiled by the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF), a contractor to the beef checkoff.

Year-on-year beef exports in September increased 6 percent in volume to 220 million pounds and skyrocketed 25 percent in value to \$631.9 million. For year-to-date through September, beef exports rose 3 percent in volume to nearly 2 billion pounds and 15 percent in value to \$5.18 billion.

With herd rebuilding gaining traction in the U.S. beef industry, fed slaughter numbers have trended lower. Still, the value of exports in September reached \$313.67 per head of fed slaughter – down from the record set in August but 26 percent higher than September 2013.

For January through September, per-head export value was \$283.29 – up nearly \$40 from the same period last year. Exports equated to 14 percent of total beef production and 11 percent for muscle cuts only – up from 13 percent and 10 percent, respectively, last year.

Japan was the pacesetter for September beef exports, with volume to Japan climbing 36 percent year-on-year to 51.1 million pounds and value up 55 percent to \$155.7 million. For January through September, exports to Japan were steady in volume at 406.3 million pounds and 7 percent higher in value to \$1.17 billion.

Find more information at <http://tinyurl.com/septresults>.

Washington Focuses on Trade and the Lame Duck

Congress reconvened in a lame-duck session this week after a month-long break to campaign for the mid-term elections. Several political pundits say there's little expectation that much will be accomplished in the short session before the term of the 113th Congress expires on Jan. 3, especially with the troubling issue of immigration reform hanging over Washington, *Agri-Pulse* reports.

Still, there are expectations that Congress will take action on legislation that will keep the government functioning beyond Dec. 11, when the current short-term spending measure expires. Lawmakers may also

reach an agreement on reviving tax breaks that expired at the end of 2013, including one that allowed small businesses to immediately expense up to \$500,000 when purchasing machinery or other assets, instead of expensing them over time.

Meanwhile, President Obama traveled to Asia this week where he attended the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Ministers meeting in Beijing. Trade is one of the few areas where the White House and Senate Republicans share agreement.

There had been some hope that the APEC meeting could result in some movement on the Trans-Pacific Partnership, involving the U.S. and 11 other nations. However, those hopes were dimmed Sunday when U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman said there would be "no major announcement" on the free-trade deal. Negotiations on the pact have been held up by disagreement between the U.S. and Japan over the latter's reluctance to open its markets to farm exports.

However, agricultural interests are cautiously watching the APEC talks to see if U.S. negotiators can make additional progress on TPP and perhaps make progress with the Chinese on other contentious issues, such as biotechnology approvals.

For more information, visit <http://tinyurl.com/trade-lame-duck>.

Universities Form Antibiotic Resistance Task Force

The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) and the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC) have joined forces in the creation of the Task Force on Antibiotic Resistance in Production Agriculture, the groups said in a news release.

The goal of the task force is to help advise the federal government on a research agenda and also help publicly disseminate information on the use of antibiotics in production agriculture.

The task force is comprised of representatives from U.S. agriculture colleges/land-grant universities and veterinary colleges as well as key representatives from the animal agriculture community and the pharmaceutical industry. Officials from key federal agencies are expected to serve as observers to the task force and leaders from public universities in Mexico and Canada will serve as ex officio members.

"We recognize antibiotic resistance as a public health challenge and look forward to collaborating with APLU and the federal government on this critical initiative," said AAVMC Executive Director Andrew T. Maccabe.

"The task force and its members are well-positioned to advise the Obama administration as they consider strategies to address the judicious use of antibiotics in production agriculture," APLU President Peter McPherson said.

Find a list of those serving on the task force at <http://tinyurl.com/university-taskforce>.

Harvard Law Professors Call for New Food Worker Protections

In a *New York Times* op-ed published this week, Harvard law professors Jacob E. Gersen and Benjamin I. Sachs recommended federal action to classify food workers, including farm workers, as a distinct legal category because of the special nature of their work. "Once federal law recognizes food workers, it could then regulate food work and offer distinct protections to food workers," the professors' op-ed stated.

The professors also claim that food workers regularly witness dangerous breaches in safety procedures, like the "illegal but, unfortunately, not uncommon practice" of processing infected, downer cows and need whistleblower protection. "Food workers are distinct from other workers in ways that are critical to food safety and public health, and they ought to be protected by the law in new ways. Otherwise, we run the risk that workers – charged with producing our food – will be unable to protect public safety."

The op-ed states that some of the other benefits of legally recognizing food workers would include union-organizing protection and rethinking rules about line speeds, work hours, paid break time, vacations and training requirements.

Food for Tomorrow

The first annual *New York Times* Food for Tomorrow conference, hosted by renowned *Times* journalist and food writer Mark Bittman, was held Nov. 11-12 in Pocantico Hills, N.Y. The conference explored two significant food challenges facing the world in the 21st century: how to feed a growing population and how to reverse poor eating habits in the developed world.

The event gathered over 200 top senior executives, chefs, researchers, N.G.O. leaders and important thinkers about food issues for a day-and-a-half of networking and discussion. For more information and to watch the full conference sessions online, visit <http://tinyurl.com/food-for-tomorrow>.

Innovation in Beef Cutting

This week in Denver, representatives of the Beef Checkoff and the Beef Innovations Group at NCBA met with trade media to discuss progress and challenges outlined in researching and developing markets for innovative beef cuts. Bridget Wasser, executive director of meat science and technology with NCBA, explained the product-development process and demonstrated meat-cutting methods for established and emerging beef cuts.

Two cuts that she focused on were the Flat Iron and the Petite Tender. Both of these cuts come from the Shoulder Clod and require extra labor to separate. A downfall to these cuts is that some yield is lost in the process due to the difficulty of removing connective tissue and separating the muscle. However, consumer demand for these cuts has proven the process to be worth the trouble. In 2013, 71 million pounds of Flat Iron steaks were sold topping the 65 million pounds of Porterhouse and T-Bone combined.

Merck Launches Animal Well-Being Education, Training Program

Merck Animal Health publicly launched a program called Creating Connections, an education and training website to help cattlemen achieve overall health and well-being within their herd. The launch of the program, which is designed to foster strategies that can reduce stress and improve reproduction and immune responses, came one week after updating regulator status on administering Zilmax.

The program will be updated monthly with videos including relevant information regarding animal handling and well-being. Video releases on the horizon include topics such as the use of a Bud Box, horsemanship, animal loading and acclimation. The website will feature more than just videos. Training modules are being developed to be released in 2015 that will cover science behind stockmanship in basic, intermediate and deep science levels.

To find more information, visit <http://tinyurl.com/merck-creating-connections>. Visit the Creating Connections website at www.creatingconnections.info/.

Producer Education Webinar

NCBA will be hosting a free webinar on end-of-year tax strategies for cattlemen Dec. 9 at 7:00 p.m. CST. Speakers will include Larry Kopsa, CPA, and NCBA's Colin Woodall and Kent Bacus. Visit www.beefusa.org for more information and to register.

TCFA Education Foundation

TCFA supports the future of cattle feeding through scholarships awarded by the Education Foundation, which are available to graduate and upper-class undergraduates who are pursuing cattle feeding careers.

Please consider making a donation to the TCFA Education Foundation. Contributions are tax deductible and an excellent way to make a memorial or recognize anniversaries, holidays and other special events. Special acknowledgement will be made to the family or person being honored. Contact Shannon Standley at TCFA for details at shannon@tcfa.org or (806) 358-3681.

English to Spanish Dictionary

Clear and effective communication between feedyard employees and managers is a critical component of feedyard efficiency and can often impact the economic success of the enterprise.

Browning's Concise English-Spanish Feedyard Terms is a pocket-sized dictionary that allows employees to become familiar with practical terms commonly used around the feedyard. To request your copy, contact TCFA at (806) 358-3681.

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