



TEXAS CATTLE FEEDERS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

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2015 Cattlemen at the Capitol

TCFA board members and staff joined forces with Texas & Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association (TSCRA) to host the 2015 Cattlemen at the Capitol this week in Austin. TCFA was represented by Chairman Tom McDonald, Chairman-Elect David Baumann and board members Joel Bassinger, Jimmy Schwertner and Jason Peeler. Ross Wilson, Ben Weinheimer and Josh Winegarner represented TCFA staff.

Activities kicked off Tuesday evening with a reception at The Driskill Hotel, where many state officials visited with cattle industry leaders and association representatives.

TCFA and TSCRA visited the Texas State Capitol on Wednesday, where they met with Gov. Greg Abbott, Lt. Governor Dan Patrick, Speaker of the House Joe Straus and about 30 other elected state officials about their legislative priorities for the 84th Legislative Session.

As the session moves forward, TCFA will keep you updated on the issues. Please be prepared to contact your Texas representative and senator as bills develop. TCFA staff will also monitor the legislative sessions in Oklahoma and New Mexico. For more information, contact Josh Winegarner at josh@tcfa.org.



TCFA and TSCRA leadership met with Gov. Greg Abbott (pictured left) and Speaker Joe Straus (pictured right).

Submit Comments Urging USDA and HHS to Reject Unsound Dietary Guidelines

Late last week, the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee released their scientific report, which serves as a recommendation to the Secretaries of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in their development of the final 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. At a minimum, this report is inconsistent, and if adopted will lead to conflicting dietary advice that could be detrimental to the health of our nation and our industry.

The advisory committee's failure to consider much of the most recent gold standard nutritional research, including the BOLD (Beef in an Optimum Lean Diet) report that confirms the vital role beef plays in a healthy diet, is apparent in their elimination of lean meat from the list of foods they consider to be part of a healthy dietary pattern. At the same time, the committee endorsed the Mediterranean style diet, which includes higher levels of red meat consumption than currently consumed in the U.S. Additionally, the committee overstepped their congressionally mandated charge to include the issue of sustainability as part of their dietary recommendations.

NCBA and TCFA are in the process of drafting comments urging the Secretaries of HHS and USDA to reject this flawed report and to put lean meats back into the recommendation of an overall healthy dietary pattern, as it currently exists in the 2010 Dietary Guidelines.

TCFA urges you to do the same. Make sure your voice is heard on this critical issue. To submit comments, go to <http://tinyurl.com/comment-dietary-guidelines>. There you will find talking points and drafted comments to

use at your discretion. Share the information with fellow producers, family and friends. The 45-day comment period is now open and will close on April 8. The final 2015 Dietary Guidelines are expected to be finalized and published by the end of 2015. To view the committee's full report, go to <http://tinyurl.com/dgac-report>.

Power of Meat Survey Reveals Meat Buyer Preferences

The 2015 edition of the *Power of Meat* report, sponsored by the Food Marketing Institute and North American Meat Institute, reveals that meat remains among one of the top choices for shoppers at retail; however, consumers are changing their purchasing behavior. U.S. shoppers still value meat's nutritional benefits, despite higher prices at the supermarket, although price per pound is a leading factor driving consumers to either purchase less meat or to choose different cuts or brands.

Overall meat is still very much a planned purchase, but the decision is increasingly shifting to in-store experiences. According to the report, shoppers applaud the return of full-service meat counters. Sixty-three percent of survey respondents have access to a meat counter and consider it a store advantage, while the 36 percent without access said they wish their primary store had a meat counter.

One-quarter of shoppers say they purchase value-added items sometimes or regularly, but for most, cost (21 percent) or preferring to prepare items themselves (46 percent) are the greatest barriers to purchase. Regardless of all heat-and-eat, ready-to-eat and value-added solutions provided by food retailing, foodservice continues to win the last-minute dinner decision.

To view the *Power of Meat* report in its entirety, go to <http://tinyurl.com/power-of-meat>.

Five-Year Labor Deal Ends West Coast Port Gridlock

A tentative agreement has been reached by the Pacific Maritime Association and the International Longshore and Warehouse Union after over nine months of disagreements leading to import/export gridlocks for U.S. companies. The new five-year contract that will cover workers from all 29 West Coast ports was reached after mediation from U.S. Secretary of Labor Tom Perez and Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service Deputy Director Scot Beckenbaugh. No details regarding the agreement have been released, and the agreement must still be officially ratified by both parties.

"We are hopeful that the parties will ratify the new contract agreement as soon as possible and clear the backlog that currently exists in several major ports, so that U.S. industries can once again serve our international customers with the confidence and reliability they deserve," said USMEF President and CEO Phil Seng. "With nearly 80 percent of our waterborne red meat exports utilizing West Coast ports, this situation had become very damaging not only for exporters, but also for farmers, ranchers, processors and everyone in the supply chain."

Though it is expected to take over a month to get back on schedule and clear the backlog of containers waiting to be unloaded, the U.S. meat and livestock industries are optimistic about the agreement. According to Secretary Perez, the dockworkers' union and their employees have agreed to return to work Saturday evening, Feb. 28, 2015.

FDA Releases Biannual Progress Report on Judicious Use

The U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) announced yesterday the release of its second progress report on its strategy to promote the judicious use of antimicrobials in food-producing animals. In December 2013, FDA published Guidance #213, which calls on animal drug sponsors of approved medically important antimicrobials administered through medicated feed or water to remove from their product labels indications for use related to growth promotion and to bring the remaining therapeutic uses of these products under the oversight of a veterinarian by December 2016.

In March 2014, 283 applications were identified as being affected by Guidance #213, and since that time, 11 new generic and combination approvals were added to the list of affected applications. The agency reported that while some affected drug sponsors have already started implementing the recommended changes to their affected antimicrobial products, more changes have occurred. Three applications have been converted from over-the-counter to prescription dispensing status; production indications have been withdrawn from one application; and 32 affected applications have been completely withdrawn.

FDA noted that it continues to work closely with affected drug sponsors to help ensure the changes they agreed to make as described in Guidance #213 are completed by the end of December 2016. The agency added that it intends to use a variety of metrics to assess the effect of these changes over time, including existing data on drug sales and resistance as well as additional on-farm data.

FDA will hold a joint meeting with USDA and Centers for Disease Control this spring to discuss ways to collect and utilize on-farm use data. Details of the public meeting will be released closer to the meeting date. To review Guidance #213, visit <http://tinyurl.com/guidanceforindustry213>.

Senators Urge USDA on Pathogen Standards for Beef, Pork

U.S. Sens. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) and Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.) on Wednesday urged USDA to establish salmonella and campylobacter standards for pork and beef products.

"There are currently no Salmonella performance standards for ground pork or pork parts, and the standards for pork carcasses have not been updated in nearly 20 years. Ground beef Salmonella performance standards are similarly outdated, and there are no Salmonella standards for beef parts," the senators wrote in a joint letter to Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack.

The senators commended USDA's release of proposed poultry performance standards for salmonella and campylobacter, but said the agency needs to address beef and pork as a next step and expressed disappointment in the omission of beef from its Salmonella Action Plan.

Find the press release and the letter at <http://tinyurl.com/sens-path-standards>.

Government Report Outlines New Approach to Attributing Foodborne Illnesses

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) developed an improved method for analyzing outbreak data to determine the foods responsible for illnesses related to four major foodborne bacteria.

They released a report, produced by the Interagency Food Safety Analytics Collaboration (IFSAC), on Tuesday about the new methods behind the results. One of the findings included in the report was that more than 80 percent of *E. coli* O157 illnesses were attributed to beef and vegetable row crops, such as leafy vegetables. Also, Salmonella illnesses were broadly attributed across food commodities, with 77 percent of illnesses related to seeded vegetables (such as tomatoes), eggs, fruits, chicken, beef, sprouts and pork.

IFSAC recommends caution in interpreting certain findings due to limitations in outbreak data and uncertainty in the estimates and suggests that the results be used with other scientific data for risk-based decision making. View the report at <http://tinyurl.com/ifsac-report>.

Froman Asks County Officials to Back Obama Trade Policies

U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) Michael Froman on Monday called on county government officials from across the country to support President Obama's request for Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade deal, *Agri-Pulse* reports.

TPA allows a chief executive to negotiate a treaty that Congress could either accept or reject, but not amend. During a visit to Japan last week, House Ways and Means Chairman Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) said he expected a bipartisan TPA bill this spring.

According to Froman, the TPP agreement, which includes the U.S. and 11 other Pacific Rim nations, will cover nearly 40 percent of the global economy and grow U.S. exports by more than \$123 billion by 2025.

"It's time to update trade promotion legislation to meet the needs of today's global economy and lock into law the progress we have made on a number of issues, including labor and the environment" in the TPP talks, Froman said. "A bipartisan trade promotion bill will do just that, addressing these changes and empowering America to continue leading on trade."

Darci Vetter, USTR's chief agricultural negotiator, says both trade agreements have the most ambitious agendas of any treaties in decades and are aimed at reducing tariffs that are restricting U.S. exports, including a wide array of agricultural goods, and costing American producers billions of dollars a year.

"The bottom line is, we face an important choice," Vetter said. "We can lead and ensure that the global trading system reflects our values and our interests, or allow others to come in and take our place."

For more information, visit <http://tinyurl.com/froman-trade-policy> and <http://tinyurl.com/vetter-tpa>.

Conservation Stewardship Program Sign-Up Deadline Extended

Natural Resources Conservation Service Chief Jason Weller announced Tuesday that USDA is offering a renewal option through Tuesday, March 31, 2015, for eligible agricultural producers and forest landowners with expiring Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) contracts. These producers must be willing to adopt additional conservation activities aimed at helping them achieve higher levels of conservation on their farms, forests and ranches.

USDA will also extend the deadline for general sign-up CSP applications until Friday, March 13, 2015,

providing farmers, ranchers and private forest managers two additional weeks to apply for this funding round of \$100 million.

"CSP producers are established conservation leaders who work hard at enhancing natural resources on private lands," Weller said. "This contract renewal period will provide greater opportunities for these conservation stewards to voluntarily do even more to improve water, air and soil quality and enhance wildlife habitat on their operations. By extending the deadline for general sign-up applications, we are ensuring that landowners will be able to take advantage of a program that will enroll up to 7.7 million acres this year."

For more information, view the announcement at <http://tinyurl.com/csp-extended-deadline>.

FARMLAND Documentary Available at Wal-Mart Stores March 3

Academy Award®-winning filmmaker James Moll's feature-length documentary, FARMLAND, will be available on DVD beginning Tuesday, March 3 at select Walmart locations and www.walmart.com. The availability of the documentary at retail locations across the country and online provides another opportunity for viewers to experience the film, which offers a firsthand glimpse inside the world of farming by showcasing the lives of six young farmers and ranchers in their twenties.

FARMLAND premiered in theaters across the country in spring 2014, and is now available on hard disk for rent and purchase at Netflix, Amazon, select retail outlets and via On Demand platforms.

Beef 4 Kids Initiative

Knowing the importance of beef in a child's diet, TCFA teamed up with Snack Pak 4 Kids in 2012 to ensure that beef is provided in weekend snack paks for children at risk of hunger in the Texas Panhandle. Since that time, TCFA members have rallied to make sure that kids who face the possibility of missing meals over the weekend – 17 to 31 percent of kids in the Texas Panhandle – have access to a high quality beef product as an excellent protein source.

There are over 6,000 students in the program who receive a snack pak every weekend, and survey results show that the beef sticks provided by the Beef 4 Kids initiative are the No. 1 liked item, right behind the choice that says, "I like it all." Results also indicated 94 percent of teachers with students in the program saw improvement in academic performance.

Please help us continue this program that is vital to the children of the Texas Panhandle with a donation to the Beef 4 Kids program. For more information, visit <http://tinyurl.com/beef4kids> or contact Kayla Lanford at kayla@tcfa.org or (806) 358-3681.

2015 Fed Beef Challenge

The best cattle in Cattle Feeding Country will make their way to the historic Amarillo Livestock Auction on Wednesday, April 15 for the 2015 TCFA Fed Beef Challenge. Feedyards from throughout the TCFA area will bring top quality steers, heifers, as well as Holstein steers, to compete for awards, cash and bragging rights. In addition to the carcass contest to determine the best beef, there will be a live evaluation contest, steak feed and special activities benefiting the TCFA Education Foundation. Visit <http://tinyurl.com/tcfafbc> for contest rules and the printable entry form. Contact Jason Slane at (806) 358-3681 or jason@tcfa.org for more information.

Calling All Junior Cattle Feeders

The start of the 2015 Junior Fed Beef Challenge is just around the corner. Junior cattle feeders from all across Cattle Feeding Country will compete for more than \$20,000 in scholarships, cash and prizes by participating in four phases of the event, including carcass merit, record keeping, a written exam and oral presentation or interview. Steers can be validated March 1 – March 28. Find all contest details at <http://tinyurl.com/tcfajfbc>, or contact Jason Slane at (806) 358-3681 or jason@tcfa.org.

TCFA Dues Rebate Criteria and Forms Available

If you fed 10,000 head or more in 2014, you may apply for a dues rebate. The rebate applies to the cumulative number of cattle fed by a single feeding entity. Rebate applications must be completed and returned to the TCFA office by April 15. For more information or to request an application, contact Jason Slane at (806) 358-3681 or jason@tcfa.org.

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