



TEXAS CATTLE FEEDERS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

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Dietary Guidelines Comment Period Extended

The deadline for submitting comments to the Secretaries of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) concerning the 2015 Dietary Guidelines has been extended to May 8. This extension allows more time for cattle feeders to give input on this report, which will serve as a recommendation to the development of the final 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

TCFA encourages you to submit comments today 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.

Guoyao Wu, Ph.D., Distinguished Professor of Animal Nutrition at Texas A&M University with more than 30 years of scientific research, recently submitted comments that highlighted the flaws and inconsistencies in the report released in February by the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (DGAC).

In Wu's comments, he says, "The report contains conceptual errors on protein as a dietary nutrient and is inconsistent with respect to protein intakes by Americans. Additionally, lean red meat is widely available as a food source of high-quality protein and therefore consumption should be encouraged." Wu also noted the DGAC lacks experience in addressing the environmental impact of animal production and that there is no scientific basis for the recommendation of reducing consumption of lean red meat. To read all of Dr. Wu's comments, visit <http://tinyurl.com/dgac-wu-comments>.

Ensure that your voice is heard on this critical issue. To submit comments, go to www.tcfa.org and click on the Dietary Guidelines banner at the top of the page. There you will find talking points and drafted comments to use at your discretion. **The last day to submit comments is May 8.** To view the DGAC's full report, go to <http://tinyurl.com/dgac-report>.

Animal Agriculture Tells House It's Time to Ditch the Rule

NCBA Past President Steve Foglesong testified before the House Committee on Agriculture Subcommittee on Conservation and Forestry at their hearing titled, "Waters of the U.S. Rulemaking and its Impact on Rural America." Foglesong testified on behalf of animal agriculture, urging Congress to act in order to prevent the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers from finalizing their "Waters of the U.S." rule.

The proposed rule would expand the definition of "navigable waters" giving federal control over land features if a U.S. regulator could subjectively distinguish a bed, bank and ordinary high water mark.

"Let's be clear – everyone wants clean water," said Foglesong. "Farmers and ranchers rely on clean water to be successful in business. But, expanding the federal regulatory reach of the EPA and Army Corp does not equal clean water. After reading the proposed rule, I can say that only one thing is clear – the proposed rule and its definitions are ambiguous."

Foglesong also addressed that the proposed rule was drafted without outreach to agriculture or small business communities. "There was zero outreach to us in the agriculture community before the rule was proposed," he said. "We want to continue to do our part for the environment, but this ambiguous and expansive proposed rule does not help us achieve that."

NCBA and others in agriculture are calling on the EPA and the Army Corps to withdraw the "Waters of the U.S." proposed rule and to engage in serious and meaningful dialogue with the agricultural and business communities to find the necessary solution that will provide the clarity and certainty on this issue.

Listen to NCBA Past President Steve Foglesong's interview on his testimony before the House Agriculture Subcommittee regarding EPA's proposed WOTUS rule at <http://tinyurl.com/ncba-audio-testimony>.

Mediterranean Diet Cuts Heart Disease Risk by Nearly Half

A study conducted in Greece, which was recently presented at the American College of Cardiology's 64th Annual Scientific Session in San Diego, showed that adults who closely follow the Mediterranean diet are 47

percent less likely to develop heart disease compared to those who do not. Mediterranean diets tend to include large amounts of processed meat including twice as many red meats compared to USDA recommended levels.

This was an inclusive study monitoring over 2,500 Greek adults from 2001 to 2012. This was the first study to track heart risk for 10 years in a general population. Similar studies have focused only on middle-aged people; this study monitored adults ranging from 18 to 89 years old.

Participants were monitored based on how closely they adhered to the diet. Those who scored in the top third of closest adherence to the diet were those that were 47 percent less likely to develop heart disease over the 10-year research period. On a scale of 55 points, each point closer to adhering to the diet yielded on average a 3 percent drop in heart disease risk.

For more details, go to <http://tinyurl.com/mediterranean-diet-heart>.

Texas Legislature – Bill Filing Deadline Passed

Last Friday marked the deadline to file bills in the 84th Texas Legislature. At the end of the day, almost 8,000 bills, resolutions and constitutional amendments were filed. More than 200 of the bills related to the property tax and 94 dealt with changing or repealing the franchise tax. There were also a number of sales tax, transportation, water and agriculture bills introduced. TCFA staff is reading, researching and tracking the bills and will provide a complete list of relevant bills in the coming weeks.

North Plains Groundwater Conservation District Proposes New Rules

Meetings are scheduled for stakeholders to provide feedback on a new set of proposed rules for the District. If approved, the proposed rules would replace the current rules. You are encouraged to attend one of the following meetings as these proposed rules will affect members of the district.

- **Monday, March 23 - Perryton**
Ochiltree County Expo, 402 Expo Dr., Perryton, TX 79070
- **Tuesday, March 24 - Dumas**
Hampton Inn Meeting Room, 2010 S. Dumas Ave., Dumas, TX 79029
- **Thursday, March 26 - Dalhart**
Rita Blanca Coliseum, 1219 W. FM 281, Dalhart, TX 79022 (middle building)

All meetings will be held at 7 p.m. For more information about the meetings or the proposed rules, visit www.northplainsgcd.org.

FDA Issues Draft Guidance on On-Farm Animal Feeding Safety

This Thursday, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued Draft Guidance 203, which outlines steps that animal producers can use in ensuring the safety of animal feeding practices on farms. These steps help identify and prevent possible feed contaminants present in farm production environments that could result in an animal health and food safety concern.

In the draft, six general principles and practices are listed for ensuring feed safety:

- Know what feed contaminants may be present in your animals' feed and the measures known to prevent such contaminants from becoming unacceptable feed risks.
- Obtain feed from safe and reliable sources.
- Recognize unexpected changes in the feed at your farm (e.g., changes in color, smell, texture, or appearance).
- Know where in your production system(s) unacceptable feed risks may occur.
- Monitor animal feed products for contaminants during receiving, holding and handling.
- Be aware that other actions, such as limiting access to the premises to authorized personnel, following feed labeling directions, proper personnel training, and sampling and testing of feed, can help ensure feed safety.

The FDA will be accepting comments through June 3, 2015. To submit comments electronically to the docket, go to <http://tinyurl.com/fda-draft-guidance-203>.

To read the full document, visit <http://tinyurl.com/fda-draft-guidance-feeding>.

House Passes Bill to Overhaul EPA Scientific Advisory Board

Tuesday, the House passed legislation modifying the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Scientific Advisory Board's member selection process. The bill prohibits the board from appointing registered lobbyists as members; requires a minimum of 10 percent of the board members be from state, local or tribal

governments; and nominees for the Scientific Advisory board will be forced to disclose financial relationships such as contracts and grants from the EPA.

"We live in an extremely cynical time," said Rep. Frank Lucas (R-Okla.). "This is a bill that tries to move us in the direction of not only better regulations when we must have regulations, but better science to justify those regulations and the confidence of all of our fellow citizens."

As Republicans see the bill increasing transparency within the EPA, Democrats argue it will simply limit environmental experts serving on the board while creating unnecessary burdens.

The White House has threatened to issue a veto on the premise that the bill would "negatively affect the appointment of experts and would weaken the scientific independence and integrity" of the board.

Visit <http://tinyurl.com/house-bill-epa-advisory> to read the full story.

Cargill Beef Plant Recognized for Water Conservation

Cargill's beef processing plant in Friona has been recognized for their efforts to optimize water use throughout the state. Nominated by the High Plains Water District, Cargill's Friona facility will receive a 2015 award for water conservation at the "Texas Water Day at the Capitol" event next week in Austin.

Cargill's Friona facility has saved 150 million gallons, reducing total water use by 23 percent annually over the past six years. Cargill's team has demonstrated methods for water conservation by creating methods to recycle captured water in addition to providing local farmers water for agriculture production. Cargill's efforts are driven by recognizing the need for reducing water usage from the Ogallala Aquifer, one of the largest underground bodies of water on the planet, as it is currently being stressed by population growth, agricultural irrigation, industrial use and drought.

For more information about at the "Texas Water Day at the Capitol" event, visit <http://tinyurl.com/texas-water-day-2015>.

China Police Continue Crackdown on Beef Smuggling

China customs officials have uncovered another beef smuggling case, this time involving around \$32.6 million worth of U.S. beef. The suspects allegedly smuggled 6,000 tons of beef by working their way through customs clearance with fake invoices and false agreements. All of the suspects' bank accounts have been frozen, holding around \$4.7 million.

Previously in November, Chinese officers arrested 27 individuals for smuggling beef from Brazil. Though it was 300 tons, significantly less than the most recent smuggling, it had a significant effect. Smuggled beef was being sold at half the price of domestic product, around \$7 per kilogram, harming the local market by depressing prices. The suspects involved in this case are still awaiting a trial and formal charges.

Fernando Sampaio, executive director of Brazilian Beef Exporters Association, believes that promoting legitimate Brazilian beef exports to China is the best way to end the smuggling. "Beef consumption is directly related to income. China has rising incomes and a large population. This is reflected in an increase of protein consumption. Brazil would like to be a partner of China in granting food security to the Chinese population, complementing local production, not harming it."

To see the full article, go to <http://tinyurl.com/china-crackdown-beef-smuggling>.

Celebrating National Ag Day

Wednesday, March 18, was celebrated as National Agriculture Day. It is hosted by the Agriculture Council of America (ACA) and is celebrated in communities across the country.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack thanked agriculturists across the nation for our daily lives and our impact on the nation's economy. "Thank you to the ingenuity, efficiency and sweat of those working in American agriculture," Vilsack said. "We saw our agricultural economy remain strong and help keep the country afloat through the Great Recession and we see it now helping to drive our recovery...because American farmers are able to provide for so many of us, they give more and more of us the freedom to pursue goals and livelihoods beyond growing the food we need to survive."

The core values of ACA, in association with National Agriculture Day, are that every American would understand how food and fiber products are produced; appreciate the role agriculture plays in providing safe, abundant and affordable products; value the essential role of agriculture in maintaining a strong economy; and acknowledge and consider career opportunities in the agriculture, food and fiber industry.

Visit www.agday.org to view educational and promotional resources related to agriculture to be utilized all year long.

Sign-Up Open for Beef Quality Assurance Transport Symposium

The Cattle Transportation Symposium is an event designed to implement Beef Quality Assurance practices in the loading, hauling and unloading portions of cattle handling. The beef checkoff announced that registration for the event is now open and will be held May 14-15 in Fort Collins, Colo.

Cattle transporters, farmers, ranchers and dairymen are encouraged to attend to learn about the future of cattle transport in the U.S. and to learn about improved practices with cattle handling in transportation.

"Cattle that are stressed are difficult to handle, and the quality of their beef can be affected," says Dr. Dan Thomson, Jones professor of production medicine and epidemiology and director of the Beef Cattle Institute at Kansas State University's College of Veterinary Medicine. "This symposium is aimed at teaching producers, packers and dairymen how to get the most value from the carcass and provide consumers with the highest quality beef possible through best animal handling and transport practices." For more information on the symposium, visit <http://tinyurl.com/bqa-symposium>.

2015 Fed Beef Challenge

The 2015 TCFA Fed Beef Challenge will be held on Wednesday, April 15 at the Amarillo Livestock Auction. If your feedyard plans to compete for awards, cash and bragging rights, be sure to request your tags by Friday, April 3. In addition to the carcass contest to determine the best beef, there will be a live evaluation contest, steak dinner and activities benefiting TCFA's Education Foundation. For contest rules and the printable entry form, go to <http://tinyurl.com/tcfafbc>, or contact Jason Slane at (806) 358-3681 or jason@tcfa.org.

Calling All Junior Cattle Feeders, It's Time to Claim Your Tags!

Steer validation for the 2015 Junior Fed Beef Challenge is currently underway. Claim your tags today! Any student interested in the commercial cattle feeding industry, who is nine years of age or older, is encouraged to participate. Students will compete for more than \$20,000 in scholarships, cash and prizes in four phases of the event, including carcass merit, record keeping, written exam and oral presentation or interview.

The deadline to validate steers is next Saturday, March 28! Official entries are due by Friday, April 17. Find all contest details at <http://tinyurl.com/tcfajfbc>, or contact Jason Slane at (806) 358-3681 or jason@tcfa.org.

2015 TCFA Feedyard Camp

TCFA, in conjunction with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and West Texas A&M University, will host the 2015 Junior Fed Beef Career & Leadership Program, also known as "Feedyard Camp." The program is open to incoming high school juniors or seniors who are interested in a career in the fed beef industry.

Participants will receive hands-on instruction about feedyard operations, as well as career opportunities in the fed beef industry. Students can obtain an application, which must be returned to TCFA by May 1, online at <http://tinyurl.com/fy-camp>. The registration fee for camp is \$100, which covers all costs excluding travel to and from Canyon. Contact Jason Slane at jason@tcfa.org or Jayce Winters at jayce@tcfa.org with any questions.

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 Wednesday, 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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