



# TEXAS CATTLE FEEDERS ASSOCIATION

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# NEWSLETTER

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## **Scientists Dispute Findings Published in Feedyard Dust Paper**

In response to negative and sensational media coverage of a paper published by Texas Tech University's Institute of Environmental and Human Health addressing airborne particulate matter from cattle feeding facilities, three professional scientists and researchers with significant experience studying antimicrobial resistant bacteria authored a white paper addressing their concerns with the erroneous conclusions and speculation concerning biological risk being drawn, neither of which is supported by the research.

In the white paper, Michael D. Apley, DVM, PhD at Kansas State University, Samuel E. Ives, DVM, PhD at West Texas A&M University and H. Morgan Scott, DVM, PhD at Texas A&M University focused on three major points in the research to help eliminate confusion surrounding the issue, including bacterial viability, likelihood of bacterial repopulation, and concentration of antimicrobials.

"In this paper, many inferences are presented as conclusions when in reality they are actually untested hypotheses. Contrary to much of the media representation of this research, the data do not indicate that there are any viable bacteria present in their samples. The likelihood of non-viable bacterial genes transforming into other living bacteria is of very low probability. The antimicrobial concentrations used in this study are not grounded in appropriate air and soil volume concentrations and do not accurately represent the dispersion and dilution of these agents in the environment," were among the observations from Drs. Apley, Ives and Scott. Dr. Ives went on to state, "qPCR techniques only reveal the presence of bacteria, not their viability. That doesn't translate to transference to the environment and beyond."

The comments addressed the paper released by Texas Tech University's Institute of Environmental and Human Health called, *Antibiotics, Bacteria, and Antibiotic Resistance Genes: Aerial Transport from Cattle Feed Yards via Particulate Matter*, which was published this week in the *Journal of Environmental Health Perspectives*.

To view the white paper, go to <http://tinyurl.com/fydust-white-paper>.

## **Congresswoman Hartzler Calls for Sound Science in Dietary Guidelines**

Congresswoman Vicky Hartzler (R-Mo.) and 70 House colleagues on Tuesday called for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of Agriculture to ensure the final Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) are based on sound nutritional science and adhere to the DGA charter authorized by Congress.

The letter to Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and HHS Secretary Sylvia Burwell said, "The notion that the recommendations in this report were made based on selected data and excluded valuable nutritional information is appalling. As someone who taught nutritional science for 11 years, I am disturbed by the suggestion that a quality source of protein like red meat shouldn't be a part of a healthy diet. Flagrant claims like that are cause for concern and call into question the validity of this report, not to mention the threat they pose to the integrity of the dietary guidelines as a whole."

A copy of the letter with all 71 signatories can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/hartzler-letter>.

**TCFA needs you to submit comments today** urging the Secretaries to re-instate the 2010 Dietary Guidelines recommendation on lean meat. To make sure your voice is heard on this critical issue, go to [www.tcfa.org](http://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>.

## **Red Meat is Not the Enemy**

An article published this week in the *New York Times* highlights the fact that although Americans are consuming more calories than needed from a number of food groups, including carbohydrates and sweeteners, "no food has been attacked as widely or as loudly in the past few decades as red meat."

As warnings against red meat in today's society are prevalent and forceful, the author notes that Americans are more overweight than ever before, as they have turned to consuming more carbohydrates in obsession of avoiding fats and red meat.

The author, Aaron E. Carroll, who is a professor of pediatrics at Indiana University School of Medicine, brought to light that claims of red meat increasing risk for diseases such as cancer and diabetes are not supported in scientific evidence. Specifically, a study conducted through the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, or Nhanes, found that high protein was associated with lower levels of all-cause and cancer-specific mortality. Based on the study's findings, Carroll remarked that perhaps doctors should recommend people to eat more meat, but they aren't advising that.

Carroll says the take-home message is that it isn't helpful to cherry-pick a nutritional culprit of bad health and proclaim that everyone else is eating wrong. For the full story, visit <http://tinyurl.com/red-meat-not-enemy>.

### **Marbling Research Touts Benefits of Healthy Fat in Beef**

A recent research article called, "Marbling: Management of cattle to maximize the deposition of intramuscular adipose tissue," addresses the biology and biochemistry of beef marbling and its effects on production systems, carcass and fat quality.

The research looked at gene expression associated with fat development and found a profound increase in genes associated with fat development and making more oleic acid in feedlot feeding compared to pasture or grass feeding. The article describes the published ground beef studies and how ground beef affects cholesterol in humans. "In most studies, ground beef increased high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol – the good cholesterol – in men and women," said Stephen Smith, a Texas A&M AgriLife Research scientist and regents professor in the department of animal science at Texas A&M University.

According to the research, the relationship between fat and overall palatability "underscores the importance of grain feeding and intramuscular lipid in beef quality." The research was funded by the National Beef Checkoff Program and can be found online at <http://tinyurl.com/marbling-research>.

### **Texas House Passes 2-Year Budget Bill**

After almost 18 straight hours of debate on Tuesday and Wednesday, the Texas House of Representatives passed a \$210 billion appropriations bill (HB 1) to fund state agencies and programs in FY 2016 and 2017. The House budget reforms state government through increased transparency and addresses the needs of our growing state while staying under the constitutional spending cap. HB 1 invests significant resources in public schools, boosts formula funding for higher education, invests additional general revenue in transportation and promotes border security and public safety.

The bill also provides increased funding for the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC), the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) and the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Service. Additionally, HB1 accomplishes this by limiting overall spending growth to less than what is necessary to account for population and inflation increases, leaves \$8.4 billion unspent for tax reform and \$11 billion in the Rainy Day Fund.

More than 350 amendments to the bill were offered and debated. Several of these amendments would have transferred funding from TAHC, TDA and other rural initiatives to pay for other programs. However, the agriculture groups and rural House members were able to secure the votes and exert enough pressure to defeat these bad amendments.

The Senate has yet to consider their version of the budget, but is expected to take it up in the next few weeks. Once the Senate passes a bill, a conference committee will be convened to reconcile the differences between the two versions. TCFA will continue to engage in the process and work with the Senate and the members of the conference committee to ensure that agricultural and rural priorities are adequately funded.

**Also on Wednesday**, the House passed a supplemental appropriations bill (HB 2) to cover unbudgeted needs during the current biennium. Included in the bill was additional funding for the TAHC to support efforts to combat the spread of fever ticks in South Texas and to test and monitor two TB-infected dairy herds in the Panhandle. The Senate has yet to consider a supplemental appropriations bill.

### **Beef Herd Rebuilding**

It seems likely that the cattle industry will be rebuilding, or trying to rebuild, for the remainder of the decade. That's according to Derrell Peel, Oklahoma State University Extension livestock marketing specialist, who says the

questions about how much additional herd growth is needed, how fast it can happen and where it will take place are not completely apparent, but there are indications already in place.

“At this point I see little reason why the cow herd should not rebuild to at least the level of the truncated expansion in 2007-2008...roughly 32.5 million head,” Peel said. “That would suggest another 2.8 million head beyond the January 2015 level. This implies total herd growth of nearly 9.5 percent in the next few years. Time and market conditions will, however, determine exactly what the size potential is for the industry.”

In the current expansion, according to Peel, it is unlikely that an annual growth rate much above 2 percent could be maintained for two or three years consecutively. An average herd growth rate of 1.5 percent would take until 2021 to exceed 32 million head of beef cows.

There are however, a number of regional factors that could slow down expansion, so the question of how long is directly related to where herd growth will take place.

“The 2015 beef cow inventory of the Southern Plains region (Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas) was down 13.2 percent from 2008, a decrease of over 1.1 million head. This represents 42 percent of the total beef cow herd decline between 2008 and 2015,” Peel said. “This region will clearly play a central role in U.S. beef cow herd expansion in the coming years. Parts of the region are still experiencing severe to exceptional drought conditions. The 6.2 percent herd expansion in 2014 in the Southern Plains may be difficult to maintain if drought conditions do not improve significantly. Moreover, herd expansion could be halted or reversed if drought conditions redevelop in the region.”

While the final beef cow herd total for this expansion is unknown, it seems likely that the industry will be rebuilding or trying to rebuild for the remainder of the decade. Much of the herd growth will be in the Southern Plains with proportionately more growth likely in the western half of the country compared to the eastern half.

View Dr. Peel’s full commentary on beef herd rebuilding at <http://tinyurl.com/beef-herd-rebuilding>.

### **TCFA BQA Cattle Care & Handling Seminar**

TCFA, in conjunction with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, will host a Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) Cattle Care & Handling seminar for member feedyards on April 21 at Dawn Cattle Feeders in Dawn.

Dr. Ted McCollum will present the principles of cattle handling, movement of non-ambulatory cattle and proper euthanasia of cattle with an emphasis on cattle flight zone, point of balance, basic instincts of cattle and human interaction. A safety component of the program will be presented by TCFA’s Brady Miller. Dr. Ron Gill will present a session on processing cattle, including key concepts like the importance of facility design, understanding the capacity and capabilities of the facilities available, establishing cattle flow, working cattle in the box vs. the tub and ensuring proper handling and movement of cattle from the first day of arrival until they are shipped out.

The one-day program will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Attendees will receive signed training logs that can be used to fulfill the TCFA BQA requirements for annual employee training. The registration fee is \$30 per person or \$100 per feedyard for unlimited employees. The deadline to register is April 15. For more details and to register, including how to register, visit <http://tinyurl.com/cattle-care-bqa-sem>.

### **Grain Grading Workshop**

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will hold two one-day workshops at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center in Amarillo that will focus on grain grading, grain grading standards, proper sampling techniques and how to identify different types of damage. The identical workshops will be held on May 5 or May 6 and will run from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The workshops, which are co-sponsored by TCFA, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and Panhandle Grain and Feed Association, can count toward the TCFA BQA training for feedmill/feed department employees. The cost of the workshop is \$75 per participant. Pre-registration is required. View the brochure at <http://tinyurl.com/2015-grain-grading-brochure>.

### **USDA Extends ARC and PLC Deadlines**

The deadline for selecting a safety-net coverage path under the 2014 Farm Bill has been extended to Tuesday, April 7 by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. The two paths which producers must select between are Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC). In order to establish which area they need to be covered under, producers must either update their yield history or reallocate base acres.

“This is an important decision for producers because these programs help farmers and ranchers protect their operations from unexpected changes in the marketplace,” said Vilsack. “Nearly 98 percent of owners have already updated their yield and base acres, and 90 percent of producers have enrolled in ARC or PLC. These

numbers are strong and continue to rise. This additional week will give producers a little more time to have those final conversations, review their data, visit their local Farm Service Agency offices, and make their decisions.”

In order to make their official selection between the ARC and PLC programs, agriculturalists must have their appointment scheduled at their Farm Service Agency office even if their appointment is scheduled for after that date. Online tools to help producers explore how ARC or PLC coverage will affect their operation are available at <http://tinyurl.com/arc-plc>.

### **Senate Republicans Push to Abolish the Death Tax**

Senate Republicans are rallying behind legislation from Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.) that would repeal the federal estate tax, or death tax.

“Death should not be a taxable event. For too long the federal government has forced grieving families to pay a tax on their loved one’s life savings that has been built from income already taxed when originally earned,” Thune said in a statement. “This tax punishes farmers and entrepreneurs for a lifetime of hard work.”

Senators voted last week to include an amendment that backed the repeal of the estate tax in the budget. Every Republican, aside from Sen. Susan Collins (Maine), supported the amendment, which was also from Thune. With around 90 percent of the value in agricultural family entities being tied up in illiquid assets, the death tax can make it nearly impossible to pass a family business from one generation to the next while keeping it in tact. A death tax repeal would allow for more family farms and ranches to be preserved and able to continue to serve the food needs of a growing population. Under current law, a deceased person’s estate or assets have to be worth more than \$5.43 million before they are subject to the tax.

### **Australian Drought Provides Supply to Tight Global Market**

Herd liquidation has been underway in Australia due to drought conditions. This has played a factor in balancing global beef demand with higher cow slaughter and export coming out of the country. While the drought has continued into 2015 and is expected to continue, the report says global beef supply cannot afford the high rate of herd liquidation that has been exhibited over the last two years to continue.

According to the latest Rabobank Beef Quarterly report, global beef supplies are expected to remain tight without much global beef expansion in the near future. “Global beef supply continues to remain tight in Q1 2015, although Australian exports remain high as drought continues,” says Rabobank Animal Protein Analyst Angus Gidley-Baird. “Continued liquidation of the cattle herd and possible improved seasons will lead to a reduction in Australia’s beef production through 2015.”

The report can be viewed at <http://tinyurl.com/q12015rpt>.

### **2015 Fed Beef Challenge**

The 2015 Fed Beef Challenge is quickly approaching, and we look forward to seeing everyone at the Amarillo Livestock Auction on Wednesday, April 15! Area feedyards will compete with pens of steers, heifers and Holstein steers 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 dinner and activities benefiting TCFA’s Education Foundation. Make plans to join us for this historic event! Contest rules can be viewed at <http://tinyurl.com/tcfafb>. For more information, contact Jason Slane at (806) 358-3681 or [jason@tcfa.org](mailto:jason@tcfa.org).

### **2015 Junior Fed Beef Challenge**

Students planning to compete in the 2015 Junior Fed Beef Challenge must have all official entries to the TCFA office by Friday, April 17. The deadline to validate steers for this year’s contest closed on Saturday, March 28.

This program encourages young people to gain practical experience in feeding commercial beef cattle and stresses the importance of proper animal husbandry and financial management. 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. Find contest details at <http://tinyurl.com/tcfajfbc>.

### **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” June 29 – July 1 in Canyon. This three-day highly engaging and extensive program is open to any incoming high school junior or senior who is interested in pursuing a career in the fed beef industry.

If you know of a student who would be interested in this one-of-a-kind camp, please share this information with them. 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](mailto:jason@tcfa.org) or Jayce Winters at [jayce@tcfa.org](mailto: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, contact Jason Slane at (806) 358-3681 or [jason@tcfa.org](mailto:jason@tcfa.org).

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