



TEXAS CATTLE FEEDERS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

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House Votes to Repeal the Death Tax

On Thursday, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Death Tax Repeal Act of 2015 (H.R. 1105). The bill, introduced by Rep. Kevin Brady (R-Texas) will permanently repeal the federal estate tax and finally put an end to a punitive tax on family farms, ranches and businesses upon the death of an owner. USDA has named the estate tax as one of the top contributors to the breakup of multigenerational farming and ranching operations.

At the end of 2012, Congress passed the American Taxpayer Relief Act (ATRA), narrowly avoiding a return to a \$1 million estate tax exemption with a 55 percent tax rate. This legislation provided a permanent exemption of the estate tax of \$5 million per individual, \$10 million per couple, and raised the top tax rate to 40 percent. While ATRA provided some relief for some farmers and ranchers, fixing the underlying problem is critical. With rising farm land values across America the estate tax will continue to plague farm and ranch families until it is repealed.

U.S. House Committee Calls for Repeal of WOTUS

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, on Wednesday, approved the Regulatory Integrity Protection Act of 2015 (H.R. 1732). The bill requires the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to withdraw the Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) proposal within 30 days. The bill also charges the agencies with developing a new proposed rule that must take into consideration all of the comments received and reach consensus with the state and local governments on defining "Waters of the United States." According to an NCBA statement, this action sent a clear message to the EPA and Corps that the proposed WOTUS rule is an expansion of federal jurisdiction that strips rights from private property owners.

Hatch, Wyden and Ryan Introduce Trade Promotion Authority Legislation

Members of the U.S. Senate Finance and House Ways & Means Committees introduced The Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015 (TPA-2015) yesterday. According to the Senate Committee on Finance, this bipartisan, bicameral Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) legislation will establish concrete rules for international trade negotiations to help the U.S. deliver strong, high-standard trade agreements that will boost American exports and create new economic opportunities and better jobs for American workers, manufacturers, farmers, ranchers and entrepreneurs.

Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), Ranking Member Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) and House Ways and Means Chairman Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) introduced the legislation. "If we want to maintain our nation's economic leadership and promote American values around the world, we must reach beyond our borders, and this bill is a strong first step," said Hatch.

Past free trade agreements (FTA) negotiated under TPA have shown tremendous success for U.S. beef exports. The Korea-U.S. FTA will eliminate a 40 percent tariff rate, Columbia-U.S. FTA will eliminate an 80 percent tariff, Panama-U.S. FTA will eliminate a 30 percent tariffs, and the Dominican Republic-Central America-U.S. FTA will eliminate a 15-40 percent tariff; all over the course of 15 years. Currently, the U.S. exports over \$1 billion in beef and variety meats to these markets, with greater opportunity as those tariffs continue to drop.

To read more about the bill visit <http://tinyurl.com/comm-finance-tpa>.

Deadline Nearing to Submit Comments on Dietary Guidelines

The deadline to submit comments to the Secretaries of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) concerning the 2015 Dietary Guidelines is less than a month away. Your input is crucial, as comments will be considered as the Secretaries form the final guidelines before the end of the year. TCFA needs you to submit comments today urging Secretaries Burwell and Vilsack to put lean meats back into the recommendation of an overall healthy dietary pattern, as it currently exists in the 2010 Dietary Guidelines.

To make sure your voice is heard on this critical issue, 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 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee's full report, go to <http://tinyurl.com/dgac-report>.

Texas Beef Checkoff Six Month Checkup

On Oct. 1, 2014, the Texas state beef checkoff assessment began, and now, with the fiscal year half way through, the following are some of the findings from a six-month check-up of the program.

- State checkoff collections through the end of March 2015 totaled \$3,440,345.
- Checkoff collections through the end of March (October 2014-February 2015 transactions) are very close to expectations, and to date, collections received during this period are 99.1 percent of the amount budgeted for the same period.
- Refund requests received through March 2015 totaled \$147,216, which is 4.27 percent of collections.

With the exception of the \$1.1 million investment to the U.S. Meat Export Federation to promote beef internationally, the remainder of your state checkoff dollars will be invested in promotion, research and education programs in Texas.

2015 Fed Beef Challenge

The 2015 Fed Beef Challenge was a huge success, with 47 pens of cattle represented by 25 TCFA member feedyards at the Amarillo Livestock Auction. Individuals traveled from all over to view the best fed cattle around and to participate in the live evaluation contest and TCFA Education Calcutta. With generous support of member feedyards, Allied Industry representatives and TCFA supporters, nearly \$15,000 was raised in the Calcutta, which is used to award scholarships to students with a future in the fed beef industry.

Everyone celebrated another Fed Beef Challenge in the books with the traditional steak dinner, sponsored by the TCFA Allied Industries Committee. Watch future *Newsletters* and the TCFA website to see which feedyards fed the best pens of cattle. Until then, catch a glimpse of some of the action through pictures on TCFA's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/texas catt le feeders association.

MS Beef-A-Thon

The Panhandle Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society held the 45th annual MS Beef-A-Thon on Sunday. The Panhandle chapter is the only one in the nation to conduct an event of this kind that features beef. This year, Beef-A-Thon raised over \$32,500, and all proceeds go towards the Panhandle Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. The beef donated was sold in custom-cut quarters and ground beef packages.

A special thank you goes to all TCFA member feedyards who graciously donated a steer to be auctioned off at the event. This year's beef donors are Bar-G Feedyard, Cattle Town Feeders, Circle Three Feedyard, Dawn Custom Cattle Feeders, Dean Cluck Feedyard, Dimmitt Feedyard, F-Troop Feeders, Hartley Feeders, XIT Feeders, Coronado Feeders, Cimarron Feeders, Keeling Cattle Feeders, Kirkland Feedyard, Perryton Feeders, Rafter 3 Feedyard, Rogers & Sons, Tulia Feedlot and Western Cattle Feeders.

Environmental Groups Sue Over Pollution-Reporting Exemptions for CAFOs

Environmental groups on Wednesday filed a lawsuit challenging a 2008 rule, created before George W. Bush left office, which exempts concentrated animal feed operations (CAFOs) from reporting data on air emissions from animal waste. The environmental groups soon after challenged the decision, arguing that it violated two federal right-to-know laws, but the suit was dismissed. Now, the groups contend the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the Obama Administration never moved to vacate or revise the exemption, hence they are asking the court to review their original petition. For more information, visit <http://tinyurl.com/enviro-sue-epa>.

Removing Barriers for U.S. Trade

United States agriculture continues to see international trade as a strong contributor to the overall U.S. economy. Results of Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 show increased trade overseas in correlation with USDA expanding opportunities for American producers in international markets. The total amount in combined agricultural exports for FY 2014 was \$152.5 billion, an increase of \$11.6 billion over 2013. These exports represent nearly 1 million U.S. jobs in production agriculture and other industries. Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/usda-ag-trade>.

Consumer Preferences Change as Grilling Season Approaches

Oklahoma State University's latest Food Demand Survey revealed more willingness to pay more for steak and chicken but less for hamburger and pork products compared to last month. Consumers said they would pay \$8.02 per pound for steak compared to \$7.89 per pound in March. Hamburger, however, dropped to \$4.46 per pound

compared to \$4.61 per pound last month. Last year at this time, consumers reported they were willing to pay \$6.87 per pound for steak and \$4.17 per pound for hamburger.

Consumers reported spending 4 percent more eating out in April than in March. In terms of general food values, consumers ranked taste, safety and price as the most important when purchasing food this month. Find the complete Food Demand Survey at <http://tinyurl.com/osufoods04-15>.

2015 TCFA Safety Award Contest

Be sure to submit your ideas in the 2015 TCFA Safety Award Contest. The employee(s) with the winning idea will receive \$1,000, a jacket and a recognition luncheon for all employees held at the feedyard. The submitting feedyard will also receive a plaque. Second place will receive \$500, a jacket, a recognition luncheon for the feedyard and a plaque. Third place will be awarded \$250, a jacket and a plaque.

The idea does not have to be originally created by the employee; it just has to be discovered and implemented by the feedyard. View the English Safety Award flyer at <http://tinyurl.com/sa-flyer-english> and the Spanish version at <http://tinyurl.com/safety-awards-spanish> for details. Make sure to submit your Best Safety Practices applications, which can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/2015-sa-app>, by the deadline of Friday, May 29, 2015.

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. Participants can choose to attend the workshop on May 5 or May 6, as they are identical programs. The workshops, which are co-sponsored by TCFA, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and Panhandle Grain and Feed Association, will run from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and 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>.

2015 TCFA Feedyard Camp

TCFA's Feedyard Camp will be held June 29 – July 1 at West Texas A&M University in Canyon. This three-day extensive program is open to incoming high school juniors and seniors who are interested in a career in the fed beef industry. Applications can be found online at <http://tinyurl.com/fy-camp> and must be returned to TCFA by May 1. 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.

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