



# TEXAS CATTLE FEEDERS ASSOCIATION

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# NEWSLETTER

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## **Agricultural Groups Express Concern for FMD Vaccine Shortage**

Eight national agricultural organizations, including NCBA, wrote a letter urging the Senate Committee on Agriculture to address the foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) vaccine shortage in the U.S. The groups expressed concern for the vulnerability of the U.S. livestock community should an outbreak occur.

“Today there is not enough vaccine available to handle an outbreak beyond a very small localized disease event. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) currently manages a vaccine bank at Plum Island, N.Y., where vaccine antigen concentrate for a limited number of FMD strains is stored,” the letter said.

If an outbreak were to occur, the letter goes on to say that the antigen must be shipped to Pirbright, England or to Lyon, France, where it is turned into finished vaccine and shipped back to the U.S.

The groups request that APHIS contract an offshore FMD vaccine bank and a production facility that would allow large-scale vaccine production in the shortest amount of time, and put out a Request for Proposals to companies engaged in FMD vaccine production for estimated costs.

To read the full letter from the agricultural groups, visit <http://tinyurl.com/FMD-Vaccine>.

## **House Committee Votes to Delay Importation of Beef from Argentina and Brazil**

The U.S. House of Representatives Appropriations Committee voted Wednesday to include language in the Agriculture Appropriations bill halting implementation of USDA’s recent rule that lifts the ban on importation of beef from Brazil and Argentina until USDA completes a more comprehensive risk analysis on foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) in these countries. This amendment was adopted just one week after USDA announced it would be lifting the ban on beef imported from certain approved regions of these countries.

To read more on this amendment, visit <http://tinyurl.com/FMD-07-10-15>.

## **Researchers Support Healthful Fats in Dietary Guidelines for Americans**

A new article in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* recommends removing the limit on total fat consumption from the 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and promoting the consumption of healthy fats. Researchers from Tufts University and Boston Children’s Hospital based their findings on accumulated new scientific evidence.

“A restructuring of national nutritional policy is warranted to move away from total fat reduction and toward healthy food choices, including those higher in healthful fats,” concluded Dr. Dariush Mozaffarian of Tufts and Dr. David Ludwig of Boston Children’s Hospital.

To view a preview of the article, visit <http://tinyurl.com/DGA-7-10-15>.

## **General Mills Expands Animal Welfare Policy**

General Mills has joined numerous other food production companies in expanding its animal welfare policies to include the “Five Freedoms” and other specifications related to farm animal production. Among its efforts is a commitment to work toward 100% cage-free eggs, promotion of polled genetics for cattle, and support of pork suppliers creating plans to end the use of gestation crates.

The company also included statements on antibiotic use and animal testing. To view the full policy, visit <http://tinyurl.com/GM-7-10-15>.

## **Trans-Pacific Pact to Reshape Stock Portfolios Alongside Trade Flows**

According to *Reuters*, investors may want to take look at Pacific Rim countries as a new free trade pact develops. Following the recent trade laws passing the U.S. Congress, the 12 countries that are a part of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) could reach an agreement in the coming weeks. The new pact is expected to deliver \$295 billion in annual global economic gains and covers 40 percent of the global economy. This will mean huge gains for participating countries, and long-term implications for those that don’t join.

Groups such as the Peterson Institute for International Economics and the East-West Center have done analysis on potential outcomes of the pact. Malaysia and Vietnam are expected to have the largest relative gains. Japan is expected to benefit highly in the textiles and transport equipment industries, and Mexican farm exports are expected to benefit food companies.

To read the full article from *Reuters*, visit <http://tinyurl.com/TPP-7-10-15>.

### **FSIS Report Shows Success in Beef Food Safety Practices**

The USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) published its preliminary data for the first six months of the Beef and Veal Carcass Baseline Survey. FSIS collects samples from steers, cows, bulls, dairy cows, heifers and veal carcasses to determine prevalence of pathogens and to evaluate procedures to develop regulatory policies.

According to the report, "FSIS determined that the percent of all pathogens decreased from post hide removal to pre-chill. These results suggest that the interventions are reducing the pathogens on the beef and veal carcasses."

To read the full report from FSIS, visit <http://tinyurl.com/FSIS-7-10-15>.

### **Right to Farm Gains Ground in Oklahoma**

The "Right to Farm" initiative has made its way to Oklahoma and is gaining ground across the agricultural spectrum. The bill, introduced by Rep. Scott Briggs (R-Chickasha), would provide some protections to farmers and ranchers. A portion reads, "The legislature shall pass no law that abridges the right of farmers and ranchers to employ agricultural technology and livestock production and ranching practices without a compelling state interest."

The Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association (OCA) is raising awareness for the initiative. Executive Vice President Michael Kelsey says the association will be discussing and promoting the bill every chance it gets, from publications to speaking engagements with the general public. OCA will also host a panel discussion at its 63rd Annual Convention and Trade Show in Midwest City, Okla., on July 24.

"We're all in this together," Kelsey said. "Oklahoma agriculture has a great benefit from this and we want to continue to position Oklahoma agriculture positively in the future and we think this is one great step to do that."

Oklahomans will vote on the measure in November 2016. To read more or listen to an interview with Kelsey, visit <http://tinyurl.com/OK-7-10-15>.

### **Department of Labor Proposes New Overtime Compensation Rule**

The Department of Labor proposed a rule Monday to modify the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) as it relates to overtime pay for salaried employees. The current law requires employers to provide overtime pay for hours worked in excess of 40 per week to individuals earning less than \$23,660 per year. The proposed rule would require overtime pay to be extended to those employees earning less than \$50,440 per year. NCBAA is currently looking into agriculture exemptions for this rule.

Public comments on the proposed rule are being accepted through Sept. 4, 2015. To view the proposed rule or to submit comments, visit <http://tinyurl.com/DOL-7-10-15>.

### **USMEF to Host African Buyers Seminar and Showcase**

The U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) has announced plans for the African Buyers Seminar and Showcase, an event to promote U.S. beef and pork trade opportunities with African buyers, to be held on Sept. 22 in Accra, Ghana. The growing middle class and increased buying power in Sub-Saharan Africa presents an opportunity for the U.S. red meat industry.

USMEF Senior Vice President for Marketing Dan Halstrom says there will be three main components to the event, two of them being educational. There will be overall educational sections for beef and pork where attendees will learn about best handling practices in both production and harvest facility settings, as well as about economics and merchandising opportunities. The third component will be a "meet the buyers conference," where USMEF members will have one-on-one opportunities to meet with potential buyers.

To learn more or listen to an interview with Halstrom, visit <http://tinyurl.com/USMEF-7-10-15>.

### **Commissioner Miller Delivers State of Agriculture Address**

Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller celebrated six months in office on Wednesday. Miller delivered a State of Agriculture Address to Texans on the progress of the Texas Department of Agriculture throughout his tenure and his vision for the future.

“It’s been an honor to serve the people of Texas and our farmers and ranchers as Agriculture Commissioner,” said Commissioner Miller. “The work we’ve done so far is only the beginning. It was my goal from day one to hit the ground running, and I can honestly say that my team and I have done just that.”

To view Miller’s address, visit <http://tinyurl.com/TDA-7-10-15>.

### **Private-Sector Members Appointed to Agricultural Trade Advisory Committees**

U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and United States Trade Representative Michael Froman announced the appointment of 130 private-sector members to the Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee (APAC) and six Agricultural Technical Advisory Committees (ATACs), according to a news release from USDA.

“USDA and USTR rely on the individuals who serve on these committees to provide their expert advice on U.S. trade policy and priorities,” said Vilsack. “They are an invaluable asset as we work to enact trade agreements and trade policies that deliver the greatest economic benefit for U.S. agriculture and for our nation as a whole.”

These new committee members will serve until June 15, 2019, though other new appointments will also be added throughout that time period. To read the full news release and view a list of all new members, visit <http://tinyurl.com/FAS-7-10-15>.

### **2015 Farm Bureau Photo Contest**

The American Farm Bureau Federation’s 2015 Photo Contest is open to all Farm Bureau members and staff over the age of 18 at the time of entry. The contest seeks photos that accurately portray agricultural production and promote safe practices. Submission categories include technology, farm families, farm labor and consumer outreach.

For more information on contest rules and details or to enter, visit <http://tinyurl.com/AFBF-7-10-15>.

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**Texas Cattle Feeders Association**

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