



TEXAS CATTLE FEEDERS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

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Nutrition Coalition Criticizes Dietary Guidelines Lack of Science

Due to the announcement of Nina Teicholz being disinvited from the National Food Policy Conference panel, the Nutrition Coalition hosted a press conference this week ahead of the event to discuss issues with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The Coalition said policy makers have ignored scientific evidence on saturated fat and total fat and have failed to curb increases in obesity and diabetes. They outlined scientific evidence that had been excluded from the compilation of the guidelines.

Teicholz is the author of “The Big Fat Surprise” and was a 2014 TCFA Convention speaker. Research cited by the Coalition is also represented in her work that the USDA’s recommendations of a low-fat diet has not proven health benefit and that despite decreased consumption of red meat, eggs, butter and whole milk in the U.S., obesity rates have risen.

View background materials prepared for the press conference at <http://tinyurl.com/TNC-4-8-16>.

McDonald’s Developing Antibiotics Policy

According to an interview with *Meatingplace*, Justin Ransom, senior director of quality systems for McDonald’s USA, shared that McDonald’s is currently working with beef and pork producers to develop an antibiotics use policy for both industries. He said they will not likely take a “never ever” approach, but rather work with industry scientists to develop the best antimicrobial stewardship policy that both beef and pork producers can achieve.

“We know some of our competitors have come out and said ‘no antibiotics ever.’ We don’t necessarily think that is possible in the short term. It is really more about how we can challenge people to find better ways to raise animals so that they don’t need antibiotics to begin with,” Ransom said. “Our goal is to come out with a commitment we know industry can move toward. It may be a stretch goal, but it is one of those things where we really want industry’s engagement on how we can do things differently.”

Ransom said the company is focused on social media engagement with its customers to answer their questions. To read the full article, visit <http://tinyurl.com/McDonalds-4-8-16>.

EPA Funds Anti-Agriculture Billboard

A new billboard posted by the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission in Olympia, Wash., promotes stricter environmental regulations on farmers and ranchers, directing viewers to a website with more information. The billboard, however, fails to disclose one important detail—its funding source. The billboard was funded by a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Funding disclosure was required by the terms of the grant, and the EPA has notified the Commission that the billboard is out of compliance without the funding disclosure.

“While there are legal concerns with the lack of disclosure of EPA’s involvement, the billboard is another example of EPA’s improper practice of encouraging the lobbying of legislators,” said Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Pat Roberts (R-Kan.) “How and why the EPA has allowed taxpayer dollars to be used to attack any industry, including our vital agriculture producers, demands answers.”

To learn more, visit <http://tinyurl.com/EPA-4-8-16>.

Food Transparency Making Progress

The latest FoodThink study from Sullivan Higdon & Sink (SHS) indicates that efforts made by agriculturalists and food companies towards increased transparency are effective in contributing to consumer trust. In SHS’s white paper, “Evolving Trust in the Food Industry,” it was noted that even though there has been an increase in perceived food production transparency, food marketers must understand that there is still much work to do, and marketing initiatives must continue to exhibit openness and transparency to consumers.

The study found that perceived transparency in agriculture and food companies has increased 15 percent from 2012 to 2016. Two-thirds of consumers surveyed that they believe it’s somewhat or very important to

have knowledge of food production processes and practices. The study found that more consumers are looking for various label claims on food. Friends and family are the most trusted group for consumers when it comes to getting information about their food. The next highest trusted sources are food companies, manufacturers, bloggers/social media personalities, grocers and food retailers. The less trusted groups include government agencies, the medical community and the academic community.

To download the latest white paper from FoodThink, visit <http://shsfoodthink.com/>.

Agricultural Air Quality Task Force Meets in D.C.

The USDA Agricultural Air Quality Task Force (AAQTF) met this week in Washington, D.C., to discuss issues and make recommendations to Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. The task force is composed of representatives from industry, agriculture, academia, government agencies, non-governmental organizations and other agricultural and environmental experts. In January, Vilsack appointed new members to the AAQTF for the 2016-2018 term, including TCFA Vice President Ben Weinheimer.

The AAQTF promotes USDA research efforts and identifies cost-effective ways the agriculture industry can improve air quality. It also helps better coordinate activities and resources among USDA agencies and other federal partners such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

At the meeting this week, the task force heard updates from EPA, NRCS, ARS, Forest Service and other federal agencies. Subcommittees were formed to continue work between meetings in the areas of air quality standards and regulations, reactive nitrogen, and climate change/GHGs.

The task force also approved four recommendations: to encourage USDA to revise and extend the terms of the task force members to provide continuity and retention of institutional knowledge in light of the relatively small pool of potential candidates for membership in the AAQTF; to establish separate and distinct research funding for air quality, and re-instate annual funding at a minimum level of \$40 million per year, focused on criteria air pollutants; to list air quality as a specific priority in the call for Conservation Innovation Grant proposals and give those proposals equal consideration in the review process; and to request that NRCS and EPA reengage in research and policy discussions and provide a report on the status of several issues at the next AAQTF meeting, including exceptional events, prescribed burning, ozone, regional haze and greenhouse gas emissions.

Originally established by the 1996 Farm Bill, the task force is charged with: 1) Advising the Secretary of Agriculture on air quality and its relationship to agriculture based on sound scientific findings; 2) Reviewing research on agricultural air quality supported by federal agencies; 3) Promoting intergovernmental (federal, state, local and tribal) coordination in establishing agricultural air quality policy to avoid duplication of efforts; and 4) Ensuring that air quality conservation practices supported by USDA are based on peer reviewed research and are economically feasible for agricultural producers.

Study Analyzes Consumer Activity Based on Knowledge of Labels

A recent study by the University of Arkansas analyzes the impact of labels on consumer perception of the product. The study used four identical chicken meat products and gave them different label claims, including USDA Organic, No Hormones Added, USDA Process Verified and no-label condition. Equal numbers of participants in two groups evaluated and sampled the products. One group had prior knowledge of the meanings of the labels; the other group had no prior education or knowledge about the labels. The study found that the high label-understanding group perceived differences among the differently labeled chicken, while the group with no prior knowledge found no discernable differences between the products.

“The chicken-meat samples were the same; the only treatment was on the label claims,” said researcher Han-Seok Seo. “If participants fully understand the claims, those claims affect their perception toward the samples. If they do not understand, there might be no significant effect of the label claims. To strengthen the impact of label claims, it would be suggested to educate consumers on their meaning.”

The study titled “Effects of Label Understanding on Sensory Acceptability of Chicken Products” was published in the journal *Food Quality and Preference*.

USDA Names Permanent Chief Veterinary Officer

Dr. Jack Shere has been named the permanent chief veterinary officer and deputy administrator for Veterinary Services (VS) the USDA. Shere was established as the acting chief following the resignation of Dr. John Clifford. This appointment has now been made permanent.

“Dr. Shere brings a wealth of veterinary knowledge, skills, and hands-on experience to the VS Deputy position. I am confident that these skills, coupled with his management expertise, will position VS well to not only defend against the many foreign pests and diseases that regularly threaten the U.S. but to continue our diligent efforts to maintain and open new markets,” said APHIS Administrator Kevin Shea.

Shere joined VS in 1990 as a field veterinary medical officer in Nebraska and Wisconsin and has held many leadership positions since then, including Associate Western Regional Director from 2002 to 2005 and Eastern Regional Director from 2005 to 2013. Shere has served as VS Associate Deputy Administrator since 2013.

USDA Announces Available Veterinary Loan Repayment Funds

The USDA announced this week that it is making \$4.4 million available as a part of the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program to help repay veterinary school loans if the veterinarian seeking repayment will work for at least three years in an underserved location that lacks sufficient veterinary resources.

Participants must participate in one of three shortage situations. Students must either dedicate at least 80 percent of their time to the provision of food animal veterinary services; serve in rural areas where food animal services are at least 30 percent of their time; or work in public practice from at least 49 percent of their time.

Applications for the program are due May 20. To learn more, visit <http://tinyurl.com/USDA-4-8-16>.

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 may choose to attend the workshop on either May 3 or 4, 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/2016-Grain-Grading>.

TCFA BQA Cattle Care & Handling Seminar

TCFA, in conjunction with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, will host three upcoming Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) Cattle Care & Handling seminars for member feedyards. The date and location options will be as follows: April 19 at Bartlett I, Tulia; April 20 at Dawn Custom Cattle Feeders, Dawn; and April 21 at Cactus Feedyard, Cactus. Please note that the trainings at Dawn Custom Cattle Feeders and Cactus Feedyard will include moving and handling cattle with horses, while the training at Bartlett I will focus on moving and handling cattle on foot.

Each 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 including how to register, visit <http://tinyurl.com/BQA-2016-03-11>.

2016 Fed Beef Challenge is Next Week – See You There!

The best cattle in Cattle Feeding Country will make their way to the historic Amarillo Livestock Auction on Wednesday, April 13 for the 2016 TCFA Fed Beef Challenge. Feedyards from throughout the TCFA area will bring their top quality steers, heifers and 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.

Contact Brady Miller at (806) 358-3681 or brady@tcfa.org for more information.

2016 TCFA Feedyard Camp

TCFA, in conjunction with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and West Texas A&M University, will host the 2016 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. The registration fee for camp is \$100, which covers all costs excluding travel to and from Canyon. Students may obtain an application, which must be returned to TCFA by May 1, online at <http://tinyurl.com/fy-camp>. Contact Brady Miller at brady@tcfa.org or Rachel Hernandez at rachel@tcfa.org with any questions.

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Texas Cattle Feeders Association

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