



TEXAS CATTLE FEEDERS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

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BPI vs. ABC Trial Begins

Beef Product Inc.'s \$1.9 billion defamation lawsuit against ABC News began this week in South Dakota. During opening statements, BPI attorney Dan Webb outlined the scope of the damages done to BPI by coverage from the news station.

According to Webb, over a period of 30 days, the news organization used 131 media communications, including 12 TV broadcasts over six media platforms where it called the company's signature product — lean finely textured beef (LFTB) — “pink slime” 350 times. This media attack is what caused the plant to close three of its four processing plants and lay off 700 employees in a matter of two weeks after the first report.

“The message to viewers is that ‘slime’ is disgusting, inedible, unhealthy and harmful,” Webb told the jury.

Mindy Brashears, a Texas Tech University food safety and public health professor, testified Wednesday noting that she has comprehensive knowledge of how BPI makes LFTB. She told the jury she concluded that LFTB is beef and not ‘pink slime’ and is certainly not the inferior product ABC made it out to be.

BPI's goal is to prove to the jury that ABC knowingly made such false statements or implications about LFTB, including that it does not constitute beef, that it is not safe for human consumption, and that the company acted improperly in getting USDA approval for the product, according to a report in *Meatingplace*.

A [June 6 editorial](#) in the *New York Times* from journalist Alexander Aciman noted, “the truth about pink slime is that, despite its unappetizing name, it's entirely safe to eat. More than that, it is an affordable source of lean meat for low-income Americans, and stigmatizing it hurts people who rely on it for protein.”

BPI is suing ABC for product defamation under a South Dakota food libel law that would award them nearly \$6 billion if they win. The trial is expected to last through July.

Texas Legislature Headed Back for Special Session

Gov. Greg Abbott called a special session of the Texas Legislature to work on 20 items that were not addressed during the regular session.

“A special session was entirely avoidable, and there was plenty of time for the legislature to forge compromises to avoid the time and taxpayer expense of a special session,” Abbott said in a statement Monday. “If I'm going to call a special session, I intend to make it count.”

Some of the issues to be addressed include property tax reform, school finance, school vouchers and transgender bathrooms. The special session begins July 18. To learn more, visit <http://tinyurl.com/TCFA-Special-Session>.

Former TCFA Board Member Don Oppliger Passes Away

Former TCFA Board Member Don Oppliger died Sunday after his helicopter crashed near Dimmitt. He was 68.

Oppliger owned and operated Oppliger Companies, headquartered in Amarillo. It includes feedyards, farms and ranches. He served on the TCFA board from 1999 to 2001 and was known for his passion for the beef industry and his love of flying. He leaves behind wife Joi, son Benjamin and wife Katie, granddaughter Madison, all of Amarillo, and three sisters in Nebraska. TCFA extends its condolences to Don's family and friends.

Trump Pulls Out of Paris Accord

President Trump announced last week that the U.S. would exit the Paris Climate Accord. Under the agreement, the U.S. had pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 26 percent by 2025. The exit marks a campaign promise Trump made arguing that the Paris agreement was hurting industries and killing jobs.

Trump said the pact would have put the U.S. at a permanent disadvantage with China, India and other countries and could cost 2.7 million jobs by 2025 and as much as \$3 trillion in lost gross domestic product.

Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue praised the exit saying, “President Trump promised that he would put America first, and he has rightly determined that the Paris accord was not in the best interest of the United States.

“The earth’s climate has been changing since the planet was formed — on this there is no disagreement. At USDA, we rely on sound science and we remain firmly committed to digging ever deeper into research to develop better methods of agricultural production in that changing climate,” he continued.

The Trump Administration said they will begin to negotiate on an entirely new agreement with more favorable terms for the U.S.

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Los Angeles School District Pilots Vegan Lunch Program

The second largest public school district in the country, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), will launch a pilot program to test plant-based vegan options in school lunches during the 2017-2018 school year.

“Children who grow up with exposure to fresh fruits and vegetables naturally prefer those foods,” Dr. Neal Barnard, president of the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, an animal activist group with close ties to PETA, said. “A bean burrito and garden salad or a tofu veggie wrap with fresh mango slices won’t be new at age 25 if it’s served every day, today, in school lunch lines.”

The goal of the program is to provide vegan and non-dairy options daily for school children starting in Kindergarten through 12th grade.

In 2013, the district introduced Meatless Mondays where cafeterias served only vegetable-based foods on the first day of each school week.

“It seems a bit absurd that LAUSD approved a pilot program to test-drive daily plant-based vegan entrees in a handful of district schools during the 2017-2018 school year,” said Chuck Jolley, president of Jolley & Associates, a marketing and public relations firm that focuses on the food industry. “With some of the best dietitians and health professionals at their front door, the LAUSD board members approved the resolution, drafted by Lila Copeland, a freshman student and youth director of the nonprofit Earth Peace.”

SAVE THE DATE for TCFA’s 50th Anniversary Convention

Mark your calendars for TCFA’s 50th Anniversary Convention October 8-10 at the Embassy Suites Downtown Amarillo. The speaker lineup includes *Lone Survivor* author, Marcus Luttrell; generational/millennial expert, Jason Dorsey; and agricultural economist and global futurist, Dr. Lowell Catlett. The Cattle Feeders Get

Together will feature live entertainment from 80s cover band The Spazmatics. Make plans to join us in Amarillo for this special event.

National MS Society Hosts Beef-a-Thon This Sunday

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society will host its annual Beef-a-Thon Sunday, June 11, from 3-6 p.m. on Fox 14. The event is a partnership between the National MS Society and TCFA. It has been hosted every summer in the Panhandle area since 1970, raising tens of thousands of dollars each year.

Quarters of custom cut beef, 15 pound boxes of 90 percent lean ground beef and other items will be available to bid on.

To place your bid, call (806) 340-7535 or toll free (866) 227-5292 between 3 and 6 this Sunday. You can also make cash donations online at <http://tinyurl.com/Beef-a-Thon>.

Beef Producers Look Ahead with Confidence

In its annual State of the Industry report, *BEEF Magazine* notes a major shift in producer attitude. According to the report, beef producers as a group are more optimistic and are looking ahead with confidence, in spite of a projected cyclical decline in cattle prices.

"I see that producers are showing increased optimism both in the short term and long term due to their perception of the supply and demand fundamentals, domestically and internationally," said Scott Grau, Penton's director of research. "This is supported with their view that the international beef trade influences the prices they receive here in the U.S., so they are competing in a worldwide marketplace."

Grau went on to note that there are possibly other influences affecting optimism that weren't directly asked.

"Those are the improvement of drought conditions in the Western U.S. and the election of President Trump." To read the full survey, visit <http://tinyurl.com/TCFA-Beef-Survey>.

Domino's Will Not Be Pressured by Activists

If you are looking to order takeout this weekend, look no further than Domino's. The restaurant chain has said they will not cave to animal activists who have pressured many food companies and restaurants into adopting unnecessary animal welfare policies.

Domino's spokesman Tim McIntyre told *Brownfield Ag News* their philosophy is simple. Farmers know best.

"We will never tell a farmer how to farm. We will never tell a rancher how to raise his or her animals," McIntyre said. "What we believe is they're the experts. They have the most vested interests in raising their livestock. It's not just a job, we recognize that. It's a life and we appreciate that — and we're not afraid to stand up and say it."

The ag community spoke out commending Domino's for taking a stand against activists.

McIntyre says that the extremists have pressed hard, but they will not cave.

"The best answer is to be deaf. To not hear them, to not respond, to not give them a platform," he said. "The biggest mistake we make is believing they are reasonable people. We've learned they're not. That's why they are called extremists." To read the full article, visit <http://tinyurl.com/Domino-Activist>.

58 Percent of Consumers Concerned About Animal Welfare

Fifty-eight percent of consumers are more concerned about food animal welfare than they were a few years ago, according to a recent report in *Packaged Fact's*.

The rising interest in animal welfare issues is due in part to consumers' increased concern about the safety of their food, and the growing belief that if an animal is raised in healthy circumstances, then its meat and dairy products will be healthier, as well as better-tasting and more nutritious, according to the report.

The report states that only 33 percent of grocery shoppers view themselves as well-informed about claims such as hormones/steroids/antibiotic free, cage-free, free-range, pasture-raised and certified-humane. Nonetheless, nearly two-thirds of consumers agree that humane treatment of animals raised for food should be a societal concern and a regulatory issue. To learn more, visit <http://tinyurl.com/58Percent-Consumers>.

Sid Miller Elected as Vice President of National Ag Association

Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller was elected as Vice President of the Southern Association of State Departments of Agriculture (SASDA) at their 2017 conference this week.

"I am honored to receive the trust and support of my colleagues from across the South," Miller said in a statement. "Many of the challenges we face in Texas agriculture are also found in other states, and SASDA is a great way to find common solutions to these problems."

SASDA is part of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) and is comprised of officials from the southern states. Miller will become president of SASDA at the 2018 conference.

Texas A&M Beef Cattle Short Course Set for August 7-9

The 63rd Texas A&M Beef Cattle Short Course is scheduled to take place Aug. 7-9 at Texas A&M University in College Station. The short course is the largest beef cattle educational event in the country and attracts more than 1,600 beef cattle producers from Texas and abroad.

This year's general session will focus on export markets and how they play an important role for cow-calf producers.

"The beef export market continues to grow for U.S. ranchers and is an important part of the overall cattle market," said Jason Cleere, conference coordinator and AgriLife Extension beef cattle specialist. "We will be looking at how much export value there is in a weaned calf and what hurdles there are when it comes to accessing emerging markets such as China."

Also scheduled for the general session is a long-term weather outlook. The course will feature 22 sessions covering basic practices, new technologies and other industry topics.

Registration is \$180 before July 31 and \$220 after. For more information or to register, visit <http://beefcattleshortcourse.com/>.

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