



TEXAS CATTLE FEEDERS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

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EPA Proposes to Rescind the WOTUS Rule

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt on Tuesday announced the Trump Administration's intent to rescind the 2015 WOTUS Rule and start the rulemaking process over.

"This is great news for those of us concerned about the ambiguity and federal overreach of the WOTUS rule and environmental stewardship," said TCFA chairman Jim Lovell. "Livestock producers and farmers are the original environmental stewards and deserve common sense regulations that can be easily understood and actually help ensure clean water resources. TCFA applauds this action and will continue to work with EPA to draft a replacement rule."

The proposed rule is the first in a two-step process planned by Administrator Pruitt. The agency is working on a new version of the rule that would include a narrower interpretation of which waters are subject to federal oversight. TCFA, NCBA and other stakeholders are working with EPA to draft the replacement rule with the intent that it will minimize intrusion into private property, give producers regulatory certainty, provide actual environmental benefit and stand the test of time.

The proposal to rescind the 2015 WOTUS rule is subject to a 30-day public comment period following publication in the *Federal Register*. The agency will then review the comments and issue a final rule, at which time the WOTUS Rule will cease to exist. The final rule will also recodify the regulations that were in place prior to the 2015 WOTUS Rule. This action will not change current regulatory definitions and practices which are already in place as a result of the stay issued by the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals.

BPI, ABC News Reach Settlement

After 18 days in court, Beef Products, Inc, which manufactures lean finely textured beef (LFTB) reached a settlement agreement with ABC News in the defamation lawsuit against the network and reporter Jim Avila for using the disparaging term "pink slime" in 2012 reports on LFTB.

While the terms of the settlement are confidential, it appears the final decision was vindication to BPI, which lost more than three-fourths of its company following ABC's reporting, reports *BEEF Daily*.

"We are extraordinarily pleased to have reached a settlement of our lawsuit against ABC and Jim Avila," said Dean Webb, BPI's attorney. "While this has not been an easy road to travel, it was necessary to begin rectifying the harm we suffered as a result of what we believed to be biased and baseless reporting in 2012. Through this process, we have again established what we all know to be true about LFTB: it is beef, and is safe, wholesome, and nutritious. This agreement provides us with a strong foundation on which to grow the business, while allowing us to remain focused on achieving the vision of the Roth and BPI family."

Avila and ABC, however, are unapologetic. To read more, go to <http://tinyurl.com/BPIsettleslawsuit>.

Sec. Perdue, NCBA Officers Mark Return of U.S. Beef to China

NCBA President Craig Uden and President-elect Kevin Kester joined U.S. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue, U.S. Ambassador to China Terry Branstad and Chinese Agricultural Minister Han Changfu in Beijing, on Friday for a ceremony welcoming the first shipments of American-produced beef into China since 2003. The highlight of the event was a ceremonial "Cutting of the Prime Rib."

"Restoring U.S. beef access to China has been a top priority for many years, and we are excited to have the opportunity to provide Chinese consumers with safe, tender, and delicious U.S. beef once again," Uden said at the ceremony

"I will be proud to be on hand for the official reintroduction of U.S. beef to China," Perdue said prior to leaving for the ceremony. "This is tremendous news for the American beef industry, the agriculture community, and the American economy in general. We will once again have access to the enormous Chinese market, with a strong and growing middle class, which had been closed to our ranchers for a long, long time. There's no doubt in my mind that when the Chinese people taste our high-quality U.S. beef, they'll want more of it."

NCBA Calls on NAFTA Negotiators to Preserve Market Access, “Do No Harm”

NCBA President-Elect Kevin Kester testified in support of the market access that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has delivered for America’s cattle producers, and warned against the re-adoption of failed policies that harmed the industry in the past.

“NCBA strongly supports NAFTA because the terms of NAFTA developed Canada and Mexico into two very important export markets for U.S. beef,” Kester testified at a hearing hosted by the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR). “Quite frankly, it is difficult to improve upon duty-free, unlimited access to Canada and Mexico — so please do no harm and do not jeopardize our access.”

Kester pointed out that Canada and Mexico have become two of the top five export markets for U.S. beef producers, accounting for approximately \$1 billion each in annual sales. Kester also warned USTR’s NAFTA negotiators to beware of protectionist calls to resurrect failed policies of the past, such as mandatory country-of-origin labeling, also known as COOL.

While not present at the hearing, TCFA submitted written comments urging USTR to exercise caution so as to not harm current market access for U.S. beef. “NAFTA has been one of the greatest success stories in the history of U.S. agriculture, with Mexico and Canada becoming two of our best international customers,” Ross Wilson, TCFA CEO, said in the comments. “TCFA supports efforts to modernize NAFTA, but those efforts must not erode the market access and scientific standards that NAFTA has provided for U.S. beef.”

To read TCFA’s comments go to <http://tinyurl.com/TCFA-NAFTA-2017>.

Also this week, a group of 17 U.S. Senators, including John Cornyn (R-Texas), sent a letter asking USTR to ensure that no changes to NAFTA are made that could result in harm U.S. agriculture.

To read the letter, go to <http://tinyurl.com/y9u5hbqt>.

First Signs of Trade Trouble with Mexico Surface

While the U.S., Canada and Mexico gear up for NAFTA renegotiations, Mexico is sending clear signals that it won’t roll over in trade disputes, according to *Southwest Farm Press*.

For the first time in four years, U.S. exports of soybean meal used to feed Mexican livestock and poultry has fallen by 15 percent in the first four months of the year. And U.S. chicken meat exports to Mexico dropped 11 percent over the same period, the biggest decline since 2003. U.S. corn exports have also dropped, by an unexpected 6 percent. As most farmers can tell you, Mexico is the largest international buyer of U.S. corn, soybeans and poultry.

The Wall Street Journal largely attributes this decline in exports to what they term the growing unease of Mexican buyers who fear that renegotiation of NAFTA will not take place without complications. The *Journal* article illustrates how many Mexican companies are turning to other suppliers, like Brazil, for replacements to U.S. agricultural products in the short term, at least until after NAFTA renegotiation efforts prove to be either a true success or a terrible failure.

Texas exports to Mexico totaled \$833.5 million in 2016, of which \$270.8 million were animal products and \$562.8 million were plant products. The top four Texas agricultural exports to Mexico were beef and veal, valued at \$141.7 million; cotton, \$125.4 million; sweeteners, \$64.5 million; and corn, \$62.4 million.

To read more, go to <http://tinyurl.com/tradetroublewithmexico>.

USTR Suggests Japan Make “Unilateral Concessions” in Trade, Including Beef Imports

Testifying before the Senate Finance Committee, U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer said Japan should make some “unilateral concessions” to help reduce its trade surplus with the United States. Lighthizer said U.S. beef is one of the areas in which Japan should do so, according to *MeatingPlace.com*.

“I don’t quite understand why that doesn’t happen,” he said. “That’s a simple way to get that trade deficit down and doesn’t cost them anything.”

While Lighthizer did not elaborate on what kind of concessions Japan should make, in March, his office urged Japan to fully open its market to U.S. beef from “animals of all ages.” Japan currently only allows imports of U.S. beef products from cattle younger than 30 months. As well, the industry long has been seeking to reduce a 38.5 percent tariff that Japan imposes on U.S. beef.

Japan agreed to these concessions as part of the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP), but President Trump withdrew the U.S. from the agreement in January. Lighthizer assured the committee that the U.S. would not return to the TPP table.

USDA Proposes Changes to Beef Quality Grading

USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is proposing a revision to the U.S. Standards for Grades of Carcass Beef. The revision would include dentition and documentation of actual age as additional methods of classifying maturity of carcasses for quality grading.

Currently, the beef standards only include skeletal and muscular evidence as a determination of maturity grouping. The proposed change would allow carcasses of grain-fed steers and heifers determined to be less than 30 months old either by dentition or by documentation of actual age to be included in the youngest maturity group for carcasses recognized as “beef” (A maturity).

A notice of the proposed change was published in the *Federal Register* on June 19. AMS will accept comments until August 18, 2017. TCFA will submit comments similar to those previously filed in support of this change. To read the *Federal Register* notice, go to <http://tinyurl.com/6-19FederalRegister>. TCFA’s previous comments are available at <http://tinyurl.com/10-28-AMS-Comments>

Agro-Terrorism Bill Sent to the President

Late last week, the U.S. House of Representatives overwhelmingly approved legislation (H.R. 1238) to address the threat of agro-terrorism and ensure the safety of the U.S. food supply. The bill, introduced by Rep. David Young (R-Iowa) and Senate Ag Committee Chairman Pat Roberts (R-Kan.) would require the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to lead the government’s efforts to secure the nation’s food, agriculture and veterinary systems against terrorism and high-risk event. The bill also calls for collaboration with other agencies like the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to ensure food and agriculture sectors are integrated into the DHS domestic preparedness policy initiatives.

An amended version of the bill was approved by the Senate last month. The final version of the bill has been sent to President Trump for his signature.

Preliminary Injunction Granted in Montana Checkoff Lawsuit

Earlier this month, U.S. District Court Judge Brian Morris, ruling from his bench in Great Falls, Mont., granted R-CALF a preliminary injunction enjoining USDA from continuing to allow the Montana Beef Council (MBC) to use beef checkoff assessments to fund advertising campaigns, unless a cattle producer provides prior affirmative consent authorizing the MBC to retain a portion of the cattle producer’s assessment, reports *The Fence Post*.

As a result of this preliminary injunction, MBC must begin forwarding all federal Beef Checkoff Program funds directly to the Cattlemen’s Beef Promotion and Research Board, absent proof that a producer has provided advanced affirmative consent authorizing the MBC to retain a portion of that producer’s assessment.

To read more, go to <http://tinyurl.com/ycgkopwu>.

2017 Junior Fed Beef Career & Leadership Program

The 2017 Junior Fed Beef Career and Leadership Program was held June 26-29. Hosted with Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension and West Texas A&M University, the Junior Fed Beef Career and Leadership Program, also known as Feedyard Camp, is designed for high school juniors and seniors with an interest in pursuing a career in the fed beef industry. Students must go through an application process to be selected to participate in the program. This year’s program consisted of 21 total students that came from Texas, New Mexico and Oklahoma.

Throughout the four-day program, students observed a necropsy, visited a feedyard, toured a beef processing facility, received media training, fabricated their own steaks, toured the WTAMU Research Feedlot and Nance Ranch, gained knowledge from a feedyard industry professional panel and more.

TCFA sponsors help make this event possible by providing the meals for students during camp. Thank you to the following companies for your support of Feedyard Camp: Animal Health International; Bayer HealthCare; Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica, Inc.; Capital Farm Credit; Elanco Animal Health; Merial, Ltd.; Micro Technologies; Norbrook, Inc.; and Sweet Bran.



Texas “Live Well” Event Motivates Health Professionals to Recommend Beef

Leading Texas health, nutrition and fitness experts recently joined the Texas Beef Council (TBC) for Live Well 2017. The workshop, funded by Texas beef checkoff programs, provided an opportunity to engage and connect with 23 participants and provide them with the latest protein research and tools to incorporate beef nutrition information into their education efforts.

“This event provided a unique opportunity for attendees to engage in an open discussion and hear practical information on how beef can fit into a healthy diet and lifestyle,” said Jason Beyer, TBC board chairman and cattleman from Stephenville. “The education and engagement provided will benefit beef farmers and ranchers for years to come.”

“The content delivered was designed to educate and provide meaningful solutions to help attendees and their clients enjoy nutrient-rich foods that can support a healthful, balanced and active lifestyle,” said Hawley Poinsett, registered dietitian and TBC senior manager of nutrition. “It also aimed at building and enhancing our relationships with fitness and health professionals who not only communicate with their clients, but are also leaders in their perspective fields and potentially influence their followers.”

Working with influential nutrition and fitness professionals allows the beef checkoff to have a larger impact and reach. Throughout the workshop attendees shared their experiences using a variety of social media platforms. Post-event surveys indicated a significant increase in likelihood of recommending beef to their clients and followers.

Barbecue Summer Camp Teaches Finer Aspects of Smoking Meat

Call it a summer camp for big kids. And make no mistake — those big kids had the time of their lives. At Texas A&M University, adults flocked to summer barbecue camp in College Station by the hundreds to find out how to cook great beef brisket and other cuts of meat suited best for the pit.

In fact, the Barbecue Summer Camp is so popular that a lottery system has been put in place to handle registration, according to organizers. The camp, sponsored by Foodways Texas and the Meat Science Section of the Texas A&M Department of Animal Science, is a must for those wanting to learn how to smoke meat Texas style.

“This is the fifth year of our barbecue summer camp,” said Dr. Davey Griffin, a meat specialist with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and professor in animal science at Texas A&M. “The lottery system was put into place due to so much demand for people to come and learn more about barbecue. It just continues to grow.”

Griffin said participants are from all walks of life and include people interested in getting into the barbecue business to those just wanting to learn how to smoke a better beef brisket.

To learn more, go to <http://tinyurl.com/yd4b7hxb>.

Sponsor Spotlight

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