



# TEXAS CATTLE FEEDERS ASSOCIATION

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# NEWSLETTER

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## **Oklahoma Cattlemen Gear Up for State Beef Checkoff Vote**

Oklahoma beef producers will have the opportunity to approve a \$1 per head state beef checkoff beginning Oct. 2. The assessment is in addition to the current U.S. Beef Checkoff program, and, if approved, will be managed by Oklahoma cattlemen and women to promote, market and educate consumers about Oklahoma beef.

"Unlike the U.S. program, which requires that fifty cents of every dollar collected be sent to the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board for programs, the entire \$1 will stay in Oklahoma," said Weston Givens, a rancher from Arnett, Okla. "Oklahoma beef producers will decide where and how to invest checkoff dollars."

Oklahoma would follow Texas and 14 other states who have already adopted a state program. Similar to the Texas Beef Checkoff, the Oklahoma Beef Council will serve as the management entity of the state-level checkoff program. TCFA, the Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association and the Oklahoma Farm Bureau are among several of the groups that support the \$1 per head assessment.

According to a 2014 economic study by Dr. Harry Kaiser of Cornell University, the current checkoff program yields \$11.20 return for every \$1 invested.

"Imagine how much value an additional dollar would add for Oklahoma producers — we have the ability to face challenges head on and the opportunity to shape the future of the beef industry," Givens said. "I ask you to join me in voting yes for an Oklahoma Beef Checkoff."

Beef producers, regardless of age, who would be required to pay the assessment are eligible to vote. Out-of-state producers who have cattle operations in Oklahoma are also eligible. Early voting will take place Oct. 2-20, 2017. Producers can request a mail-in ballot from the Oklahoma Beef Checkoff Ballot Committee by calling (405) 235-4391. Complete mail-in ballots must be returned to the committee with a postmark no later than Oct. 27, 2017. Voting in person will take place Nov. 1 at all Oklahoma County Extension offices. Eligible producers may vote at any extension office, regardless of where their cattle are located or where they live. For more information, visit [www.oklahomabeefcheckoff.com](http://www.oklahomabeefcheckoff.com).

## **New Form I-9 Effective Next Week**

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has issued a new Form I-9. Employers will be required to use the new version of the form (dated 07/17/17) starting Sept. 18, 2017. The new Form I-9 applies to new hires only; employers should not complete new forms for current employees.

The new Form I-9 is available at [tinyurl.com/TCFA-FormI-9](http://tinyurl.com/TCFA-FormI-9). A 15-page set of instructions also is available for the new Form I-9. Additionally, an updated *Handbook for Employers*, a valuable resource for those handling Form I-9 issues, is available on USCIS's website.

Given the increased enforcement of immigration-related laws this year, employers should use care when handling Form I-9 and other immigration-related employment processes and practices. Annual internal Form I-9 audits and periodic third-party Form I-9 audits by qualified professionals are recommended. Many mistakes discovered during an audit can and should be corrected.

## **ELD Exemptions Included in House Funding Bill**

A provision to delay implementation of the electronic logging device (ELD) enforcement date for livestock and insect haulers for one year was included in the FY 2018 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies (THUD) appropriations bill that passed the U.S. House of Representatives Thursday.

The waiver was granted after TCFA, NCBA and other livestock groups expressed concerns about the ELD rule. "The transportation of live animals presents unique welfare challenges to the commercial trucking industry and a one-size-fits-all approach simply will not work," the groups stated in a letter to members of the House Appropriations Committee.

Additionally, more time is needed to distribute information to live animal haulers, ELD manufacturers, and law enforcement concerning a recent Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration regulatory change that exempts livestock loading and hauling time, within a 150-air mile radius of the point of origin, from Hours of Service. We need time to better understand the exemption to prevent unnecessary hassles and smoother implementation of the rules and guidance before they are enforced, the groups said.

### **U.S. House Set to Lay Out Tax Reform Framework**

Republican leaders in Congress have said they will lay out framework for a new tax plan in the coming weeks. "It starts with the outline that will be released the 25th and then the tax writing committees are going to take feedback and input, and then they are going to go produce their bills in the weeks ahead," said House Speaker Paul Ryan to *NBC News*. "So this is the beginning of the process."

NCBA is rolling out a video campaign to highlight how various federal tax provisions affect beef producers — specifically the death tax. The campaign's second video features Nebraska rancher Jay Wolf who discusses the time, energy and financial cost he's forced to spend on estate planning due to the death tax.

"You'd think in operating a business like this, the most important decisions would be strategic decisions about buying or selling cattle or buying and selling land," Wolf says in the video. "Instead the most important decisions I've made have been estate-planning decisions, and they have impacted our ability to maintain our operation more than anything else — and that doesn't really seem right."

TCFA staff continue to engage with the Texas delegation, including Rep. Kevin Brady (R-Conroe) who chairs the committee that oversees all tax reform legislation. Brady has said the current tax code is harmful to U.S. agriculture, and he plans to call for a complete repeal of the death tax and the Alternative Minimum Tax. Brady has called for reform that begins with, "significantly lower tax rates for farmers, ranchers and all American job creators so they can keep more of their hard-earned income and invest it in growing their businesses."

To see NCBA's video campaign, visit [cattlemenfortaxreform.com](http://cattlemenfortaxreform.com). For more on tax reform go to [waysandmeans.house.gov/taxreform/](http://waysandmeans.house.gov/taxreform/).

### **TCFA Convention: Meet Miss Texas at the TCFA Convention**

Meet Miss Texas 2017 Margana Wood at TCFA Convention's Awards Luncheon.

She will highlight the Miss Texas Foundation's work with the Texas Cares for Children Program, the Children's Miracle Network and her personal platform titled "You Belong." Her platform seeks to teach lessons of inclusion and respect, while also educating audiences of the different kinds of bullying.

Wood is a graduate of the University of Texas where she received her degree in Corporate Communications. She was named the 4th runner-up in the 2018 Miss America Pageant.

Check out the full convention activity schedule on the [TCFA website](http://tcfa.org). Make your hotel reservations online at [tinyurl.com/tcfa-conv-embassysuites](http://tinyurl.com/tcfa-conv-embassysuites) to secure your room at the Embassy Suites Downtown Amarillo.

**Your hotel reservations must be made by Sept. 24.** We look forward to seeing you at this year's Convention!



### **Historic TCFA Pictures Needed**

As we prepare for this year's convention, we are asking any members with historic or unique TCFA photos to send them to TCFA. Hard copies can be mailed to: TCFA, 5501 I-40 West, Amarillo, TX 79106, ATTN: Shannon, or emailed to [shannon@tcfa.org](mailto:shannon@tcfa.org).

### **Student Registration Rate Available for TCFA Convention**

TCFA would like to invite college and university students with an interest in pursuing careers in agriculture, especially the beef industry, to take advantage of a special registration rate of \$100 to attend the 2017 TCFA Annual Convention Oct. 8-10 at the Embassy Suites Downtown Amarillo.

Attendees will have the opportunity to hear from expert speakers and network with industry professionals. The student registration can be purchased at [shop.tcfa.org/Convention/](http://shop.tcfa.org/Convention/).

### **South Texas Feedyard Job Openings Among New Jobs Posted on TCFA Website**

New job postings have been added to the TCFA Member Feedyards Job Openings web page, including two openings on feedyards in South Texas. To view the web page and current listings, visit [www.tcfa.org/news-events/jobs.html](http://www.tcfa.org/news-events/jobs.html). If you have any additional questions, please contact Carmen Fenton at [carmen@tcfa.org](mailto:carmen@tcfa.org).

### **Assistance Available for Flood Damaged Ag Land through NRCS**

The USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Texas has established two special Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) sign ups to help farmers and ranchers that suffered damage to working lands and livestock mortality as a result of Hurricane Harvey.

An EQIP special sign up specific to agricultural livestock mortality and carcass disposal is now available to immediately assist producers in disposal of livestock carcasses on their farm or ranch. The sign up ends **Sept. 22, 2017**.

NRCS is also accepting EQIP applications from producers in the Harvey disaster declared counties to apply conservation practices and to address resource concerns due to Harvey, as well as agricultural livestock mortality carcass disposal. The first funding deadline is **Oct. 6, 2017**, with additional funding dates of Nov. 3, 2017, and Dec. 3, 2017.

Farmers and ranchers seeking NRCS financial and technical assistance can sign up for EQIP at their local NRCS office or if already a USDA client, online via Conservation Client Gateway. For more information, visit [www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov) or call (888) 489-8732.

### **Panhandle PBS Reports on TCFA's 50 Years**

As part of TCFA's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration, TCFA Chairman Jim Lovell and TCFA President and CEO Ross Wilson sat down with Karen Welch, host of *Live Here* on PBS, to discuss the history of the association and the impact the cattle feeding industry has had on the local, tri-state and national economies.

The program aired last week, but you can watch it online at [video.kacvtv.org/video](http://video.kacvtv.org/video).

### **TCFA on NCBA's Cattlemen to Cattlemen**

NCBA's *Cattlemen to Cattlemen* will feature segments on TCFA's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Be sure to watch the program set for Sept. 19 on RFD-TV at 7:30 PM CST.

### **Plant-Based Meat Sales Continue to Rise**

Sales of plant-based meats in the U.S. rose 6 percent from last year, according to data from Nielsen, the Plant Based Foods Association and the Good Food Institute.

The report comes during the same week that the Los Angeles-based Beyond Meat announced it would sell its plant-based meat products through Sysco, the nation's largest food distributor — expanding the product's reach to tens of thousands of restaurants and food service establishments.

According to Nielsen's report, refrigerated meat sales grew 23 percent since last year, with plant-based meat claiming a 2.1 percent market share of refrigerated and frozen meat products sold at retail chains.

The report shows that plant-based dairy alternatives grew 20 percent, with sales topping \$700 million. Plant-based milk was up 3.1 percent.

The Nielsen report analyzed data from foods that replaced animal products over a 52-week period. Foods analyzed included meat, seafood, eggs and dairy.

### **New Survey Shows 99 Percent of Adults Buy Groceries in Person**

A new survey by the International Council of Shopping Centers shows that U.S. consumers are buying their groceries in a lot of ways, but most of the time in person at a brick-and-mortar store.

The *State of Grocery Shopping* survey found that 99 percent of adults buy some or all of their groceries in person because they want the food immediately, want to select their own meat, dairy and produce, and they want to see product options in person.

Younger consumers are more likely to purchase groceries multiple times a week from many different avenues including brick-and-mortar and online stores. When it comes to online grocery shopping, nearly three out of four consumers purchase online and then pick up their order in the store. Only one percent of consumers solely buy their groceries online and never go into a store. To read the full report, visit [tinyurl.com/TCFA-Grocery-Survey](http://tinyurl.com/TCFA-Grocery-Survey).

## Organic Trade Association Sues USDA Over Organic Livestock Standards

The Organic Trade Association (OTA) has filed suit against USDA stating that the department failed to advance new organic standards.

The suit alleges that USDA violated the Organic Foods Production Act and unlawfully delayed the effective date of the final livestock standards. The group also accuses USDA of abusing its discretion by ignoring and "overwhelming" public record established in support of the organic standard, according to *Meatingplace.com*.

OTA contends that the Trump administration's regulatory freeze order issued to federal agencies in January should not apply to organic standards because they are voluntary and are required only of those farms and business that opt in to be certified organic.

## TAKE ACTION: WOTUS Comment Deadline Approaching

TCFA is urging all members to submit comments supporting the repeal of the Obama era 2015 Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule. Comments are **due Sept. 27** and can be submitted at [tinyurl.com/TCFA-WOTUS-2017](http://tinyurl.com/TCFA-WOTUS-2017). An example comment letter for members to use is available [tinyurl.com/2017-Example-WOTUS-Comments](http://tinyurl.com/2017-Example-WOTUS-Comments). For more information on WOTUS, contact Ben Weinheimer, TCFA vice president, or Josh Winegarner, TCFA director of government relations.

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