



# TEXAS CATTLE FEEDERS ASSOCIATION

## NEWSLETTER

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**TCFA And NCBA Are Deeply Concerned About The Potential Impacts Of Last Week's EPA Finding**, which proposes that greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are an endangerment to public health and welfare. This finding is the first step in a process that could require GHG regulation under the Clean Air Act (CAA). The CAA is fundamentally ill-suited for GHG regulation and TCFA and NCBA are opposed to any attempts to use it for this purpose.

"While the Clean Air Act has done a good job of cleaning up pollutants, it is not adequately equipped to address global climate change," explains NCBA Chief Environmental Counsel Tamara Thies. "Congress never intended to regulate greenhouse gas emissions under the Clean Air Act, and any attempts to use it for this purpose would be devastating for the U.S. economy."

Currently, agricultural sources generally are not required to obtain permits for GHG emissions. But regulation of GHGs under the CAA may for the first time trigger such regulation. According to the advanced notice of proposed rulemaking for regulating greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act, released last year by the Bush Administration, the USDA estimated that "even very small operations would meet the 100 tons per year emissions threshold to require regulation. For example, dairy facilities with over 25 cows, beef cattle operations of over 50 cattle, swine operations with over 200 hogs, and farms with over 500 acres of corn may need to get a Title V permit."

TCFA and NCBA plan to submit comments to EPA during the upcoming 60-day public comment period.

Meanwhile, the EPA finding prompted U.S. Senator John Thune (R-S.D.) to renew his call for passage of S. 527, which he introduced earlier this year in an attempt to ban a so-called "cow tax." Thune said, "If the Administration wants to implement climate change legislation, it should work with Congress to pass bi-partisan legislation rather than finding a way around working through the legislative process."

Senator Mike Johanns (R-Neb), a co-sponsor of the bill and a former U.S. Ag Secretary, also issued a news release touting the legislation. Johanns said S. 527 "applies some common sense to ensure the Clean Air Act isn't stretched to far-reaching applications that it was never intended to cover."

### **FDA Has Decided To Keep April 27 As The Implementation Date Of The New Feed Ban.**

However, FDA has established Oct. 26 as the compliance date to give renderers additional time to comply with the new regulations. TCFA is disappointed by the decision to proceed with the new ban, which is not needed. Proven effective BSE control protocols have been in place for years. FDA has not produced any evidence that the new guidelines will improve upon the existing safeguards. Instead, anticipation of the new feed ban's implementation has already caused very serious economic, disposal and environmental problems.

### **The Genome Of Domestic Cattle Has Been Published By An International Consortium Of Researchers**,

USDA and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) announced Thursday. The landmark research will bolster efforts to produce better beef and dairy products and lead to a better understanding of the human genome, according to USDA and NIH. The breed of cattle used in the project was Hereford, which became the first livestock mammal to have its genetic blueprint sequenced and analyzed.

Sequencing and analysis of the bovine genome was funded in part by USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service and Agricultural Research Service, which jointly contributed approximately \$10 million. Approximately \$25 million was contributed to the project by the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI), part of the NIH, which is a component of the Department of Health and Human Services. The State of Texas also provided funding. In 2003, at the request of TCFA and other groups, Governor Rick Perry secured \$10 million for bovine genome mapping at Baylor and Texas A&M Universities.

"The cattle industry is extremely important for U.S. agriculture with more than 94 million cattle in the United States valued at \$49 billion," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "Understanding the cattle genome and having the sequence will allow researchers to understand the genetic basis for disease in domestic cattle and could result in healthier production of meat and milk."

"The domestic cattle genome sequence opens another window into our own genome," said Acting NIH Director Raynard S. Kington, M.D., Ph.D. "By comparing the human genome to the genomes of many different species, such as domestic cattle, we can gain a clearer view of how the human genome works in health and in disease."

For more about the genome project, go to [http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/s.7\\_0\\_A/7\\_0\\_1OB?contentidonly=true&contentid=2009/04/0125.xml](http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/s.7_0_A/7_0_1OB?contentidonly=true&contentid=2009/04/0125.xml).

**Long Night Produces Budget Bill:** At 4 a.m. Saturday morning (April 18), after 18 hours of debate and consideration of 225 amendments, the Texas House of Representatives unanimously approved its version of the state's 2010-2011 biennial budget. The bill (SB 1) provides \$178.4 billion to fund state agencies and programs, a 2.5% increase over the previous budget and \$4 billion less than the Senate-passed version. The House and Senate will convene a conference committee to reconcile the differences between the two bills. A comparison of the exceptional agricultural funding requests in the two bills is available at [www.tcfa.org/Newsletter/Ag\\_Funding\\_Requests.pdf](http://www.tcfa.org/Newsletter/Ag_Funding_Requests.pdf).

**Eminent Domain Legislation: The Texas Senate Committee On State Affairs** Thursday unanimously approved CSSB 18 to modify the process governing eminent domain proceedings. The legislation also addresses evidence that can be considered by a court regarding damages, requirements for governmental entities in their dealings with property owners and the ability of previous owners to repurchase taken property (at the original sales price), if not used for the stated purpose within 10 years. Specifically, the bill provides significant and long sought landowner protections including requirements that authorities involved in the taking of property provide accurate and timely information, negotiate in good faith and provide adequate compensation for impairment of access. TCFA supports this carefully crafted and negotiated bill and is grateful to Senators Craig Estes (R-Wichita Falls), Robert Duncan (R-Lubbock) and Glenn Hagar (R-Katy) for their hard work and dedication to ensuring landowners' rights. The bill has been sent to the full Senate for consideration.

**TB Has Infected A Dairy In West Texas, According To Preliminary Test Results** reported by the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC). Obtaining final results "may take several weeks," according to TAHC Executive Director Bob Hillman. "We will be determining the dispensation of the herd in the next few days," said Dr. Hillman. "An epidemiological investigation has been launched to determine the source or possible spread of the disease." Since milk from commercial dairies is pasteurized, there is no public health concern from this herd detection.

Texas regained cattle TB-free status in fall 2006, after losing the coveted status in spring 2002. Dr. Hillman noted that one TB-infected herd will not affect the state's status, but two infected herds within a 48-month period will result in a loss of TB-free status. Texas' most recent TB-infected herd was a dairy, detected in 2004 and depopulated. California lost its TB-free status in September 2008, and Minnesota, Michigan and New Mexico are split states, meaning areas within these states have different TB statuses. All other states currently are TB-free.

**Fever Tick Update:** Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) has released from temporary preventive quarantine more than 375,000 acres in Maverick, Dimmit and Webb counties. The preventive quarantine was imposed on the three counties more than a year ago to prevent the spread of dangerous cattle fever ticks. Further south in Zapata and Starr counties, however, more fever tick-infested ranches are being detected at a disturbing rate, and concerns remain for sustainable fever tick program funding, fever tick surveillance and the approval of new products for treating fever tick hosts. To read more of what TAHC has to say on the fever tick situation, go to [http://www.tahc.state.tx.us/news/pr/2009/2009Apr\\_FeverTickQuarantineNews.pdf](http://www.tahc.state.tx.us/news/pr/2009/2009Apr_FeverTickQuarantineNews.pdf).

**The 2009 TCFA Fed Beef Challenge** certainly did not disappoint as steers and heifers from throughout Cattle Feeding Country made their way to Amarillo to prove once again the best beef anywhere is fed in the TCFA area. Contest cattle were harvested at Tyson Fresh Meats in Amarillo and the carcass data was scored on the Fed Beef Challenge index that uses a base of 100 points and is adjusted for industry markers, such as ribeye area, fat thickness, quality grade and yield grade.

**Grand Champion Carcass** belonged to Hartley Feeders with a heifer that scored a contest high of 116.4 points on the index.

**First place pen of steers** went to Cactus Feedyard at Cactus with a total score of 304.04. Heritage Feeders at Happy took second place with a pen of steers totaling 301.89. Third place went to Hansford County Feeders at Spearman with a total score of 297.49.

**In the heifer division**, Hansford County Feeders claimed first place with a pen total of 304. Second place honors went to Tri-State Feeders, Inc. at Turpin with a total score of 301.47. Kirkland Feedyard at Vega rounded out the heifer division in third with a total score of 295.02

**The Fed Beef Challenge live evaluation contests** proved once again to be a fun and exciting test of the participants' skills. In the Managers "Judge Your Own" contest, Robby Kirkland of Kirkland Feedyard took top honors, winning Kenneth Wyatt artwork for his efforts. Leo Vermedahl of Carrizo Feeders in Texline came out on top of the Feedyard Personnel Evaluation Contest to earn a custom-made trophy saddle.

**In the Collegiate Evaluation Contest**, more than 65 college students competed for scholarships. Corey Smith of Clarendon College claimed first place, followed by classmate Darren Koller in second. Lance Waugh of Oklahoma Panhandle State University at Goodwell rounded out the contest in third.

**In the Public Evaluation Contest**, Laban Tubbs of Clarendon made his mark by placing first. Ty Lawrence of Canyon earned second place and Daren Stephens of Goodwell took third.

Thanks to all who participated in the 2009 Fed Beef Challenge and congratulations to all our winners.

**Earth Day Was April 22** and unfortunately tradition was upheld as various news outlets served up stories that reflected negatively on livestock production. A prime example was an article in *USA Today* which advised readers that their carbon footprint could be reduced by eating less meat. Nathan Fiala, a doctoral candidate in environmental economics at the University of California-Irvine, was quoted as saying so much carbon dioxide is involved in producing beef that "a family of four that gives up eating beef one day a week has basically traded in their pickup for a Prius." NCBA staff worked hard to rebut such misinformation, including recruiting two third-party environmental experts to submit letters to the editor of *USA Today*. NCBA also began discussions with the NBC's "Today Show" and the CBS "Early Show" about the possibility of segments featuring the environmental stewardship of cattle producers. For cattlemen called upon to do media interviews, NCBA provided a wealth of information about the beef's industry's concern for the environment. Key facts included:

- Beef contributes significantly to a healthy diet and minimally to total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the United States. According to EPA, the entire U.S. agricultural sector contributes just 6.4% of total U.S. GHG emissions.
- On average, each beef producer has 13 different practices in place to accomplish environment goals such as nurturing wildlife, preventing erosion or conserving and protecting water.
- Raising cattle serves a valuable role in the ecosystem by converting the forages humans cannot consume into a nutrient-dense food.
- Nearly 90 percent of U.S. cattle farms and ranches are family owned and operated. Approximately two-thirds have been under the same family ownership for two generations or more. Sustainability practices are an important part of the beef production knowledge that's passed down and improved from generation to generation.

**Food Safety Hearing: NCBA Senior Vice President of Research, Education and Innovation Bo Reagan** testified Thursday during the U.S. House Subcommittee on Livestock, Dairy and Poultry hearing to review USDA food safety systems. Reagan, an NCBA member and chairman of the Beef Industry Food Safety Council (BIFSCo), highlighted the role of the U.S. beef industry in producing the most affordable, nutritious and safest food supply in the world. Since 1993, cattle producers have invested more than \$27 million in beef safety research, and the beef industry as a whole spends approximately \$350 million every year in beef safety.

"Above all, safety is a non-competitive issue for the beef industry," Reagan told the Subcommittee. "As an industry, we continue to remain committed to a broad, coordinated effort to solve pathogen issues by developing industry-wide, science- and risk-based strategies to address safety challenges."

In his prepared remarks, Reagan said, "Everyone plays an important role in the safety of food. All beef is subject to strict government oversight and everyone who plays a role in the production chain is committed to producing safe beef products."

"As the food safety policy discussions continue, we encourage Congress to work with FSIS to focus on the resources needed to effectively implement the science- and risk-based regulations that are currently in place. Just as important is the need for employee training and the communication of any new regulatory changes to FSIS inspectors in the field so that there is not any confusion or misinterpretation of the law. We realize that

communicating regulatory changes to personnel throughout the country is a challenge, but this is an area of concern for the beef industry."

Reagan also told the panel that "consumers will always play an important role to ensure that their food is safe. The beef industry has created numerous resources like [www.safeandsavory160.com](http://www.safeandsavory160.com) for consumers to learn more about the proper storage, handling and cooking of beef products. Any assistance the federal government can provide to ensure that consumers learn more about their important role in food safety and the educational resources that are available for their use would be appreciated."

**The 2009 Junior Fed Beef Career & Leadership Program** will be held in Canyon June 29-July 1. This program, hosted by TCFA in conjunction with the Texas AgriLife Extension Service and West Texas A&M University, is designed to give incoming high school juniors and seniors a look into the fed beef industry and career options that are available in the cattle feeding business. Students will tour commercial cattle feeding operations and a beef processing facility, interact with feedyard managers and employees, participate in day-to-day feedyard operations, and learn beef carcass anatomy and fabrication. Students also have the opportunity to participate in job shadowing at an area feedyard after the program. **The deadline for applications is Friday, May 1.** For more information about the Junior Fed Beef Career and Leadership Program and to obtain an application for the program log on to <http://www.tcfa.org/jfbc/FeedyardCamp.html> or contact Trent Tyson at (806) 358-3681 or [trent@tcfa.org](mailto:trent@tcfa.org).

**Two New Studies That Suggest Concerns For Beef Consumers** have been responded to by NCBA staff and the beef industry this week.

Research published in the April edition of the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* reported foods including red meat, white bread and white potatoes could boost risk of the most common type of kidney cancer. According to the study, both men and women who ate red meat five or more times a week were more than four times as likely to develop the disease compared to people who consumed red meat less than once a week.

However, as NCBA is pointing out to news media, a recently published comprehensive quantitative assessment found no evidence that red meat causes kidney cancer. *Cancer Detection and Prevention* published a meta-analysis in February 2009 that concluded there is "no epidemiologic evidence to support a causal association between consumption of red meat or processed meat and kidney cancer." This assessment of red meat and processed meat consumption and kidney cancer included data from peer-reviewed publications of epidemiologic cohort and case-control studies.

Meanwhile, the University of Minnesota School of Public Health research found that meat cooked at high temperatures to the point of burning and charring may increase the risk of pancreatic cancer. The data was presented at the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) meeting this week in Denver, Colo. Industry response included the issuing of this news release on safe grilling practices: <http://sev.pnewswire.com/food-beverages/20090422/CG0354122042009-1.html>.

**U.S. Meat Packers That Ship Beef To South Korea Are Conforming** to legal, safety and sanitation standards, Korean government inspectors say, according to *Yonhap*. The officials from the National Veterinary Research and Quarantine Service (NVRQS), who carried out on-site inspections of 22 companies from March 29 through early last week, say all facilities were properly removing specified risk materials (SRMs) and had standard sanitation operating procedures and hazard analysis systems in place to ferret out meat that could pose health problems.

**The Obama Administration And USDA Have Made More Announcements** concerning positions within USDA. A 29-year veteran of the New Mexico Department of Agriculture, Edward M. Avalos, is the nominee for Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs. During his career, Avalos has been involved in trade efforts in Mexico, Japan, China, Canada and Latin America. Kevin W. Concannon is being nominated as Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services. Concannon's resume includes serving as director of health and human service agencies in Iowa, Maine and Oregon. Meanwhile, Jay Jensen has been appointed as Deputy Under Secretary for Natural Resources and the Environment. Since May 2005, Jensen has been the Executive Director of the Council of Western State Foresters/Western Forestry Leadership Coalition. Also, Doug Caruso has been appointed as Administrator of the Farm Service Agency (FSA). Caruso previously served as FSA State Executive Director in Wisconsin.

**A New Website Has Been Launched By The Drought Joint Information Center**, a group of state and federal agency public information officers, led by Texas AgriLife Communications, who were activated by the Governor's Division of Emergency Management. Participating agencies include: Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Texas Water Development Board, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Texas Forest Service, Texas Animal Health Commission, Texas Department of Agriculture, Texas Department of Public Safety, Texas Department of Transportation and Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. To see a wealth of information on the Texas drought, go to <http://agrilife.tamu.edu/drought/>.

*Please note: All links are still available at [www.tcfa.org](http://www.tcfa.org) under Newsletter links.*