

Full length version of articles abbreviated in TCFA *Newsletter* print edition.

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USDA Rules Out CRP Releases

USDA has decided it will not allow the penalty-free early release of CRP land “at this time” after what Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer called “a very thorough review” of recent crop reports, weather conditions and price trends.

Schafer told reporters that despite the June floods in the Midwest, the impact on corn and soybean crops is less severe than was originally feared. He added, “The markets have been reacting favorably to the good growing weather we have been experiencing in recent weeks and encouraging reports on crop conditions.”

Cash prices for corn are down 25% from the record highs recorded in June, Schafer said, adding that “this year’s corn crop is on track to be the second largest on record with an anticipated harvest of almost 79 million acres.”

While USDA’s outlook is a rosy one, the CME Group’s *Daily Livestock Report* that was issued Wednesday pointed out that “plenty of unknowns still remain in the market. The size of the final corn crop has yet to be determined, ethanol demand remains a wild card, soybean/corn stocks are less than plentiful, and export demand remains a significant driver.” CME notes that of the approximately 2 million acres of CRP acres expiring this year, just a little more than a fourth will be in the top five corn-producing states.

Congress Passes ADUFA Bill

The U.S. House of Representatives passed the Animal Drug User Fee Amendment of 2008 (ADUFA) on Thursday, and the U.S. Senate passed the measure by unanimous consent this morning (Friday). This legislation authorizes FDA to continue to collect fees for certain animal drug applications, which support FDA’s ability to ensure that new animal drug products are safe and effective. The current authorization is scheduled to expire in September. The Senate also is expected to pass the bill before Congress adjourns for the August recess.

TCFA and NCBA support the legislation after successfully blocking the inclusion of language to ban the use of antibiotics in animal feed.

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Animal Rights Groups Suffered A Defeat when the New Jersey Supreme Court upheld several regulations established by that state’s agriculture department. *The Star-Ledger* of Newark reports measures upheld by the court included those pertaining to sow gestation crates, castration, and methods used to stimulate chickens to produce extra eggs. However, the Court did find the practice of tail docking dairy cattle to be objectionable. The court also found the department needs to do more work to evaluate and define what routine husbandry practices are if they want to keep relying on it.

Meat From Cloned Animals poses no threat to food safety or the environment, says the European Food Safety Authority. According to *Brownfield*, the Authority’s scientific opinion comes after 17 months of research and on the heels of a similar opinion released earlier this year in the U.S. by FDA and USDA. The authority’s research suggests there is no detectable difference in the safety of meat and milk from cloned cattle and hogs and their offspring compared to the meat and milk of their conventionally bred counterparts.

The Doha Round of global trade talks collapsed Tuesday. Doha’s demise resulted primarily from the inability of India, China and the U.S. to compromise over measures to protect farmers in developing countries from greater liberalization of trade, the *New York Times* reports. Economists and trade experts believe it could be years before the right conditions will be present for a broad deal among the WTO’s 153 members.