

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

From *Newsletter* Page 1 – 09/26/08

Committee Passes Horse Bill

The House Judiciary Committee acted quicker than most people expected on Tuesday and passed, on a party line voice vote, the “Prevention of Equine Cruelty Act of 2008” (H.R. 6598). The legislation is the most recent attempt to limit private property rights and eliminate a humane animal management option by banning the processing of horses. It was introduced under the guise of protecting horse welfare, but many believe that it will do more to harm horses than it will to protect them — a result similar to the dramatic increase in the number of abandoned, neglected and starving horses since states banned horse processing. Given the uncertainty of the House schedule, the bill could come to the floor for a vote at any time. However it is unlikely the Senate will consider the bill this year. TCFA continues to oppose H.R. 6598 and encourages all members to contact their Members of Congress and ask them to oppose this and similar legislation.

Stokes Leaving NCBA

After six years as CEO of NCBA and 12 years with the organization altogether, Terry Stokes this week announced his plans to resign following the Cattle Industry Convention in January 2009.

Stokes said representing cattlemen and championing their cause has been the greatest honor and the most fulfilling job of his career, but it also is all-consuming. He said he is looking forward to spending time with his family and exploring new opportunities.

NCBA President Andy Groseta said all of the NCBA officers want Stokes to stay, “Yet, personally, we respect and honor Terry’s decision to make this life change. We only hope he continues to contribute to the industry; his leadership is that valuable.”

Of his many career highlights, Stokes led the NCBA team’s response to the discovery of BSE in the U.S., a response credited for maintaining consumer confidence in beef, and directed development of a strategic plan for NCBA efforts funded by the Beef Checkoff, focusing on product innovation, nutrition and safety.

“Terry is a trusted friend of many TCFA members and staff, and we deeply appreciate his contributions to NCBA and the beef industry,” said TCFA President & CEO Ross Wilson. “His consummate professionalism, integrity and commitment to doing the right thing will be deeply missed by NCBA and state affiliates, and we hope that he will stay engaged in a new beef industry role.”

A Place to Lay Your Head Nov. 2-4

Have you made your room reservations at the Gaylord Texan Resort for the 2008 Convention? Better get it done! The cutoff date is **Friday, Oct. 3**. TCFA cannot guarantee that rooms will be available after that date. Call the Gaylord Texan at (866) 782-7897 and reserve your room today!

Jay Gray of Gonzales will be there. As the 200th registrant for Convention, Jay receives a free \$225 member registration. Watch future *Newsletters* to see who will be Number 300.

Convention will kick off this year with the Inspirational Breakfast Monday morning. Former Texas Rangers baseball star Jim Sundberg will give his inspirational message to cattle feeders and get Convention off on the right foot.

The Opening General Session is sure to keep your attention. TCFA Chairman Walter Lasley will update members on a very busy year at TCFA. NCBA President Andy Groseta will inform TCFA members of what's been going on at the national level. Then TCFA will host the Packer Industry Showcase featuring representatives from the major packers. For more information and to register for Convention, call TCFA at (806) 358-3681 or go to <http://www.tcfa.org/convention/agenda.htm>. See you in Grapevine!

From *Newsletter* Page 2 – 09/26/08

For Agriculture In General, 2008 is shaping up as a good year as the Farm Sector Income Forecast released by USDA-ERS projects net farm income of \$95.7 billion, a 10% increase over 2007 and 57% above the 10-year average. As the report notes, the big gains are on the crop side where production value is trending toward a \$189 billion total, a 25% increase from last year. By comparison, the values of livestock production and livestock cash receipts are expected to increase 6%.

TCFA Market Director Don Close points out that despite recent improvement in live cattle prices, cattle feeders are not sharing in the bounty enjoyed by crop growers. So far in 2008, cattle feeders have seen losses averaging \$104 per head, which translates to \$3 billion dollars in losses nationwide on sales of fed steers and heifers.

The ERS report notes that feed prices remain a big concern. For livestock and poultry producers, feed expenses are projected to increase \$9.8 billion (25.6%) to a record \$47.9 billion. The increase would be the largest ever, topping the previous record increase of \$6.7 billion set last year. Over the past three years, feed expenses have risen \$20 billion (71%). The report states that the growing use of crops for biofuels production is putting upward pressure on commodity prices with corn being the prime beneficiary.