



# TEXAS CATTLE FEEDERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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**A New Texas A&M Analysis Of U.S. House-Approved Climate Change Legislation** has become a key resource for U.S. Senator Saxby Chambliss (R-Ga.) as he continues to challenge the so-called Waxman-Markey bill. In a Senate Ag Committee hearing this week, Chambliss released a report by A&M's Agriculture and Food Policy Center (AFPC), which studied the possible effects of the legislation on 98 representative farms of various sizes.

"The ground-truth that this study shows is very serious," said Sen. Chambliss at the hearing. "The study says that 71 of 98 farms will be worse off under the House cap and trade plan, even in the early years of the program. Most concerning, the 27 farms that benefit do so only because other producers go out of business. Not one rice farm or cattle ranch benefits, while only one cotton operation and one dairy benefit mainly due to the fact that they both grow a significant amount of feed grains."

Chambliss has urged his Senate colleagues to conduct extensive hearings on global warming legislation before votes take place.

To see the AFPC report, go to <http://www.afpc.tamu.edu/pubs/2/526/rr%2009-2%20paper%20-%20for%20web.pdf>.

## **The Senate Ag Committee Has A New Chairman: Senator Blanche Lincoln (D-Ark.)**

Lincoln becomes the first woman ever to chair the ag committee as her predecessor, Senator Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) moves over to chair the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee. Harkin is replacing the late Senator Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.).

The daughter of a farmer, Lincoln said as chairman, "I will continue to fight for the hard-working farm families and rural communities who provide the safest, most abundant and affordable supply of food and fiber in the world."

TCFA looks forward to working with Chairman Lincoln.

## **The TCFA Board Of Directors Met Sept. 9 In Amarillo.** Among actions taken:

- Approved a \$3.75 million budget for Fiscal Year 2010.
- Discussed issues including COOL, TB regulations, the Beef Checkoff and TCFA service programs on employee training, workplace safety, beef safety, animal care and environmental compliance.

## **Cattle Feeders Will Get Down To Business** at the 2009 TCFA Annual Convention October 28-30 in Amarillo.

There will be a lot to learn at the Opening General Session on the morning of Thursday, Oct. 29 at the Amarillo Civic Center. TCFA Chairman Monte Cluck will share his thoughts on industry developments that have occurred during his year as chairman and what he envisions for the future of cattle feeding. NCBA CEO Forrest Roberts will visit with Convention-goers about the beef industry on a national level and the TCFA/NCBA relationship. Also in the Opening General Session, Informa Economics' Jim Wiesemeyer, the "dean" of Washington ag journalists and observers, will review the first year of the Obama Administration and preview what we can expect next out of Washington.

Tyler Graham of Gonzales is ready to get down to business as the first TCFA member to register for the 2009 Convention. For his efforts, Tyler will receive a complimentary registration to the 2009 Convention.

From this point forward, every hundredth TCFA member to sign up gets a free registration. Who will be our next lucky member?

Register today by returning your registration information or by logging on to <http://www.tcfa.org>. And don't forget to make your reservations with the Ambassador Hotel in Amarillo by calling the Ambassador at (806) 358-6161 or by logging on to <http://www.ambassadoramarillo.com> and using the group name TEXASCAT.

We'll see you in Amarillo!



**The U.S. Senate Voted To Confirm Animal Rights Activist Cass Sunstein** as the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs within the Office of Management and Budget. Thursday's 57-40 vote to confirm was preceded by a 63-35 "cloture" vote on Wednesday in which the Senate determined that further holds on Sunstein's nomination would not be allowed.

TCFA and NCBA strongly opposed Sunstein's nomination and worked with Senators who sought to block it. The eventual outcome is disappointing. But there is one possible silver lining: In seeking to win over opposing Senators, Sunstein promised that he will not use his Administration post to advance an animal rights agenda.

TCFA also wishes to thank TCFA-area Senators John Cornyn (R-Texas), Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-Texas), Tom Coburn (R-Okla.) and James Inhofe (R-Okla.) for their no votes on Sunstein's confirmation. For the complete roll call on the confirmation vote, go to

[http://senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll\\_call\\_lists/roll\\_call\\_vote\\_cfm.cfm?congress=111&session=1&vote=00274](http://senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=111&session=1&vote=00274).

For the complete roll call on the cloture vote that allowed the nomination to go forward, go to [http://senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll\\_call\\_lists/roll\\_call\\_vote\\_cfm.cfm?congress=111&session=1&vote=00273](http://senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=111&session=1&vote=00273).

**Food Safety Protection Was Showcased By The Obama Administration** with the launching of two new initiatives this week.

On Tuesday, **FDA announced the opening of the Reportable Food Registry (RFR)**. Food industry officials must use RFR to alert the FDA within 24 hours, through an electronic portal, when they find their products might sicken or kill people or animals. The requirement, a result of legislation, took effect with the launch of the portal. The reporting requirement applies to all foods and animal feed regulated by the FDA, except infant formula and dietary supplements, which are covered by other regulatory requirements. Some examples of reasons a food may be reportable include bacterial contamination, allergen mislabeling or elevated levels of certain chemical components. For more on RFR, go to <http://rfr.fda.gov/>.

On Wednesday, **USDA and Health and Human Services unveiled a new food safety consumer website:** <http://www.foodsafety.gov>. The site is designed to help consumers and families get the latest information on food safety and food recalls in one place. The new site will feature information from all the agencies across the federal government that deal with critical food and food safety information, including preventive tips about how to handle food safely, alerts on food recalls, and news from key agencies. Consumers can sign up to receive email and RSS alerts on recalled or potentially unsafe food.

**USDA's September Production Report Offers Mixed Signals.** USDA projects corn production at 12.955 billion bu., up from the August estimate of 12.761 billion bu. Expectations are the crop will exceed 13 billion bu. by the time a final production number is released. The average yield estimate was increased to 161.9 bu./acre, up from the August estimate of 159.5 bu./acre. This year's final crop size is still dependent on realizing a full production season before first frost.

The price-supportive component of the report was in the 2008-09 ending stocks estimate, which was lowered to 1.695 billion bu., down from the August ending stocks estimate of 1.72 billion bu., based on increased usage. The 2009-10 ending stocks estimate was placed at 1.654 billion bu., compared to 1.621 billion bu. in August.

**A New Method To Detect Live E. Coli Cells In Ground Beef** has been developed by University of Missouri (MU) food scientists. The MU researchers developed a two-step method that can distinguish between dead and living *E. coli* cells. Dead cells won't make you sick, but as few as 10 live cells can inflict a severe intestinal illness, said Azlin Mustapha, associate professor of food science in the MU College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources.

"This is the first such research using these methods in testing beef," she said. Mustapha and colleagues reported on the research in the *Journal of Applied Microbiology*.

Testing takes about 12 hours, as opposed to older methods, which require up to two days for results.

For more on the research, go to <http://extension.missouri.edu/news/DisplayStory.aspx?N=507>.

**Consumer Confidence In Beef** is continuing its five-year upward trend, according to the latest Beef Checkoff-funded food safety tracking survey. Confidence in the safety of steaks/roasts (88% strong confidence) and of ground beef (84% strong confidence) remains high. Only 10% of consumers rated beef as the food of "highest safety concern" in the supermarket and just 9% at restaurants; those findings marked the lowest levels of concern in the history of the safety tracker survey.

**Most Consumers Were "Home-Schooled" On Hamburger Preparation**, a recent national study funded by the Beef Checkoff shows. According to surveys, 57% of consumers say a parent taught them how to cook burgers. Another 29% said their hamburger-making skills were self-taught.

Hamburgers and other ground beef products should be cooked to an internal temperature of at least 160°F, as measured by an instant-read meat thermometer. However, only 13% of consumers in this latest survey correctly identified 160°F as the proper cooking temperature for ground beef to ensure safety, and only 9% said they learned to use a meat thermometer to determine when a hamburger is done.

"In the beef industry, we know that 'the way it has always been done' is not good enough when it comes to food safety. That's why we invest in a wide range of initiatives to ensure we continue to produce the safest food possible," said Mandy Carr, Ph.D., executive director of beef safety research for the NCBA. "Consumers can be part of the food safety innovation process by following proper in-home food safety practices, including cooking ground beef to 160°F."

The survey also showed retail establishments are getting the word out about the best in-home food safety practices. Half of survey respondents mentioned seeing information in a supermarket about proper handling and cooking of fresh meat. The top two tips or techniques consumers said they saw in supermarkets were related to hand washing and cooking meats to recommended temperatures using a meat thermometer.

The survey of 1,007 American adults included 971 beef eaters and had a margin of error of 3.2%.

**The Masters of Beef Advocacy Program (MBA)**, launched last fall by the Beef Checkoff, recently hit a major milestone: 1,000 registered course participants. Of that total, nearly 350 have graduated from the program. MBA continues to teach (or refresh) producers, university and Extension representatives, 4-H and FFA kids and industry affiliates across the country how to be effective spokespersons for the industry. The program consists of six, one-hour core courses: beef safety, beef nutrition, animal care, environmental stewardship, modern beef production and the Beef Checkoff.

A majority of the graduates are also connected via an online alumni association that enables course graduates to network and engage in responding to media issues and share personal success stories.

Producers wanting more information should e-mail [MBA@beef.org](mailto:MBA@beef.org) or contact their state beef council. For more information about checkoff-funded programs, visit <http://www.MyBeefCheckoff.com>.

**Opportunities For Landowners With Expiring CRP Contracts** is the focus of a conference scheduled Sept. 24 at the Randall County AgriLife Extension Center in Canyon. The conference will run from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information on the program schedule and registration, go to [http://www.tcfa.org/Newsletter/after\\_crp\\_seminar.pdf](http://www.tcfa.org/Newsletter/after_crp_seminar.pdf).

**TCFA Sponsor Spotlight.** TCFA is proud to recognize its top sponsors whose efforts help deliver top-notch services to members.

This week's spotlight shines on



Elanco Animal Health is the leader in delivering Finishing Improvement Technologies™ – science-based solutions including Rumensin® (monensin sodium), Tylan® (tylosin) and Optaflexx® (ractopamine hydrochloride) that add value to the food chain. When fed during the final stage of the finishing period, Optaflexx increases live weight gain, improves feed efficiency and increases red meat yield while maintaining beef's natural taste, tenderness and juiciness. Looking ahead, Elanco remains devoted to transforming animal agriculture through superior products and services – supported by people who care. For more information, contact Elanco at (806) 655-2196 or visit <http://www.elanco.com/>

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