



# TEXAS CATTLE FEEDERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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**Is There A Definitive Study That Shows Antibiotics In Animal Feed Affects Human Resistance? No**, said federal officials testifying before the U.S. House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health. Centers for Disease Control Director Thomas Frieden and National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease Director Anthony Fauci addressed the committee during a hearing on resistance concerns. U.S. Rep. John Dingell (D-Mich.) asked if a study exists to prove a link between antibiotics in animal agriculture and human resistance; the witnesses replied there is not.

**Farm Bill Hearing In Texas:** The U.S. House Committee on Agriculture has begun a series of public field hearings regarding the 2012 Farm Bill. The committee will meet at 9 a.m. on May 17 at the Texas Tech University Museum in Lubbock, Texas. The hearing will also be broadcast live on the Committee's website: <http://agriculture.house.gov/hearings/audio.html>.

If you would like to submit public comments about the Farm Bill, go to <http://agriculture.house.gov/inside/feedbackform.html>.

All comments received online by June 14 will be included in the Committee's Farm Bill field hearing record.

**USDA Favoritism Toward The Locavore Movement Took A Hit In A Broadside Fired By U.S. Senators** John McCain (R-Ariz.), Saxby Chambliss (R-Ga.) and Pat Roberts (R-Kansas). The *Des Moines Register* reports the senators' letter to Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack expressed concern that the Obama administration's local foods initiative is diverting money from rural areas that need it in order to promote "locavore niche" food markets for well-to-do city dwellers.

"Unfortunately, this spending doesn't appear geared toward conventional farmers who produce the vast majority of our nation's food supply, but is instead aimed at small, hobbyist and organic producers whose customers generally consist of affluent patrons at urban farmers markets," the senators wrote. Apparently, the senators were especially upset by a recent USDA deputy secretary's memo to agency chiefs urging them to use funding for projects such as community cooking classes or refrigeration systems in urban areas.

In response, Vilsack told the senators that rural areas will benefit from the "Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food" initiative and that the USDA has been careful to stay within its legal authority for how money can be distributed under the programs. "I believe cultivating these new markets – not replacing old ones – is critical to revitalizing rural America by preserving wealth, increasing farm income, and reminding us all of the hard work and values that sustain those communities and our nation," Vilsack wrote.

**Transportation Issues:** TCFA Government Relations Director Josh Winegarner testified this week before the Texas Senate Transportation Committee at its field hearing in Houston. One subject addressed was the Committee's interim charge to evaluate the Texas Department of Transportation's policy for permitting overweight vehicles and recommend ways to ensure overweight vehicles do not cause significant damage to the state's roadways and bridges. TCFA's testimony focused on the efficiencies and cost savings that would be achieved by increasing the maximum allowable gross weight from 80,000 lbs. to 97,000 lbs. on a six-axle truck-trailer combination. TCFA also pointed out that this action would significantly reduce truck traffic on our roads and highways, thus reducing damage caused by wear.

**USDA Has Announced It Will Purchase Up To \$40 Million Of Beef Products** for federal food and nutrition assistance programs. USDA-AMS purchases a wide variety of food products each year to support the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, the Summer Food Service Program, the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program and The Emergency Food Assistance Program. Emergency food purchases for distribution to victims of natural disasters are also made by USDA.

The beef purchases are included in a total of \$161.4 million in a wide variety of foods that USDA is buying. "These purchases are a 'win-win' because they help provide healthy food to kids and families throughout the country, while benefiting producers by providing a customer for these products," Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack said.

For more information on purchase details, interested suppliers should contact the Contracting Officer, which can be found on AMS webpage: <http://www.ams.usda.gov>.

**July 13<sup>th</sup> Is The Date For The TCFA Masters Of Beef Advocacy (MBA) Graduation.** Arrangements for scheduling and venue are still being made, but the event will take place in the Amarillo area. This article is intended to give graduates and prospective students time to prepare for the event and/or complete their coursework.

TCFA's Industry Relations Committee has made MBA an official TCFA project. All TCFA members are encouraged to go through the MBA program – a free, self-directed online training program designed to equip producers and industry allies with information they need to be everyday advocates and effective spokespersons for the beef industry. After completing six courses, graduates will be invited to attend a commencement advocacy training and graduation ceremony focusing on sharing the positive story of beef one-on-one with friends and neighbors and interacting with consumers across the country using social media tools like Facebook and Twitter.

After finishing the program, participants will be ready to get out and meet consumers where they live. This may be as simple as talking to friends, family and neighbors, or going out to broader audiences, such as schools, businesses and civic groups to tell the beef story.

For more information about MBA, visit <http://www.MyBeefCheckoff.com>. To enroll, send an email to [MBA@beef.org](mailto:MBA@beef.org).

### **TCFA At Work For You...**

#### **In Recent Weeks, TCFA Staff:**

- Represented TCFA at industry meetings to discuss DOJ market concentration workshops.
- Hosted Korean consulate veterinarian to feedyard tour and explanation of TCFA BSQA and QSA/ASV Programs.
- Continued to work with the Department of Homeland Security on a project to evaluate the infrastructure of the cattle feeding industry and supporting industries. The study, known as a Regional Resiliency Assessment Project, will identify areas for improvement and will provide \$1.5 million in funding to improve regional response capabilities in the event of a natural or manmade disaster.
- Represented TCFA at the Southwest Council of Agribusiness meeting to discuss farm bill policy and messaging about the sustainability of modern ag production practices.
- Attended research prioritization meeting of Texas A&M National Center for Foreign Animal Disease.
- Participated in animal i.d. working group to prepare recommendations for Animal Disease Traceability program proposed by APHIS.
- Participated in Texas Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Lab Advisory Committee meeting.
- Participated in NCBA Governance Task Force working groups on dues structure and development of new bylaws.
- Conducted arbitration hearings to resolve disputes between cattle feeders and feedyards.
- Moderated the Meats Outlook session at the NCBA Spring Industry Outlook Conference.
- Spoke at the New Mexico Ag Lenders Association meeting in Ruidoso. The group heard updates on several of the legislative and regulatory issues that TCFA is working on to protect cattle feeders' interests.
- Spoke to Kentucky Farm Bureau members touring Panhandle feedyards, ranches and packing plants.
- Attended an Executive Energy Council meeting hosted by Xcel Energy. Business leaders from across the region heard updates on Xcel's efforts to maintain reliable service and meet future energy needs.
- Provided cattle feeding industry perspective in Amarillo television interviews on topics including water policy, beef safety, and improved market conditions.
- Participated in the annual meeting of the Red and Canadian River Basins Advisory Committee. The Committee meets once a year to update stakeholders and solicit comments on water quality issues and stream monitoring efforts.
- Hosted Garrett Hancock, a Bushland High School sophomore, for a day of job shadowing that allowed him to see first-hand the diversity of issues TCFA is working to address for our members. He also

interacted with staff on topics such as the cattle market, legislative and regulatory issues, communications and feedyard services.

**The Impacts Of Regulations On Food Animal Agriculture** is the focus of a symposium to be hosted by the Council for Agricultural Science and Technology in cooperation with USDA. The event June 8-10 in Washington D.C. is titled, "Sustaining Animal Agriculture: Balancing Bioethical, Economic, and Social Issues," and will feature more than 30 speakers and panelists who will discuss the intended and unintended consequences of those regulations. The symposium is free, but seating is limited and advance registration is highly recommended. On-site registration is discouraged due to the time required for non-government personnel to go through security. To find out more, go to <http://www.cast-science.org>.

**The Lies Of Animal Rights Radicals Are Easier To Spread With New Technology.** The World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) has launched an iPhone application that the organization says will help users "find humane food at your local grocery store or restaurant." How does WSPA define humanely treated? According to its news release that would be animals that are "not given hormones or unnecessary antibiotics, not continuously confined and allowed to engage in natural behaviors." WSPA proclaims that those who follow its guidance will be eating food that is "better for human health and the environment." If you want to know more, go to [http://www.wspa-usa.org/pages/3232\\_new\\_wspa\\_iphone\\_app\\_puts\\_humane\\_food\\_options\\_in\\_the\\_hands\\_of\\_consumers.cfm](http://www.wspa-usa.org/pages/3232_new_wspa_iphone_app_puts_humane_food_options_in_the_hands_of_consumers.cfm).

**Winners Of The 18th Annual Texas Environmental Excellence Awards** have been announced by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. These awards recognize nine projects that provide superior resource conservation, waste reduction, and pollution prevention.

Recipients honored for their work in the Texas Panhandle region are: Texas AgriLife Research, Texas AgriLife Extension Service, West Texas A&M University, USDA-Agricultural Research Service, and Kansas State University. Those entities worked together on field and laboratory research aimed at accurately determining emissions of dust/particulate matter, ammonia, hydrogen sulfide, odor and volatile organic compounds from cattle feedyards, and developing technologies to mitigate such emissions.

For more about the awards, go to [http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/comm\\_exec/communication/media/4-10teeabig](http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/comm_exec/communication/media/4-10teeabig).

**A New Tax Credit Is Available To Certain Small Businesses That Provide Employee Health Insurance.**

As part of the recently passed Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, the credit can be received by employers with fewer than 25 employees (more if you have part-time employees) and less than \$50,000 in average wages. Credits can be worth up to 35% of premiums paid in 2010. To find out more, visit <http://www.irs.gov>.

Please note: All links are still available at <http://www.tcfa.org> under This Week's Newsletter links.