



# TEXAS CATTLE FEEDERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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## **A Daily Four-Ounce Serving Of Steak Or Hamburger Does Not Heighten Risk Of Heart Disease,**

according to a new study from the Harvard School of Public Health. The study is regarded as welcome news by NCBA. "This is a landmark paper that provides the strongest summary of evidence to date that red meat is not associated with increased coronary heart disease or diabetes incidence," said Shalene McNeill, Ph.D., R.D., NCBA's Executive Director of Human Nutrition Research.

The study, published in the latest issue of the American Heart Association journal *Circulation*, separated processed and unprocessed red meat. While indicating that processed meats might increase potential for heart disease, the same concern was not linked to unprocessed meat. Although both meats are similar in levels of saturated fats, researchers theorize the downside for processed products is their higher salt content. The findings resulted from examination of data from 20 different studies from around the world.

Harvard's conclusions are good news for many in meat production. But the American Meat Institute Foundation (AMIF) said the study's take on processed meat conflicts with other research and the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans and is not sufficient to establish cause and effect or warrant changes in individual eating habits.

More information about the study is available at

<http://circ.ahajournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/CIRCULATIONAHA.109.924977v1?maxtoshow=&hits=10&RESULTFORMAT=&fulltext=Renata+Micha&searchid=1&FIRSTINDEX=0&resourcetype=HWCIT>.

**Widely Anticipated Changes To The Live Cattle Contract Were Announced By The Chicago Mercantile Exchange** today (May 21). The changes are specific to the October 2011 contract and beyond. A CME news release said the proposed changes are:

- Increasing the radius for determining the corresponding CME-approved processing plants for each live-graded delivery point from 150 to 200 miles.
- The maximum distance between the feedyard from which the cattle originate and any other eligible CME-approved processing plants will increase from 150 to 200 miles.
- The maximum par weight for individual animals in live-graded deliveries will increase from 1,475 lbs. to 1,500 lbs.
- Individual animals in live-graded deliveries weighing more than 1,500 lbs. will not be deliverable.

The October 2011 contract with the changes is scheduled to launch on Tuesday June 1, 2010. TCFA's position on this issue was to request that any changes to the contract be deferred until after the October 2010 contract and delivery process had closed.

**The Possible Environmental Benefits Of Organic Farming Do Not Outweigh The Loss Of Productivity,** according to a new study by British researchers. "Over the next 40 years, we're going to have to double food production worldwide to keep pace with population increases," said Professor Tim Benton, who led the project for the University of Leeds faculty of Biological Science. "Our results show that to produce the same amount of food in the UK using organic rather than conventional means, we'd need to use twice the amount of land for agriculture.

"As the biodiversity benefits of organic farming are small, then the lower yield may be a luxury we can't afford, particularly in the more productive areas of the UK."

For more about the study, go to

[http://www.leeds.ac.uk/news/article/802/organic\\_farming\\_shows\\_limited\\_benefit\\_to\\_wildlife](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/news/article/802/organic_farming_shows_limited_benefit_to_wildlife).

**NCBA Is Continuing To Respond To Information Surrounding "Meatless Monday" Initiatives.** In the past several weeks, there has been an uptick in efforts to encourage consumers to give up meat one day a week. These meatless initiatives often include inaccurate claims about meat production and the environment, technology used in animal agriculture, meat's impact on human health and generic "factory farming" claims.

The *Washington Post* ran an article on May 19 entitled, "Meatless Mondays, a movement that has legs." The article discusses Mario Batali's decision to offer two vegetarian entrees on Mondays in each of his 14 restaurants. The piece also highlights other recent Meatless Mondays supporters, including Baltimore City Public Schools, Health Care Without Harm's Balanced Menus program, San Francisco's Board of Supervisors and the state of Michigan. Additionally, the May issue of Mayo Clinic Women's HealthSource offered options to "expand the repertoire of meatless meals." And consumer media, including the *Associated Press*, are reporting on a bill proposed by U.S. Rep. Jared Polis (D-Colo.) that would give schools incentives to offer more plant-based foods.

NCBA connected *Washington Post* reporter Jane Black with Shalene McNeill, Ph.D., R.D., NCBA's executive director of human nutrition research. McNeill provided background information as to why removing animal protein from the diet can be nutritionally damaging. In a separate interview with *Associated Press* piece, McNeill explained that children need choices in school lunches but cautioned against letting beef get crowded off the menu. According to McNeill, "The movement toward vegetarian meals could mean the unintended consequences of eliminating high-quality beef products from meals."

**The Second Annual International Symposium on Beef Cattle Welfare** was held this week in Manhattan, Kansas. The opening session of the symposium included the introduction of the newly established North American Food Animal Well-being Commission – Beef. The Commission will serve as an independent voice to advance evidence-based and practical improvements in the care and well-being of North American beef cattle. Symposium participants heard presentations from members of the Commission on the topics of emergency response for livestock truck turnovers, cattle care and handling guidelines, auditing systems, cattle transportation, weaning management and preconditioning, and environmental management.

The inaugural group of experts serving on the Beef Commission include Dr. Bob Smith, VRCS, LLC; Dr. Carolyn Stull, University of California at Davis; Dr. Dan Thomson, Kansas State University; Dr. Dave Sjeklocha, Academy of Veterinary Consultants; Dr. Dee Griffin, University of Nebraska; Dr. Frank Mitloehner, University of California at Davis; Dr. Gatz Riddell, American Association of Bovine Practitioners; Dr. Guy Loneragan, West Texas A&M University; Dr. Hans Coetzee, Kansas State University; Dr. Jan Shearer, Iowa State University; Dr. Janice Swanson, Michigan State University; Dr. Ron Gill, Texas A&M University; Dr. Temple Grandin, Colorado State University; Dr. Terry Mader, University of Nebraska; Dr. Tom Noffsinger, Beef Cattle Handling Expert, Nebraska; Dr. Joseph Stookey, University of Saskatchewan; Dr. Jeff Rushen, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; Dr. Karen Schwartzkopf-Genswein, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; and Jennifer Woods, Livestock Handling Expert, Canada.

**Japanese Beef Has Been Banned From The U.S. After An FMD Outbreak** in the Japanese district of Miyazaki. Bloomberg News reported that USDA confirmed in a statement Thursday that imports of Japanese boneless beef were banned in an import alert issued on April 21. Japan shipped about \$6 million worth of beef to the U.S. in 2009.

**Farm Bill Hearing:** Members of the U.S. House Agriculture Committee were in Lubbock on Monday for their seventh field hearing on reauthorization of the 2012 Farm Bill. The majority of the comments and questions focused on commodity program payments and crop insurance, but trade agreements, mandatory price reporting, COOL and EQIP were also discussed. TCFA members and staff attended the hearing and spoke individually with congress members but did not testify. TCFA will provide written testimony to be included in the official record of the Lubbock hearing and will participate in future hearings in Washington, DC.

**USDA Wants To Help Increase The Availability Of Processors To Small Livestock Producers**, according to a *Meatingplace* report. In a press briefing FSIS said maps developed by USDA show that high densities of small producers lack access to federally and state-inspected processors across the United States. USDA says it wants to help existing and new facilities increase access to processing in these regions to benefit local food systems and the public health.

USDA told *Meatingplace* that the agency has yet to make plans for "big investments" involving construction of new processing plants and hasn't identified what an ideal number of additional facilities would be. USDA says capital improvements at existing facilities would enhance food safety, for example, by helping smaller processors implement pathogen testing programs.

The new initiative comes as small and very small processors argue that USDA's call for updated HACCP validation will put them out of business. However, Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack said during the press briefing,

"The reality is that is not the case." He said USDA seeks to offer clarification on what already is required rather than impose new requirements, such as more pathogen testing. USDA is in the process of contacting processors.

USDA has provided a series of maps that paired concentrations of beef, pork and poultry production with available slaughter facilities. To see the maps, go to <http://www.foodsafetynews.com/slaughter-availability.pdf>.

**The Lesser Prairie Chicken Advisory Committee** held its third meeting in Hereford on May 18. The committee was appointed by Texas Comptroller Susan Combs to provide input to the Texas Endangered Species Task Force. Duties of the Committee are to prevent listing of the Lesser Prairie Chicken as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA); to minimize harm to economic sectors if listing does occur; and to assist in outreach and education efforts on potential listing decision and methods to minimize the impact of listing.

Currently, the Lesser Prairie Chicken is considered a "candidate" species for listing under the ESA by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). However, the listing as a threatened or endangered species has been precluded due to USFWS workload on other species and funding limitations.

Topics discussed at the meeting this week included an overview of processes involved in working with the ESA; an update on the USFWS Wind Turbine Guidelines Advisory Committee Recommendations; a review of USDA programs available to assist in management of Lesser Prairie Chicken habitat; and discussion on management tools and initiatives for prairie birds in other states.

**USDA Has Announced Completion Of New Food Safety Standards For Ground Beef** purchased by AMS for federal food and nutrition assistance programs including school lunches. Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack said, "The new standards announced today ensure our purchases are in line with major private-sector buyers of ground beef and are part of our continued effort to employ the best scientific knowledge to increase the safety of our nutritional programs."

The new standards are the result of a joint review by the USDA-FSIS and USDA-ARS that has been ongoing since the February announcement. The new requirements will be applicable to AMS ground beef contracts awarded on or after July 1.

In addition to continuing a zero tolerance for *E. coli* O157:H7 and Salmonella, USDA said the new AMS standards will: (1) tighten microbiological testing protocols; (2) tighten the microbiological upper specification and critical limits; (3) increase microbiological sampling frequency for finished products to every 15 minutes; and (4) institute additional rejection criteria for source trimmings used to manufacture AMS-purchased ground beef. AMS will also consider any vendor classified by FSIS as having a long term poor safety record as an ineligible vendor until a complete cause-and-effect analysis is completed.

**A Decision On Whether The U.S. COOL Law Violates WTO Accords** could come before the end of the year, *Feedstuffs* reports. In the latest development, a three-member WTO panel has been appointed to hear two challenges to COOL. Normally a panel is given six months to render a verdict, but the deadline can be extended and panel decisions can be appealed.

The Canadian Cattlemen's Association believes that September is probably the earliest that oral arguments can take place. Canada alleges that U.S. rules violate WTO accords covering technical barriers to trade, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, rules of origin and the 1994 General Agreement on Tariffs & Trade.

Mexico is also challenging COOL through the WTO. Additionally, countries that have reserved the right to participate in hearings as third parties include Argentina, Australia, Brazil, China, Columbia, the EU, Guatemala, India, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Peru and Taiwan.

**HSUS Distributed Animal Rights Propaganda At The 4-H National Conference** in March. But that mistake is not likely to be repeated if you go by what Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack told *AgriTalk* Radio this week. Vilsack said he "was not aware specifically" of the decision to allow HSUS to participate at the 4-H gathering, "but it does point out the fact that we probably do not have and did not have adequate oversight, and we've obviously got to take full responsibility for that. That's one of the reasons why we're conducting a review of the process."

Vilsack said he anticipates two important changes: 4-H national headquarters will screen all handouts that will be distributed at the conference to make sure their content is relevant to the conference theme and the young people attending; and workshop proposals will be reviewed by a USDA panel and National Institute of Food and Agriculture leaders to make sure content is accurate and credible.

If you would like to hear the interview, go to <http://audio.agritalk.com/wordpress/?p=1737>.

**The 56th Annual Texas A&M Beef Cattle Short Course**, sponsored by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service, is scheduled Aug. 2-4 at Texas A&M University in College Station. "The long-term cattle market outlook and preparing for the next drought are just two of the many topics that will be discussed in the 21 different cattleman's college sessions at the short course," said Dr. Jason Cleere, AgriLife Extension beef cattle specialist and conference coordinator.

The cattleman's college portion of the three-day short course provides participants with an opportunity to choose workshops based on their level of production experience and the needs of their ranch. "These concurrent workshops will feature information on ranch management, nutrition, reproduction, genetics, pastures, carcass evaluation, record keeping, brush busting, cattle handling, landowner issues and much more," Cleere said. Along with the classroom instruction on Aug. 2-3, there will be demonstrations on Aug. 4 on chute-side calf working, cattle behavior, penning, selection and brush busting.

Registration is \$140 per person and includes educational materials, a copy of the 600-page Beef Cattle Short Course proceedings, trade show admittance, admission to the prime rib dinner, meals and daily refreshments. Registration information and a tentative schedule will be mailed to previous participants in June but can also be found on the short course website at <http://beef.tamu.edu>. Producers can register online at <http://beef.tamu.edu> or contact Cleere's office at 979-845-6931.

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

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