



TEXAS CATTLE FEEDERS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

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A Three-Year Federal Grant Has Been Awarded To TCFA And The Texas AgriLife Extension Service for efforts to protect water quality in Panhandle streams and lakes. The project involves informing manure and compost contractors, machinery operators and certified crop advisors of the best management practices for land application of feedyard manure and compost.

TCFA Vice President Ben Weinheimer said cattle feeders have intently focused on environmental management at the feedyard level for many years, and this project is the next logical step in TCFA's environmental management efforts. "Our soils need what manure and compost have to offer," he said, "so we believe it's the right time to focus on the important role that land-application contractors and landowners serve in the cattle-feeding industry."

Weinheimer and his project co-leader, Dr. Brent Auvermann, AgriLife Extension agricultural engineer, will develop a training curriculum in English and Spanish, establish demonstration sites and host seminars and field days to help machinery operators.

The curriculum will teach them how to calibrate spreader equipment so manure and compost are applied to cropland according to recommended rates based on crop requirements and water-quality protection, Auvermann said.

"In the Panhandle, we work our soils pretty hard to achieve the levels of crop production that we're able to maintain year to year," he said. "If it's done right, manure application is a tremendous way to boost soil health and productivity, including holding onto that precious rainfall."

This project is funded through a Clean Water Act non-point source grant from the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

For more information, go to <http://agnews.tamu.edu/showstory.php?id=1968>.

USDA Has Released A Report Outlining The Current Efforts On Renewable Fuels and a plan to develop regional strategies to increase the production, marketing and distribution of biofuels. The report provides information on current production and consumption capacities, as well as projections to meet the RFS2 mandate to use 36 billion gals. of biofuels per year by 2022. The report also identifies the amount of potential biomass and cellulosic-ethanol feedstocks produced in various regions of the country and ways to tap into those resources to produce biofuels. During a media call announcing publication of the report, Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack said, "We have the capacity to begin meeting a substantially greater amount of our fuel needs through renewable fuel and energy that we can produce in rural communities across the country." He went on to say, "Part of the strategy is to build biorefineries in all areas of the country, and it won't be just corn-based ethanol." To read the report go to http://www.usda.gov/documents/USDA_Biofuels_Report_6232010.pdf.

A Report By USDA's Office Of Energy Policy And New Uses, which surveyed corn growers for the year 2005 and ethanol plants in 2008, indicates the net energy gain from converting corn to ethanol is improving in efficiency. The survey asked ethanol producers to respond to questions about ethanol yield (undenatured) per bushel of corn and energy used in the plants. The 2008 updates presented in the report recorded the effects of current practices used by corn producers and ethanol processors.

According to the report, ethanol overall has made the transition from an energy sink, to a moderate net energy gain in the 1990s, to a substantial net energy gain in the present. And there are still prospects for improvement. Ethanol yields have increased by about 10% in the last 20 years, so proportionately less corn is required, USDA said. In addition to refinements in ethanol technology, corn yields have increased by 39% over the last 20 years, which USDA said means that less land is required to produce ethanol.

To see the report, go to http://www.usda.gov/oce/reports/energy/2008Ethanol_June_final.pdf.

Be Careful Who You Hire Is The Animal Agriculture Alliance's Warning to livestock producers. The Alliance says it is becoming an increasingly common tactic for activists to illicitly gain employment in livestock operations in order to create undercover videos.

While the Alliance notes that producers must ensure high animal welfare standards by following industry guidelines, it is also important to review hiring practices, train employees on proper animal handling and hold all workers accountable for their actions. Despite the best intentions of livestock operation owners and managers, activists have succeeded in using highly-edited images of violence and neglect to exploit the public's emotions.

The Alliance says some things to pay attention to are employees or applicants that:

- Befriend or mingle with upper management, asking questions about operations including security matters or time schedules.
- Volunteer for jobs before or after normal business hours.
- Volunteer for jobs that are less desirable, but would provide them access to the animals, often before or after normal business hours.
- Seek employment in jobs below their skill or education level.
- Seek employment with no pay – so they can learn more about the business before committing to that field, either with regard to their education or possibly before starting their own business.
- Using an out-of-state driver's license.

For more information from the Alliance on what to look out for and how to avoid having your operation portrayed in negative light, go to

http://animalagalliance.org/current/home.cfm?Section=20100621_Extreme&Category=Press_Releases.

A New USDA Report Suggests Consumers Are Trending Toward Grass-Fed Beef even though it remains a niche product at the present time. And if there is to be substantial growth in grass-fed's market share, USDA noted there are significant obstacles to overcome.

In the monthly "Dairy, Livestock and Poultry Outlook," USDA-ERS said "the decision to pursue grass-finished production could begin to necessitate a number of tradeoffs" that will, in fact, take the beef industry in the direction of "higher cost of production and reduced beef supplies. For example, it could become necessary to liquidate some cows to make room for grass-finishing programs, reallocate cropland to provide the necessary high-quality forages, and vary selection programs to tailor cattle genetics amenable to alternative beef production technologies."

The report also notes that "Already, providing locally sourced beef is straining slaughter capacity – e.g., supplies – in some local areas. Generally, because they lack the means to do so, local meat processors are less likely to salvage the full array of byproduct values than larger packers, thus reducing supplies of intermediate inputs to a number of industries such as pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and lubricants. Because byproducts contribute significantly to packers' profit margins, this also makes it necessary for small processors to bid less for market-ready cattle."

ERS concluded the report by saying, "As in most cases, consumers drive production decisions, and as consumer preferences continue to shift toward products from more forage-based beef production systems, solutions will need be found to many actual or anticipated short-term constraints on producing the desired final beef products."

The full report is on pages 4-7 of the document available at

<http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/usda/current/LDP-M/LDP-M-06-18-2010.pdf>.

The Deadline Is July 6 For Masters Of Beef Advocacy (MBA) Graduates To Notify TCFA that they wish to participate in the TCFA MBA Graduation **July 13** at West Texas A&M University in Canyon. The event will run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and lunch will be provided.

If you would like to attend the MBA Graduation, please contact TCFA Communications Director James Hunt at james@tcfa.org or (806) 358-3681. Space is limited to the first 75 graduates to RSVP. If you have already attended an MBA commencement in the past, you are welcome to join us if there is space available after others have responded.

In addition to the ceremonial aspects, the graduation is a full-day, hands-on advocacy workshop that will equip MBA graduates with the communication skills needed to answer tough questions from family, friends and consumers in their local communities as well as to deliver positive messages about beef to consumers in the global online community. **You must have completed all six courses in order to attend**, but there is still

plenty of time to finish up and attend this special commencement exclusively for TCFA MBA graduates. The entire curriculum takes about 6-8 hours to complete. If you still need to enroll in MBA, please go to <http://www.beef.org/mastersofbeefadvocacy.aspx>.

The U.S. Supreme Court This Week Overturned A Lower Court's Order That Has Prohibited Farmers From Planting Roundup Ready Alfalfa for the past three years. In a Monsanto news release, the company's senior vice president and general counsel, David F. Snively said the ruling "is important for every American farmer, not just alfalfa growers. All growers can rely on the expertise of USDA, and trust that future challenges to biotech approvals must now be based on scientific facts, not speculation."

The opinion of the court, written by Justice Samuel Alito, said the district court abused its discretion when it prohibited the planting of Roundup Ready alfalfa in 2007. Monsanto's release said the ruling will allow USDA-APHIS to take appropriate action to permit further planting while they complete the Environmental Impact Statement. The opinion concluded that the lower court's injunction on Roundup Ready alfalfa "cannot stand." The case will now be remanded to the lower court with the instruction to allow APHIS to decide which interim measures will need to be established in order to allow growers to resume planting of Roundup Ready alfalfa.

However, U.S. Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) and U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio (Ore.) have been joined by 49 other representatives and five other senators in sending a letter to Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack to retain the regulated status of genetically engineered (GE) alfalfa. The letter says the lawmakers "have serious concerns regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for GE alfalfa." The lawmakers cite their belief that GE alfalfa poses a significant risk of contaminating non-GE alfalfa.

A Mobile Veterinary Emergency Team has been developed by the Texas Animal Health Commission and the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences. The team's purpose is to provide statewide response to disasters that affect animals, such as hurricanes. For more, go to http://www.tahc.state.tx.us/news/pr/2010/2010Jun_TAMU-VetResponse.pdf.

The Southern Plains Area (SPA) Senior Scientist Of The Year Is Dr. Andy Cole, acting research leader for the Renewable Energy and Manure Management Research Unit in Bushland. USDA-ARS reported that Dr. Cole's citation reads, "For outstanding research in beef cattle nutrition and in management of environmental impacts of beef cattle feeding operations." Dr. Cole is the SPA nominee for the national award – Distinguished Senior Research Scientist.

The Interactive Meat Case Is A New Beef Checkoff-Funded Online Tool to help shoppers learn more about the variety of nutritious and satisfying beef cuts available, plus find cut descriptions, recipes, cooking tips and more. Meredith Stevens, manager of digital media for NCBA, said the Meat Case is intended to respond to the fact that "consumers and even folks in the industry say, 'It's really a sea of red out there.'" She said NCBA wanted to develop a tool to help answer questions about beef cuts and help people acquire "the full spectrum of knowledge of how to get the best quality and value" from various beef products.

The Checkoff, in conjunction with the market research team, conducted beta testing with foodies, moms, dads, bloggers, media representatives and others to get feedback before launching the Interactive Meat Case. Stevens says the tool was ultimately designed to assist consumers in having great beef-eating experiences each and every time they sit down to a meal. To check out the meat case, go to <http://www.beefitswhatsfordinner.com/meatcase.aspx>.

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

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

Texas Cattle Feeders Association

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