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From the

Cow Boss

Jon Wooster, USCA President

We have a problem. Argentina has foot and mouth disease (FMD). The U.S. government would like to regionalize Argentina so that beef and animals from disease-free regions could be imported into the United States. Of course, we don't know whether

we can trust Argentina to keep from transshipping across region boundaries and then into the U.S. and exposing our industry to the disease.

The U.S. Cattlemen's Association (USCA) has worked for over a year on this problem. We actually drafted legislation that was introduced in the Senate and passed by the Senate appropriations committee a few weeks ago. Interestingly, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) has taken a position opposing this legislation.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is also proposing moving the facility that studies foot and mouth disease from Plum Island to mainland USA. Kansas State University is one suggested site. This proposal is being made despite the fact that it is against the law to study FMD on the mainland. USCA has brought attention to this situation and it is finally being addressed and given the attention it deserves.

On another front, USCA has spent the last year circulating a petition seeking an amendment to the Beef Promotion Act that will allow a portion of Beef Checkoff dollars collected from U.S. cattle producers to be used in the specific promotion of products derived from cattle that are born, raised and harvested in the US. That makes sense, doesn't it? Those are our dollars. Let's promote our product.

Since the passage of Country of Origin Labeling (COOL), we have been back in DC talking to the USDA in an effort to get workable rules implemented to make COOL work for cattlemen. We want to be there and we want to let DC know what works for us.

These are issues that can have reasonable solutions. We have found that our message is being heard in DC. When we see a problem, we try to present reasonable solutions to that problem.

My personal opinion is that our industry has taken it on the chin time and time again. The packers and large feeders have very good representation, while cattlemen and independent feedlot owners are often abandoned.

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What's Happening in Cattle Country...

From USCA Affiliates

September 19, 2008: Cattle Producers of Washington (CpoW) annual convention at the Ag Trade Center located on the fairgrounds in Colville, Washington. Speakers will include USCA Director Chuck Kiker, Beaumont, Texas who will discuss the latest news from Capitol Hill including beef checkoff reform, Argentine beef and cattle imports and the implementation of COOL. For more information contact Lee or Connie Engelhardt, 509/766-0161.

November 8, 2008: Montana Cattlemen's 7th Annual Cattlemen's Day; 9:00 a.m., Yogo Inn, Lewistown, Montana.



In Washington DC

From the Cow Boss, from page 1

I don't see any other national cattlemen's association watching my back in DC.

I have been active over the years in many organizations and I have come to the conclusion that the only way to watch out for ourselves is to put a full time lobbyist in DC to watch out for our interests. The rest is fluff.

We don't need a social calendar;

we don't need conventions or meetings. We can get this job done with conference calls and emails and some financial support from independent cattlemen.

I first saw this work in Monterey County many years ago when the ag industry was continuously being caught by surprise actions of the Board of Supervisors. The Ag Task Force was formed and its original purpose was to have a hired person at every weekly meeting of the Board of Supervisors so farmers and ranchers could stay home and tend to business. It was the original concept that developed into the USCA. It was the answer to being in two places at one time.

I have belonged to some more conventional organizations, and I still do, and they work very well on the local and state level. On the national level they seem to take up a lot of time and not really represent my interests.

What does work is having a reasonable voice in DC.

I believe USCA is that voice. It is hard to find a more respected group than our current board of directors. USCA has directors and members from across the country and they are reasonable, hard working cattle people. Jess Peterson, who represents us in DC, is a young, energetic, Montana cattle rancher. He is not a hired gun; he is not a hot shot without any background in the industry. He is a savvy, ranch raised young man with a lot of energy, a great deal of respect, a surplus of people skills and abundant knowledge about the industry he is representing.

We are making great strides in DC. We believe in forming coalitions with other groups and leveraging our strength. We believe in building up, rather than tearing down.

In this industry it is easy to give up, to cave to the status quo, to believe that our best times are behind us instead of ahead. I fight that every day. It is not easy to build a new national cattlemen's association but it is something we can get done.

If you are already a member, thank you for your vote of support. We will spend your dollars where they will do the most good.

If you are not already a member, I would ask you to join us. And if you don't think you want to do that, I would ask you to help finance us. Your dollars will go to keep a representative in Washington DC who represents independent cattlemen and feedlot operators.

If you are uncertain, please go to uscattlemen.org. Click on our directors and see the kind of men and women who are guiding this organization. Or call in to our Horn Wrap call on the first or third Tuesday morning of the month at 7:00 MT, ph (785) 686-2400, access code 032007#. We bring you up to date on a new issue every call. Join the call, you will see your membership is worth every cent.

Our meetings are by conference call. Let us know if you want to participate. We keep our members informed by email and occasional newsletters.

In December we have an annual meeting in Las Vegas during the NFR. Other than that, we are pretty much all work.

Have a wonderful day.



Peanut Gilfillian, Chuck Kiker, Danni Beer, Tammy Basel, and Richie Devillier. Seated: Jon Wooster

USCA Members Can Now Benefit from Carbon Market

The National Carbon Offset Coalition (NCOC) and the U.S. Cattlemen's Association (USCA) are proud to announce a newly formed partnership. USCA members enrolling in the NCOC program will have the benefit of their carbon credits being placed into the market via NCOC and USCA on the Chicago Climate Exchange (CCX).

The NCOC is an Aggregating Member of the CCX. A CCX Aggregator serves as the administrative representative on behalf of offset project owners, including rangeland, cropland and forestry.

CCX is North America's only, and the world's first, global marketplace for integrating voluntary legally binding emissions reductions with emissions trading and offsets for all six greenhouse gases (GHG).

Ted Dodge, NCOC Executive Director said, "Carbon offsets create the opportunity for a new revenue source for landowners while providing environmental benefits. NCOC looks forward to working with USCA to ensure that this opportunity is successful."

Bill Sauble, Past President of New Mexico Cattle Grower's Association and USCA member stated, "Many farmers and ranchers already follow conservation and grazing

plans. The carbon market provides financial incentives to these types of operations. USCA is pleased to partner with NCOC and reward farmers and ranchers for following a high level of environmental and land management practices."

CCX emitting members like Dow Corning, American Electric Company and others make a voluntary but legally binding commitment to meet their annual GHG emission reduction targets. Those who reduce below the targets have surplus allowances to sell or to bank. Those who emit above the targets comply by purchasing CCX Carbon Financial Instruments contracts from landowners.

As of August 15, 2008 the price of carbon is \$3.95 per ton. USCA members can benefit from this market by selling their carbon offsets from market-approved practices like conservation tillage, grass plantings or rangeland stewardship.

For more information about approved practices or to apply, visit the NCOC website at www.ncoc.us or contact Ted Dodge at 406/491-4472 or Jess Peterson at 202/870-3867.

Road Talk

Jess Peterson USCA Director of Government Relations

The Wagner Voegelé Team at Merrill Lynch - The right team for cattle producers!

When the fall and winter rolls around, I am pleased to be working again with two top hands Charles C.B. Wagner and Ty Voegelé of the Wagner Voegelé Team at Merrill Lynch.

These guys truly know the tough times ranchers face in the business and are excited to find ways to steer clear of the blizzards and find the clear path to financial stability. Whether you're involved in estate planning or deciding how to utilize the world of financial investing, Ty and CB can get you started.

We hope to be coming to a town near you this fall and winter! To learn more about financial and investment planning opportunities and how the Wagner Voegelé Team can be an essential partner in helping your family and business achieve the results you desire, simply contact them at 866-606-5544, email: charles_wagner@ml.com or through their website http://fa.ml.com/wagner_voegele

The U.S. Cattle Industry Loses a Champion

Nebraska cattleman and U.S. Cattlemen's Association Region VII Director, Jim Hanna, passed away on Wednesday, May 28, 2008 at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha following a brief illness.

"The cattle industry lost a true champion when Jim passed," said USCA President Jon Wooster.



"He was a man of courage, character and conviction. His leadership style was one of reasoned, sound judgment combined with his wonderful vision, wisdom and wit. Jim is sorely missed by his family, friends and colleagues."

On The Road Again!

USCA Director Emeritus Leo McDonnell in Colorado

On July 19 U.S. Cattlemen's Association (USCA) Director Emeritus Leo McDonnell, Columbus, MT addressed the Colorado Independent Cattle Growers Association (CICA) annual convention near Wray, CO. McDonnell updated CICA members on key issues within the cattle industry.

McDonnell reflected on a discussion he led in Colorado nearly a decade ago during the live cattle trade cases, pointing out that the need to build a national voice for ranchers - one in which every decision made is based on what's best for U.S. ranchers - has not changed in ten years. "Other segments of the food industry chain like retailers, wholesalers, meat packers and cattle feeders have strong organizations representing their segment's interest," he noted. "U.S. live cattle producers deserve the same level of representation with leadership at the helm who are focused on the things that will impact cattle producers."

"Ten years ago we talked about problems with international trade and our domestic markets. At that time we were seeing imports increase at a faster rate than the U.S. cow herd was declining and the supply impact was literally hammering our markets," McDonnell told the crowd. "We talked about failed trade policy and we were told we needed to 'give access to get access'. The problem is the rest of the world did not follow and we saw our agriculture trade surplus go from nearly \$25 billion in the 1990's, according to the Department of Commerce, to a \$3.5 billion deficit just a few years ago. Obviously, a weaker U.S. dollar has improved this somewhat."

"Back then we discussed the lack of identity for our product - U.S. beef - in both domestic and international markets and the fact that it is impossible to capture real or perceived added value for a product if the product isn't identified. We discussed the fact that the Department of Commerce had reported that no other industry had increased faster in concentration during the last 20 years than the U.S. packing industry. We talked about the record price spread increase and the monumental losses in the producer's share of the retail dollar," continued McDonnell.

"More importantly, we talked about solutions and those

included a national organization for ranchers, country of origin

labeling, interstate shipment of meat, developing special trade rules for cattle and beef, building a strong, respected and continuous presence in Washington, DC, and taking the time to build relationships not only on Capitol Hill, but also within the industry's regulating agencies."

"The progress made amazes me," McDonnell stated. "We were told that we couldn't get country of origin labeling or interstate shipment of beef passed. We discovered that our greatest opposition was not from elected officials; instead it emanated from groups within our own industry who claimed to represent ranchers."

"Country of origin labeling will be implemented this year," he noted. "Danni Beer of South Dakota has led the charge on COOL for cattle producers for years. She has committed thousands of hours of her time and resources to work to build the largest coalition in history to get the legislation passed."

"With the threat of JBS purchasing additional packing and feeding facilities in the U.S. our concerns with market concentration are escalating. Our economy can't afford the risks of liberalizing our import standards to accommodate nations like Argentina. We have a lot of work left to do."

McDonnell concluded by thanking ranchers for becoming engaged and encouraged them to join USCA if they haven't. "USCA has a daily presence in Washington, DC and we've developed a strong voice for U.S. ranchers. We're working to protect your interests. Every decision made at USCA is with the best interests of cattle producers as the priority and with respect for your hard-earned dollars. USCA has been very successful in delivering key legislation and rulemaking to address producers' concerns and advance their issues. I hope you'll join the effort."



USCA Director Emeritus Leo McDonnell addresses the 2008 CICA Convention held in Wray, Colorado

Three Strikes; You're Out

By American Task Force Argentina

Over the past year, some of Argentina's bad acts against America have come to light.

Thanks to the efforts of the U.S. Cattlemen's Association (USCA), Congress took note of Argentina's problems with Foot and Mouth Disease and a bipartisan bill has been introduced to keep the U.S. herd safe from Argentine disease.

And thanks to the numerous members of the American Task Force Argentina, including USCA, more people are becoming aware that Argentina has intentionally refused to repay billions in loans made by Americans. In what is the largest loan default of all time, Argentina's failure to repay has harmed teacher's pensions, fleeced U.S. taxpayers, and given Argentine farmers and ranchers an unfair advantage in international markets.

Just when you didn't think it could get any worse, Argentina sided with Venezuela and Cuba in last month's World Trade Organization negotiations, making unreasonable demands of U.S. farmers and ranchers and offering no concessions or market access in return. Observers of the talks said that even Brazil was easier to deal with; a testament to Argentina's radical posture.

The time has come for the U.S. government to tell Argentina three strikes; you're out. Until Argentina learns to play by the rules, Congress should block the importation of Argentina's potentially infected meat, demand repayment of debt, and refuse to make further concessions in the WTO.



USCA To Hold 2008 Annual Meeting in Conjunction With NFR

Attention U.S. Cattlemen: The U.S. Cattlemen's Association will hold its 2008 annual meeting on Friday, December 5 in Las Vegas, NV at The Orleans Hotel. The meeting will commence at 8:00 a.m. in Salon D.

A block of rooms has been reserved for Thursday, December 4 (\$67.00), Friday, December 5 (\$124.00) and Saturday, December 6 (\$124.00).

Make your reservations now by calling the hotel at 800-675-3267. The reservation department is open Monday-Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time. Identify yourself as part of the U.S. Cattlemen's Association group or use group code 8USCC12 in order to receive the special group rate. The room block expires on November 3.

The USCA annual meeting will be held during the first week of the National Finals Rodeo. Take a few days off, have some fun and get involved with the cattle organization that's on the move.

Contact Congress Today

Attention U.S. Cattlemen. Congress is drawing to a close and we need legislators to get behind the Foot and Mouth Disease Prevention Act of 2008, a bill to block Argentine imports potentially infested with FMD. Below is a list of Senators and Representatives who have supported this important bill. If your members of Congress are not listed, contact them today and ask that they co-sponsor the bill.

Supporters of the Senate bill include Sens. Tim Johnson (D-SD), Michael Enzi (R-WY), Jon Tester (D-MT), John Barrasso (R-WY), Claire McCaskill (D-MO), Pete Domenici (R-NM), Byron Dorgan (D-ND), Wayne Allard (R-CO), Ken Salazar (D-CO), John Thune (R-SD), Ben Nelson (D-NE), Richard Durbin (D-IL), and Kent Conrad (D-ND).

Supporters of the House bill include Reps. Stephanie Herseth Sandlin (D-SD), Barbara Cubin (R-WY), Earl Pomeroy (D-ND), Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA), Nancy Boyda (D-KS), Dennis Rehberg (R-MT), and Steve Kagen (D-WI).

The Country Connection

By Jess Peterson, USCA Director of Governmental Affairs



It's been a wild ride here the past few months! Just like the proverbial ups and downs of life on the ranch, the challenges and successes with USCA have been quite memorable. The summer started with a bang when the American Task Force

Argentina (ATFA) requested help in elevating the several issues dealing with Argentina's bad acts in the trade and business world. Notably ATFA wanted to help USCA increase pressure on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's plan to increase meat imports from Argentina. Several ranchers from across the country agreed to travel to Washington D.C. and meet with Congress and USDA to discuss issues affecting the U.S. cattle industry, notably the USDA's plan to increase meat imports from Argentina. May 27-29th found USCA members, Tammy Basel, Danni Beer, and Johnny Kerstiens from South Dakota, Richie Devilier, Peanut Gilfillian, Chuck Kiker from Texas, Jon Wooster from California, and Jay Miller from Virginia in high level meetings in Washington D.C. I was proud to take these ranchers around Washington. From Hill briefings to key meetings with USDA officials, USCA was well represented.

The work from these meetings combined with the never ending involvement from folks in the countryside paid off. On July 10th the "Foot and Mouth Disease Prevention Act of 2008" was introduced in the Senate by Senators Tim Johnson (D-SD) and Mike Enzi (R-WY). This bill prevents increased access of meat imports from Argentina until Argentina gets a better handle on its foot and mouth disease problem. The equivalent bill was introduced in the House on July 16th by Representative Stephanie Herseth Sandlin (D-SD) and Barbara Cubin. On July 17, Senator Tim Johnson and supportive colleagues on the Senate Appropriations Committee were successful in getting the bill attached to the FY2009 Senate Appropriations bill. This was an amazing accomplishment and truly a team effort. The list is too long to mention all the groups that made an impact, from cattle associations like the New Mexico Cattle Growers, Wyoming Stockgrowers, Independent Beef Association of North Dakota, Montana Cattlemen's Association, Cattle Producers of Washington, Independent Cattlemen's Association of Texas to outstanding work and support of groups like the American Sheep Institute, National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials, National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, and the Western Organization of Resource Councils. I want to also extend a very special thanks to South Dakota State Veterinarian Dr. Sam Holland and North Dakota State Veterinarian Dr. Susan Keller for their leadership and help on this issue. The West is being well served by these two leaders, and I appreciate their work and the support they brought from their fellow animal health officials.

There is a good chance the Appropriations bill will not go before

a full Senate floor vote. Instead, funding will be set through a Continued Resolution (CR). In any case, it's critical to build the co-sponsors for the "Foot and Mouth Disease Prevention Act of 2008." Please call your Representative or Senator today and make sure he or she supports this important bill.

We do not have a lot of work days left in Washington this year. Members of Congress will return for a short work period in September but will then head back to their districts and states as the election season heats up! House, Senate and Presidential races provide everyone with a chance to get out to a campaign stop. Meet the candidate, quiz them on the issues and get to know them and their staffs. Most importantly get out and vote this November!

Speaking of the country, it's been a good run of meetings in the countryside. I had a nice time staying with the Lee and Connie Englehardt family in Washington state. Cattle producers packed a June 17th meeting in Moses Lake and certainly made spending time in the Evergreen state worthwhile!

I greatly appreciate the hospitality my neighbors to the South showed me on June 24-26th. I got a chance to finally seeing Chuck Kiker's cattle operation on the Gulf Coast!

Plus I enjoyed some good fish and conversation with the Charley Reneau family. From there we headed to the ICA meeting in Galveston, Texas. ICA has played a key role in getting and maintaining USCA's presence in the countryside.

The meeting was one of the largest in the association's history and a true testament of how we can keep reaching new levels if we reach out to the countryside and win on the issues that make a difference in our lives.

In closing, if you would have asked me three years ago about the chances to succeed on so many issues in such a short time I would have told you it was impossible! But USCA is showing that progress can be made out East of the Potomac! The only thing holding us back now is membership. We need YOU! We've been working hard for over a year without a single setback. We've been working hard for over a year, and still only ONE association is leading the charge with a focused, committed group of cattle producers. USCA is here for you! We thank you for your support and ask that you please keep the successes coming by signing up a new member today!



THE Horn Wrap

The Horn Wrap call is sponsored by USCA and is for non-members and members. It is an informal call held the first and third Tuesdays of every month at 7:00 AM Mountain Time. Join Jess Peterson to discuss issues facing the cattle industry. Guest expert speakers on occasion will be asked to participate. Just call 785-686-2400 then enter the access code 032007#. Join us early in the call as lines might not be available.

Please email us at usca@uscattlemen.org if you have any problems getting on the call.

On the Cusp of COOL;

USDA Releases Final Interim Rule for Implementation

On August 1, 2008 the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) published its Interim Final Rule for Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) and the agency is now accepting public comment. Prior to publication, the rule went through a vetting by the Bush Administration's Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Everyone involved in beef production should take the time to submit comments on the rule, and when you do please remember to comment not only on the changes you would like to see made, but also on the positive aspects of the rule as well. Both are equally important.

During a meeting with USDA officials who crafted the rule, USCA learned that if we fail to voice our support for the particular provisions in the rule that we appreciate, these provisions could be subject to change if challenged by other segments of the industry and USDA is left unaware that there is support for those aspects of the rule.

Without question, there are provisions in the rule that USCA believes will be beneficial to cattle producers and should be protected.

- Ground beef and hamburger will be labeled by its country of origin. All possible countries must be listed. USDA has expanded the products requiring labeling under the interim final rule.
- The "chain of custody" requirement was removed. (In USDA's original rule the agency required that retailers keep a "chain of custody" record for all covered commodities).
- Retailers can rely on a manufacturer/first handler's label to establish the product's origin.
- A producer affidavit shall be considered acceptable evidence on which the slaughter facility may rely to initiate the origin claim, provided it is made by someone having first-hand knowledge of the origin of the animal(s) and identifies the animals unique to the transaction.
- The rule does not preempt state laws on foods not covered under this law; i.e., Alaska salmon.

• The rule does not require a mandatory animal identification system.

• Import identification tags and brands can be used to verify the animal's origin.

• Mandatory COOL will be implemented on time on September 30, 2008.

USCA has also found some problematic areas in the rule:

• Under the multiple countries of origin portion of the law, it is specific that the multiple country label should only be used for meat that was NOT exclusively born, raised and slaughtered in the U.S. The interim final rule does not contain this specific instruction.

The interim final rule states that "if an animal was born, raised and/or slaughtered in the United States and was not imported for immediate slaughter, the origin of the resulting meat products derived from that animal may be designated as "Product of the United States, Country X and/or (as applicable) Country Y where Country X and Country Y represent the actual or possible countries of foreign origin."

We feel this language in the rule alters the verbiage and intent of the law and that USDA has overstepped its discretionary authority. This interpretation of the law will permit packers to list meat exclusively born, raised and processed in the U.S. to be labeled as a product of the U.S. and other countries.

Writing the rule this way allows the beef production chain to continue processing beef without separation of beef by country of origin. Plants that process beef from more than one country will benefit.



Tammy Basel and COOL Chairman Danni Beer in DC

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On the Cusp of COOL, from page 7

USCA leadership was told this decision was made on the basis that rules are written to be least restrictive and burdensome to the businesses the rule directly affects, and in this case that is the retailer. We certainly feel our comments should reflect our opposition to how this section of the rule is written.

- The processed food item definition is far too broad. Under the proposed rule, covered foods will not need to be labeled if they are part of a processed food item or are combined with at least one other covered food. A "processed" food item is defined as a retail item derived from a covered commodity that has undergone specific processing - such as cooking, smoking, curing or emulsifying which USDA views as changing the "character" of the covered food. This part of the rule doesn't affect beef as much as some other commodities. For example, 95 percent of peanuts sold at retail will not be labeled because under the interim final rule, roasting a peanut alters the "character" of the peanut. Other food items like corned beef, breaded chicken, fruit cups and the like will be exempted from the labeling law under USDA's proposed rule. Although USCA understands that the agency writing the rule had to draw some distinct lines between what food items must be labeled versus what can be marketed without a label, we believe this part of the rule exempts far too many products and will not allow consumers to make informed purchasing decisions.

Whether the interim final rule is changed or not, consumers will have more information than they do now about the origin of their beef. They will know that the U.S. beef supply of muscle cuts is predominately from the U.S., Canada and/or Mexico. Unfortunately, the rule as it is written now allows the packing industry and retailers to not differentiate between muscle cuts of beef from these three countries. We firmly believe this was not the intent of the law, and that it is very important for producers to offer comments to USDA.

You can view the entire interim final rule at www.uscattlemen.org. Click on the COOL Library and then click on the rule button in the upper left hand corner of the page.

The U.S. Cattlemen's Association will be submitting comments to USDA on the interim final rule and we encourage you to as well. Feel free to contact us at usca@uscattlemen.org if you would like assistance drafting your comments. We'll be glad to help.

Animal Health Issues Need To be Addressed

By Chuck Kiker, USCA Region V Director

There are times in life when you feel extremely proud for standing with a group of like-minded people and doing the right thing. Years ago I served on a board of directors with Jon Wooster and Leo McDonnell. Together we worked to prevent Canada from increasing its exports until increased BSE mitigation measures were in place. We did the right thing and today those same two gentlemen and I are working alongside a group of leaders that are leading the industry in battling yet another batch of animal health issues. BSE from Canada remains a concern, but failing court cases are not the answer. Especially when you look at the current animal health issues we are battling here in the U.S.

In Texas, the fight against fever ticks from Mexico rages on. Cattle fever ticks carry and transmit bovine babesiosis, once called "Texas Fever", which is a protozoal disease, caused by *Babesia bigemina* or *Babesia bovis*. Fever ticks have caused significant economic damage to the cattle industry in the past through production losses and high mortality. Fever ticks are very hard to eradicate and can also be carried by horses and wildlife.

There is already an infected zone along the Rio Grande River in Texas and it is creeping northeast. The U.S. Department of Agriculture provided \$5.23 million to combat fever ticks.

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Jon Wooster of United States Cattlemen's Association Honored

The Independent Cattlemen's Association of Texas Cattlemen's Council Award was presented on June 27 during the 34th Annual ICA Convention and Trade Show in Galveston. The Cattlemen's Council Award is presented to organizations in recognition of their leadership in the Texas livestock industry and Texas agriculture. For 2008, the award was presented to Jon Wooster, USCA President. Hats off to Jon Wooster and USCA for their hard work in Washington D.C. on behalf of the cattle producer!

Animal Health Issues, from page 8

Unfortunately, that number falls grossly short of the needed \$13 million. The burden of fever ticks costs cattle producers countless hours and dollars dealing with this problem. It's easy to say it's a Texas problem, but a few minor mistakes and fever tick infested cattle make their way to Oklahoma, Colorado, Kansas or Nebraska and pretty quick the entire Midwest becomes affected.

Montana and Wyoming fall into the category of states dealing with another disease problem, as both states recently lost their Brucellosis free status. A brief review of increased costs for ranchers in these states reveals Brucellosis tests on the ranch runs about \$15.00 per head. If you take the cattle to a sale barn, the market will charge \$4.50- \$5.00 a head for a Brucellosis test.

States like Texas, California, New Mexico, Minnesota, and Michigan are dealing with Tuberculosis (TB). Ranchers in Minnesota and Michigan, who have lost their TB free status, will take 550 pound steers to market this fall and face about a \$50.00 per head loss. Washington state is in a fight for its life to protect its TB status. Where is the problem of origin? We are being infected from the north and south with TB. Canada and Mexico both have TB problems and we are importing them into this country. While the most TB pressure is coming from Mexico, Washington state is faced with a continuous stream of cattle coming in from Canada that are slipping through the health inspections (or lack thereof) and reaching Washington feed yards only

to be determined positive for TB when lesions show up at slaughter.

Recently, USCA facilitated the first ever animal health conference call that covered all the three major health issues: TB, Brucellosis, and Texas Fever Ticks. The call was attended by a large number of state vets and cattle producers. From Texas, Missouri, on up to Nebraska and the border states of Washington, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota -health officials and producers came up with solutions to address the extreme financial and work burden these animal health issues are placing upon the U.S. cattle industry. More importantly, we communicated and are working together to find solutions amicable to everyone in eradicating these diseases and parasites.

Cattle producers need to turn their attention to the millions of dollars being lost due to fever ticks, Brucellosis, and TB. Enforcing quarantine guidelines and increased testing for TB may result in decreased imports of cattle from Mexico and Canada and a much healthier and disease free U.S. cattle herd. USCA is the only cattle association spending the time and money in finding solutions to these problems. I am pleased to work with a group of folks that are committed to addressing animal health issues and ensuring the health and safety of the U.S. cattle herd. I think you would be proud to be part of this group too.

For more information, please email usca@uscattlemen.org.

Updating the Beef Checkoff; USCA Leads the Charge

By Danni Beer, USCA Checkoff Committee Chair

Editor's Note: Beef checkoff reform has been a topic of discussion for many years now, culminating with an 8,000 producer survey conducted as part of the LMA vs. USDA checkoff lawsuit settlement agreement. Producers surveyed overwhelmingly said they want a good law made better by updating 20-year-old provisions in the Beef Act to fit an industry that is these days in strong competition with other protein sources. Producers surveyed made clear that they want a portion of their checkoff funds put to work promoting exclusively U.S. beef and they want to update provisions that restrict contractor eligibility. And, they said they want the right to vote periodically. USCA listened and launched a nationwide effort to seek improvements and congressional amendments that will update and modernize the 1985 Beef Research and Information Act. USCA's Beef Checkoff effort was initiated and chaired by the late Jim Hanna, Brownlee, Nebraska, whose work included a nationwide campaign

allowing cattle producers to sign a letter to Congress seeking specific updates to the current law. Danni Beer of South Dakota agreed to continue Hanna's efforts and now chairs the USCA Beef Checkoff Committee. Danni's role in this position is perfect timing since it appears Country of Origin Labeling will be implemented September 30. USCA believes strongly that U.S. cattle producers deserve a marketing program dedicated to promoting the product they worked so hard to label as their own.

One of the thrusts behind beef checkoff reform is the fact that cattle numbers and cattle operations in the U.S. are declining and, therefore, checkoff assessments are decreasing. This fact, along with inflation and a sagging economy, has seriously eroded the promotion value of beef checkoff dollars.

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As a result, there are producers and organizations that have promoted increasing the per head assessment. However, not all producers agree with how the beef checkoff has been managed. Many are concerned with the influence the major contractor of check off dollars has had on the program. USCA believes that before any increase in assessments can be considered there is some housework to do.

While USCA does not have a position on increasing the assessment, members do believe the twenty-year-old beef checkoff needs to be updated and some changes need to be made reflecting the industry's needs and direction in the twenty-first century. USCA believes changes that will reinforce producers' control and ownership of the program will ultimately generate support that will address the funding challenges of the future, or will result in reasonable solutions and alternatives to a decreasing checkoff budget.

The Cattlemen's Beef Board (CBB) leadership has begun the process for recommending improvements to the beef checkoff program. The CBB is authorized to recommend changes to both the Act and Order to the Secretary of Agriculture. However, the CBB is prohibited by law from lobbying for any recommended improvements to the Act or Order.

As part of the process, CBB's officers are meeting with the officers of national organizations who wish to discuss their organization's suggested improvements to the checkoff program. USCA is one of those organizations. State Beef Councils, certified nominating organizations, and national breed associations, as well as USCA, are being asked to provide the CBB with written suggestions on improvements they would like to see to the checkoff program. The CBB is

requesting all suggestions be submitted by August 29, 2008. The timeline for this process will place the Beef Board's final recommendations before the Secretary of Agriculture by February 4, 2009. USCA is currently in discussions with CBB officers to discuss its suggested changes.

USCA members would like to see a portion of checkoff funds be made available to the promotion and marketing of products derived from cattle exclusively born, raised, and harvested in the U.S. USCA also supports a referendum on the checkoff every seven years to determine whether cattle producers support terminating the program and/or make modifications to the law. USCA does not support any changes in the assessment without a referendum that results in cattle producers making that decision.

USCA also favors a less restrictive contracting process that will include direct contracting opportunities with companies providing goods and services to the checkoff, and that will allow all industry organizations to contract with the checkoff regardless of when they were established. USCA believes there should be a definitive separation in the checkoff governance system, particularly between the NCBA and the Federation of State Beef Councils. USCA also believes that all checkoff funds submitted to the Federation of State Beef Councils by the individual states should be subject to the scrutiny and oversight of the CBB Operating Committee, which is made up of ten CBB representatives and 10 Federation representatives.

You can become involved in shaping the future of the Beef Checkoff. For more information on how you can be involved with USCA's Beef Checkoff Committee contact Jon Wooster at usca@uscattlemen.org.

USCA Mission Statement

To present an effective voice for the United States cattle industry. USCA is dedicated to, and focused on, efforts in Washington, DC to further the interests of cattle producers on mandatory country of origin labeling, international trade, market competition, reform of the mandatory beef checkoff, animal health, welfare and identification, private property rights and other issues that affect the U.S. cattle industry."

USCA: Moving Cows and Moving Congress





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MEMBERSHIP—DONATION FORM

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of the United States Cattlemen's Association (USCA) is to present an effective voice for the United States cattle industry. USCA is dedicated to, and focused on, efforts in Washington, D.C. to further the interests of cattle producers on mandatory country of origin labeling, international trade, market competition, reform of the mandatory beef checkoff, animal health, welfare and identification, private property rights and other issues that affect the United States cattle industry.

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Photo Album



Back Row L-R: Richie Devillier, Peanut Gilfillian, Jon Wooster, Jess Peterson, Chuck Kiker. Front Row L-R: AMS Administrator Lloyd Day, Tammy Basel, Danni Beer, NAIS Coordinator Neil Hammerschmidt and USDA Deputy Under Secretary Burton Eller.



L-R Jess Peterson, Tammy Basel, Jon Wooster, Danni Beer, Chuck Kiker, Peanut Gilfillian and Richie Devillier