

**For immediate release:**

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### **Cattle Thefts Increase in Missouri**

Cattle thefts are on the rise in Missouri as more producers are becoming victims in what is considered highly organized theft rings. In a Missouri Senate hearing last week producer-victims testified about how their businesses have been financially damaged by these organized theft rings.

The majority of thefts are occurring in the Southwest region of the state due to easy access to Arkansas, Oklahoma and Kansas. In many cases four-wheelers, trucks and trailers are stolen in addition to the cattle.

In 2004, the Missouri Cattle Theft Task Force, at the direction of Governor Blunt, was formed in a cooperative effort between Missouri Cattlemen's Association, Missouri Highway Patrol, Missouri Sheriff's Association and others to curb cattle theft. To date, over 3,236 cattle and equipment has been stolen totaling over \$1.1 million in damages during this four year period.

Steve Willard, President of the Missouri Cattlemen's Association, said "the act of stealing from hard working producers and having a significant amount of their yearly income stolen from them has put many producers in a severe financial hardship".

"We applaud Senator Dan Clemens, of Marshfield, for wanting to stiffen the penalties for those criminals stealing cattle," stated Willard, who went on to say, "we fear for the public safety, because they appear to be well organized and armed."

The Senate is expected to take action on a cattle theft bill soon.

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The Missouri Cattlemen's Association was initiated in 1911 and is dedicated to improving profitability of Missouri's cattle industry. MCA will work tirelessly to promote, preserve and protect the future of our great cattle industry and the people who depend on us. To join, contact MCA at 573-499-9162 or at [www.mocattle.com](http://www.mocattle.com).