



Happy Spring!!

March 20, 2009

Final COOL Rule is in Effect

The final rule on Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) went into effect as scheduled on Monday, March 16.

On March 31, 2009, the six-month education and outreach program operated by the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) will come to an end, and COOL will be actively enforced by AMS as per the final rule issued on January 15, 2009.

NCBA is pleased that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is implementing the final rule as scheduled, as its permanency allows NCBA and our partners throughout the industry to dedicate resources for educating producers, processors, retailers, and consumers.

Although the final rule has gone into effect as written, in February, Secretary Vilsack sent a letter to the packing industry outlining voluntary recommendations for more detailed labeling. Specifically, he has asked that processors include information about which production step occurred in each country when multiple countries appear on the label.

NCBA will monitor USDA's implementation process to see if any aspects of this program have a negative impact on domestic beef demand or international trade.

Released by NCBA 3/19/09.

CALL TO ACTION: Sign onto the SCOTT-SMITH FDA LETTER

Below is a letter that is being circulated by Congressmen David Scott (D-GA) and Adrian Smith (R-NE) asking the FDA to delay the implementation of the Enhanced Feed Ban Rule and to reopen the comment period. Opening the comment period will allow producers to share the negative impacts of the FDA rule with regards to their cattle operation.

Congressmen Randy Neugebauer (R-TX), Lee Terry (R-NE), Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE), Mike Conaway (R-TX), and Frank Lucas (R-OK) have joined the letter.

The deadline for your Member of Congress to sign the letter is NOON - WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25th. PLEASE CONTACT YOUR MEMBERS AND URGE THEM

TO SIGN THIS IMPORTANT LETTER. Interested Members will need to contact either Gary Woodward, with Congressman Scott, at 202-225-2939 or Monica Jirik, with Congressman Smith, at 202-225-6435 to have their names added.

Below is a Dear Colleague that Congressmen Scott and Smith sent to all Members of Congress this morning. It should help provide you with some talking points when calling their offices.

If you have any questions, or need any additional information, please feel free to contact me, Elizabeth Bostdorff, at 202 879 9128 or ebostdorff@beef.org.

DEAR COLLEAGUE - Sent to all Members of Congress

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) released the Final Rule for "Substances Prohibited from Use in Animal Food or Feed" on April 25, 2008. This regulation is commonly known as the "Enhanced Feed Ban Rule," and it is scheduled to take effect on April 27, 2009.

The current U.S. ruminant feed regulation bans the use of certain cattle materials in ruminant feed, but allows the use of these material in feed for non-ruminant animals. Under FDA's new rule certain cattle materials will be banned from all livestock feeds including non-ruminant feed. We understand the purpose of the "Enhanced Feed Ban Rule" as a means to provide additional theoretical safeguard against bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in the U.S., but we are concerned significant unintended consequences have not been addressed.

In the published rule, FDA acknowledged the increased financial and operating burdens on the livestock industry such as difficulties in disposing of livestock, removing specified risk material from deceased animals, adverse impact on landfills and incinerators, and adverse environmental impacts.

In fact, twelve national livestock and meat industry organizations, including the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, American Farm Bureau Federation, and National Renderers Association, have already found the new rule to be a severe economic burden, limiting options for environmentally-friendly carcass disposal.

We hope you will join us by signing the joint letter to Frank Torti, Acting Commissioner of FDA, requesting these items be addressed. **The deadline to sign the letter is noon Wednesday, March 25th.** Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Gary Woodward with Congressman David Scott at 202-225-2939 or Monica Jirik with Congressman Adrian Smith at 202-225-6435.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Announces Final Rule for Handling of Non-Ambulatory Cattle

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced late last week a final rule to amend the federal meat inspection regulations to require a complete ban on the slaughter of cattle that become non-ambulatory disabled after passing initial inspection by Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) inspection program personnel.

The final rule amends the federal meat inspection regulations to require that all cattle that are non-ambulatory disabled ("downer") cattle at any time prior to slaughter at an official establishment, including those that become non-ambulatory disabled after passing ante-

mortem inspection, be condemned and properly disposed of according to FSIS regulations. Additionally, the final rule requires that establishments notify inspection program personnel when cattle become non-ambulatory disabled after passing the ante-mortem, or pre-slaughter, inspection. The rule will enhance consumer confidence in the food supply and improve the humane handling of cattle.

"President Obama has strongly stated his support for efforts to improve food safety," said Vilsack. "This rule is designed to enhance consumer confidence and humane handling standards and will provide clear guidance that non-ambulatory cattle will not be allowed to enter the human food supply. It is a step forward for both food safety and the standards for humane treatment of animals. "

Under the final rule, cattle that become non-ambulatory disabled from an acute injury after ante-mortem inspection will no longer be eligible to proceed to slaughter as "U.S. Suspects." Instead, FSIS inspectors will tag these cattle as "U.S. Condemned" and prohibit these cattle from proceeding to slaughter. Discontinuing the case-by-case disposition of cattle that become non-ambulatory disabled after ante mortem inspection will eliminate the time FSIS Public Health Veterinarians spend conducting additional inspections on these animals, thereby increasing the time inspection program personnel can allocate to other inspection activities. With this final rule, these cattle now must be humanely euthanized.

On July 13, 2007, FSIS published the final rule, "Prohibition of the Use of Specified Risk Materials for Human Food and Requirements for the Disposition of Non-Ambulatory Disabled Cattle; Prohibition of the Use of Certain Stunning Devices Used To Immobilize Cattle During Slaughter" (the SRM final rule). The SRM final rule allowed a case-by-case reinspection of cattle that became non-ambulatory disabled after ante mortem inspection to address the rare situations in which an animal that is deemed by FSIS as fit for human food at ante-mortem inspection subsequently suffers an acute injury.

Released by USDA on 3/14/09. Release No. 0060.09

Upcoming Cattlemen's Events & Meetings

Warren County- March 21, 5:00 PM
First State Community Bank, Warrenton
"15th Anniversary Celebration"

Crawford County- March 26, 6:00 PM
Bourbon Community Center
Sponsor: Nutrena Feed

Randolph County- March 26, 6:30 PM
Nelli's Restaurant

Lewis-Marion County- March 26, 7:00 PM
Highland High School Cafeteria
Sponsor: Pfizer Animal Health

14th Annual Cattlemen's Roundup- March 28, 4:30 PM
Missouri's Cattlemen Foundation Annual Fund Raiser
American Legion Hall, St. Joseph

Benton County - March 30, 7:30 PM

Trinity Lutheran Church, Cole Camp

Henry County- April 2, 6:30 PM

First Baptist Church, Clinton

Sponsors: Gallagher Animal Management Solutions &
Farmers Elevator of Clinton

Dallas County- April 14, 6:30 PM

Prairie Grove School, Buffalo

Sponsor: DCCA, Dallas County Farm Bureau &
Farm Credit Service representatives

Industry responds to "Death on a Factory Farm"

On Monday night, HBO aired a documentary called "Death on a Factory Farm," at 9 p.m. Central time. It will air several times through April 1. (Check local listings for times.)

The 87-minute documentary was produced by the Humane Farming Association and is based on the animal abuse incident at a hog farm in Creston, Ohio, that took place in 2006.

Two-thirds of the documentary is undercover video taken by an individual on behalf of HFA; the last portion shows the court case where the owner and two employees were on trial for the animal abuse charges.

The National Pork Producers Council and National Pork Board have prepared a statement, which NPPC delivered to congressional staff before the video aired.

"These types of challenges demonstrate why it is critical for all the industry to come together and support the 'We Care' program," said Dallas Hockman, NPPC's vice president of industry relations. "It is the responsibility of each and every producer to demonstrate his/her commitment to continuous improvement and sound business practices."

He points to the "We Care" program's "The Statement of Ethical Principles" and compliance to Pork Quality Assurance Plus and Transport Quality Assurance as proactive industry programs. "These are critical first steps in demonstrating to our customers and to the public that we are dedicated to the production of safe, wholesome food while following acceptable animal-welfare practices and safeguarding our natural resources," Hockman says.

Released by Drovers news source 3/18/09.

U.S. shoppers hit meat counters as recession bites

Restaurant-quality T-bone steaks are becoming less rare at U.S. supermarkets as shoppers take advantage of lower prices and meat companies try to make up for slumping sales to dining establishments.

Supermarket sales of beef, pork and chicken are holding up surprisingly well despite a drop in overall meat consumption, according to meat industry leaders attending this week's

Reuters Food and Agriculture Summit in Chicago.

In 2008, overall U.S. meat consumption fell about 2 percent from 2007, with beef down about 3 percent, pork down 2.3 percent and chicken down 0.6 percent, according to the Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute at Iowa State University.

It's a different picture in supermarkets. During the fourth quarter of last year, retail volume sales of beef were up more than 3 percent, while chicken and pork volume rose by 9 percent and 5 percent, respectively, according to the Fresh Look Marketing Group, a research firm based in Hoffman Estates, Illinois.

FAPRI economist Jacinto Fabiosa said restaurant sales are the first to suffer in tough economic times.

"We are really focusing right now on one aspect of our industry -- the retail side," Gregg Doud, chief economist for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, said at the Summit.

Supermarket shoppers can now find choice-grade steaks, which are commonly served in fine restaurants, selling at \$5.00 to \$6.00 a pound compared with \$7.00 to \$9.00 a year ago.

"On the steak side, you are seeing a lot of features for rib-eyes and T-bones at below \$5.00 a pound. That is some of the best featuring we have seen in many, many years," said Doud.

In Chicago, choice-grade T-bones were featured at \$6.00 a pound, a savings of \$3.00, according to an advertisement by retailer Target Corp (TGT.N).

The beef industry has been anxious to boost supermarket sales to make up for the weakness in restaurants, where about half of the U.S. beef is sold.

"We are working very hard with the retailers right now on summer and early grilling promotion programs," said Doud.

DEMAND OUTSTANDING

Chicken sales have also taken a hit at fine-dining and casual restaurants, Joe Sanderson, chief executive of No. 4 chicken producer Sanderson Farms Inc (SAFM.O), said at the Summit.

As a result, his company has cut back production of chicken aimed at that segment and focused on supermarket sales.

"Demand through the grocery stores is excellent. It is outstanding," said Sanderson.

Boneless breast meat is a key revenue item for chicken companies and is commonly shipped to restaurants, but supermarket prices have come down. The latest U.S. Agriculture Department data shows boneless breasts at supermarkets averaged \$3.33 a pound in February, down 4 percent from a year ago.

While the increase in grocery store chicken sales has been helpful, Sanderson said it has

not fully offset the decline in the food service business, which accounts for about half of the company's sales.

"It is our view that demand will be slow through food service at least for the balance of this year because of the challenges that the consumers face," Sanderson said. "If we are going to be profitable, it will be because of reductions in supplies."

In February, the Laurel, Mississippi-based company reported a net loss of \$6.7 million for the quarter that ended January 31, due in part to the slowdown in restaurant sales. A year earlier, it earned a profit of \$6.2 million.

FOCUS ON AFFORDABILITY

At Hormel Foods Corp (HRL.N), the recession has the company developing new products geared to affordability, Chief Executive Jeffrey Ettinger told the Summit.

Hormel, like other food companies, has developed a variety of meat products focused on convenience, but the economic recession may change that focus.

"Going forward I think there is going to be added attention to the affordability aspect of the product," said Ettinger.

At retail, Ettinger said sales have been strong for its canned products such as Spam luncheon meat, Hormel chili and Dinty Moore beef stew, while its microwaveable items and refrigerated entrees have been weak.

Released by Reuters.com on 3/19/09. Written by Bob Burgdorfer.

Governor Nixon, Director of Agriculture Recognize Missouri Farmers during National Agriculture Week

With more than 105,000 farms spread over 31 million acres, agriculture continues to be the leading economic driver in Missouri's economy. This week, the Missouri Department of Agriculture is celebrating National Agriculture Week, March 15-21, 2009 - an annual event honoring the hard work, sacrifice and achievements of farmers and producers across the state.

"Missouri cannot move forward unless agriculture moves forward," said Gov. Jay Nixon. "National Agriculture Week is one way we can show our appreciation to local family farmers in this state and the great work they do."

Agriculture's impact on the state economy is difficult to overstate. Missouri's crops, livestock, processing and other agricultural sectors accounted for more than \$12 billion in 2008 employing more than 245,500 workers in the industry (according to the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center, 2008).

"Missouri agriculture is in a position to capitalize on unprecedented breakthroughs in genetics, alternative energy and other technological innovations," said Dr. Jon Hagler, director of the Department of Agriculture. "The Department is ready to lead the way in the transition to a new economy."

National Agriculture Day is organized by the Agriculture Council of America - a nonprofit organization composed of leaders in the agricultural, food and fiber community, dedicating its efforts to increasing the public's awareness of agriculture's role in modern society. *Released by the Missouri Department of Agriculture 3/16/09.*

McCullough Fitting Clinic to be held in May

The Newton County Cattlemen and Crowder College Aggies will host the McCullough Fitting Clinic on May 8, 9 and 10, 2009 at Crowder College in Neosho, Missouri. The McCullough Fitting Clinic is a three-day hands-on clinic with sessions on Beef Clipping, Fitting and Showmanship sessions. The registration fee of \$100 includes hands-on learning for participants, meals, and lodging at the Historic Camp Crowder Army Barrack.

For the clinic you will need to furnish your own calf, chute, clippers, blower, washing supplies, grooming supplies, feed and bedding, show stick, notebook and pen. There are no refunds and the calf must be show broke to participate in this clinic. Cattle will pen at the Crowder College Ag Barn.

The clinic is limited to the first 30 paid registrants and will fill up fast. Get registered today! For more information of if you don't have something listed above please contact Estella Osborn at (417) 624-0415 or osbornfarms@earthlink.net.

Thank you to the 2009 sponsors of the McCullough Fitting Clinic: Crowder College, WAHL, Missouri National Guard, and John Deere Legacy.

Missouri Cattleman Produces Hereford Dam of Distinction

Eddie Watson of Cabool was recently recognized by the American Hereford Association (AHA) for producing 1 cow named to the Dams of Distinction list.

"These are the most efficient cows in the Hereford breed," said Craig Huffhines, AHA's Executive Secretary. They have met the strictest requirements for early calving, reproductive efficiency, calving intervals of no greater than one year, and weaning weight ratios in the top end of the breeder's herd.

Some 1938 cows were named to the prestigious list for this year. A complete listing of the cows and the 641 breeders who produced them is available from the American Hereford Association's website at www.hereford.org. An article reviewing the Dams of Distinction is published in the 2009 April issue of Hereford World Magazine, the breed's official publication.

Article submitted by Janet Watson.

Reach out to your State Legislators

MCA's Cattlemen at the Capitol is a great way to talk face to face with your state legislators and inform them on the importance of your business, the beef business. Missouri's cattle industry is facing tough opponents in the legislature. In order to protect your interests and your livelihood, speak with your legislators on what issues effect you before its too late.

Each Wednesday during the legislative session MCA will host cattlemen from around the state at the Capitol in Jefferson City. Sign up today by calling the MCA office at (573) 499-9162.

The personal affect that each of you may have on a legislator could sway them on a vote that could make or break your livelihood. Be involved in the issues affecting your business.

As always, MCA Membership is the key to the success of the organization. Without producers who back our association our voice is not as strong. Ask your friend, neighbor and fellow cattlemen to join the thousands of cattlemen in supporting the Missouri Cattlemen's Association.

For more industry news visit:

[Missouri Cattlemen's Association Website](#)

[Missouri's Cattlemen Foundation Website](#)

[Missouri Beef Industry Council Website](#)

[National Cattlemen's Beef Association Website](#)

[Missouri Department of Agriculture Website](#)

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Do you have questions, comments or suggestions?

Would you like to advertise in our newsletter?

If so, please contact Maureen Hamill at (573) 499-9162 (Ext. 233) or maureen@mocattle.com.