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Volume XXII Number 8

December 2014

Industry & Innovation

- What Now?
- Meet the President
- APHIS Rule Proposal Could Devastate the American Cattle Herd



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FEATURES



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Did your vote count?

By the time you read this, news from the general election will have settled down. We will likely be carrying around an extra pound or two from Thanksgiving, and Christmas shopping commercials will be in full swing. The fact if you voted or not on the first Tuesday of November is probably far from your mind.

But did you ever wonder if your vote counted? Prior to the election, several state cattle associations utilized their membership network to encourage cattlemen and women to vote. Depending on the state, some races were more crucial to agriculture than others. As discussed by NCBA President Bob McCan on page 10 of *Feed•Lot*, things may have shifted in agriculture's favor. How these things play out will take time, but many are encouraged as they look forward.

I always heard, "if you don't vote, then don't gripe." But how often does it seem that YOUR vote really counted? This year, I was part of such an election where every vote DID count.

My family lives on a ranch near the small town of Archer City, Texas. If you're a Lonesome Dove fan, Larry McMurtry was born and still resides in our small town. This fall, our local school board voted to call for a \$17.75 Million bond election to build a new junior high/high school, as well as make many needed repairs and improvements to district facilities. I serve as president of the board, and I watched as community members for and against the bond lobbied their case in our town.

Pre-election day speculation was rampant. Many said, "It will

BY JILL J. DUNKEL

pass 3 to 1." Others were certain it was doomed to fail.


On the evening of November 4th, I sat by the phone, waiting to hear the results. Precinct by precinct, the tallies came in. Some precincts were for the measure. Other precincts were against it. But at the end of the evening, the bond passed. By seven votes.

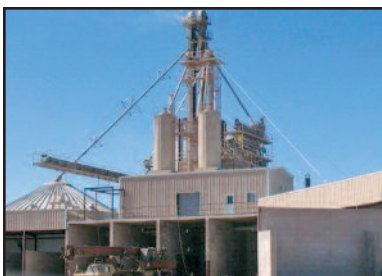
Seven. Seven single votes were the difference in a new school and improvements valued at \$17.75 Million dollars! A week later, those opposing the measure called for a recount. I participated in that process and watched a committee hand tally each vote. The result was the same. Seven votes.

Since election day, I've heard voter stories that truly made a difference. One woman picked up her mother, grandmother and two friends who did not drive and took them to the polls. They were all bond supporters. Another husband and wife drove to three different polling locations until they found the correct one. They arrived just 10 minutes before the polls closed. They were bond supporters.

Right there are seven votes. If those voters had decided that day "it's not worth it" or "my vote won't really matter," the bond would have failed. I'm sure there are many more stories of voters whose efforts made a difference that day.

As we look forward to 2015, this issue of *Feed•Lot* focuses on many issues cattlemen are facing. Several of those have national and international implications. It's important that we vote for ag-friendly legislators that understand how these issues affect our business and the nationwide food supply.

This time, I know my vote counted. 



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MEET THE PRESIDENT

In February, Philip Ellis will take the reins as president of NCBA. Ellis is a fifth-generation rancher who stewards a family business and range resources that his ancestors settled on Bear Creek in southeast Wyoming in the 1880s.



Currently the majority owner and managing member of Marsh and Ellis Ranch, LLC., he has grown the operation and evolved from a Hereford seedstock and summer yearling operation to a commercial cow/calf and stocker operation over the last 20 years.

“Our family history dates back to the open range days,” he said. “We’ve always had a real strong family orientation on the ranch, and that’s part of why I wanted to be active in the leadership of NCBA. I want to see all ranching families be successful.”

The first in his family to volunteer into leadership of state and national cattle organizations, Ellis’ family always supported livestock associations. “I wanted to get involved. I can’t just sit still when I see

there are issues, misunderstandings and problems that we need to work together to solve.”

Ellis began volunteering in the cattle industry more than 30 years ago, starting with Laramie County Stock Growers Association.

He has been active in the Wyoming Stock Growers Association where he has served on committees and as committee chairman. Ellis was elected WSGA Second Vice President from 1996 to 1998, served as First Vice President from 2001 to 2003, and then President from 2003 to 2005.

As a WSGA officer, Ellis served on the NCBA Board of Directors from 2001 through 2005 and became active on the Ag Policy Committee, where he continues to serve as a member. He has also served as NCBA’s Region V Vice President of the Policy Division and on the NCBA Executive Committee.

Ellis believes cattlemen need to come together to work on issues facing the industry. “Just like when neighbors come together for spring

branding or fall weaning, we get together to get our work done.”

He sees his leadership position will allow him to focus on what he calls the “three Ts: trade, taxes and transportation.

He also hopes to work in the research and promotion side of NCBA. “I’m constantly trying to understand the millennial consumer. I have two daughters and six nieces and nephews. One lives on the ranch, but the others are suburban dwellers. I want to make sure we understand their generation. There are a lot of misunderstandings out there, and we need to communicate with them and answer their questions about beef. We have a story to tell, and we need to keep telling it.”

Ellis is a graduate of the University of Wyoming. Before returning to the ranch full time in 1987, he worked as a farm and ranch lender in Cheyenne, Wyo., for several years. He currently serves as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Oregon Trail Bank and Chairman of the Chugwater Valley Church Council. **FL**



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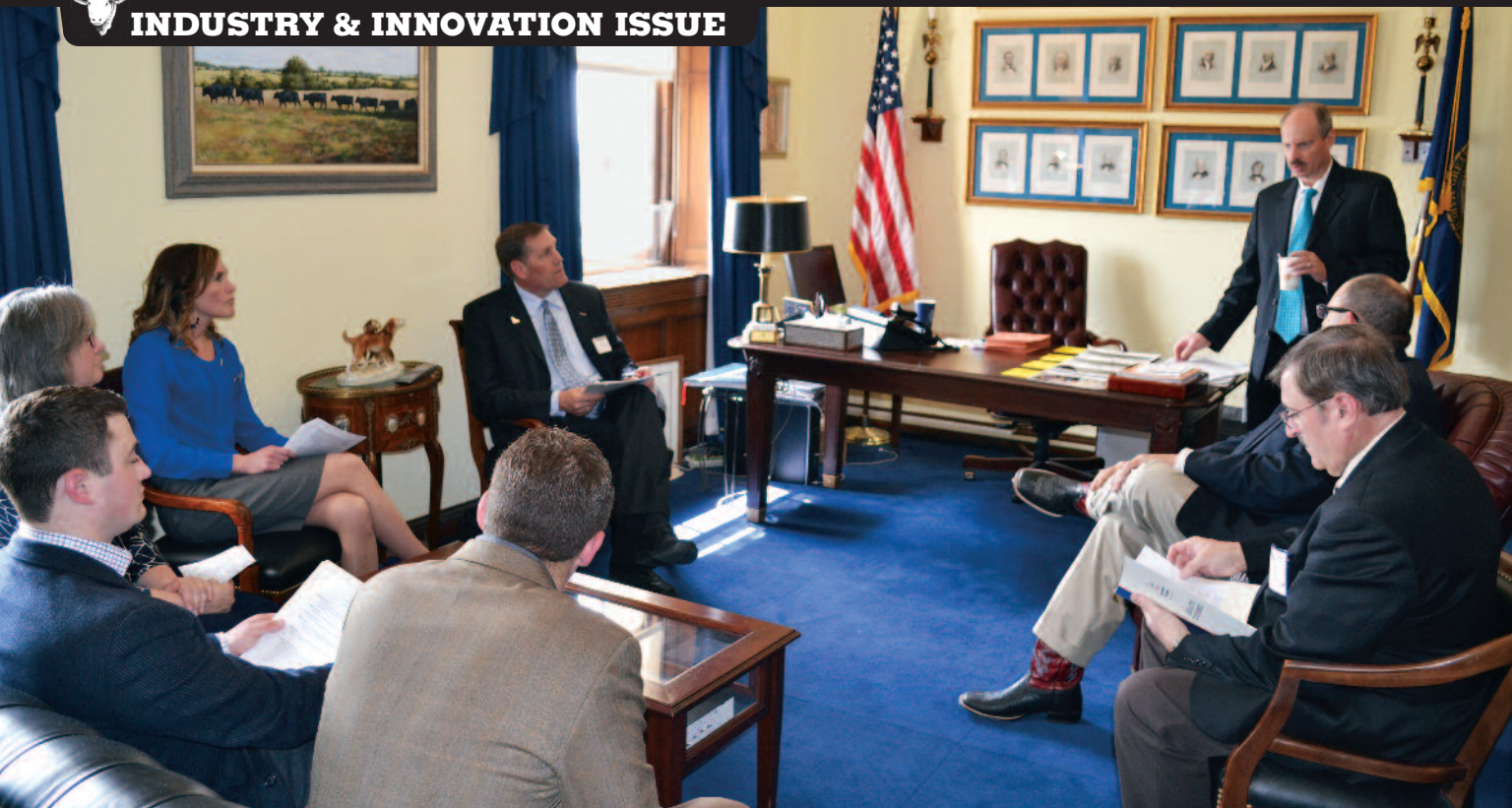
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WHAT NOW?

The Outlook For Beef's Top Issues In 2015

BY TERRY QUECK-MATZIE

The mid-term elections are over. Across the country citizens and industry forces are assessing the benefits and damage. For beef industry insiders, a Republican-controlled Senate is just what they hoped for.

“It certainly should make a lot of things easier,” says NCBA Vice President of Government Affairs Colin Woodall, starting with fending off a threat of a second check-off from the administration. In what Woodall describes as a “knee-jerk reaction to one group,” the USDA is advocating its own version. Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack has proposed using the 1996 Commodity Promotion, Research and Information Act to create a separate and parallel government-run check-off program.

The move came after the National Farmer’s Union, historically closely aligned with Vilsack and the current administration, withdrew

from an 11-member working group gathered to make changes to the current NCBA-managed check-off program.

An independent study by Cornell University shows every dollar invested in the program yields an \$11.20 return. But with the beef herd at an all-time low and a dollar not stretching nearly as far as it used to, check-off resources are low. That prompted the working group to assess the program and look at changes. The NFU grew weary of little progress on that front.

But nearly 78 percent of producers say they support the current program and are not in favor of a USDA twin. No one has made clear how end services will differ. “They’re very aware that a new program would also come with administrative costs,” says Woodall. The backlash has come from the grassroots and has been severe. The state

organizations have weighed in, and the comment period proves to be flooded with response. Woodall advocates cattlemen writing and calling their congressmen directly.

“Those in Congress and the Administration can’t just blow this off,” he says. “It’s pretty serious. They’re looking to waste producers’ money and we can’t just stand back and let them do it.”

Water and the EPA

Keeping the Environmental Protection Agency from implementing its proposed Waters of the U.S. agenda is hopefully another advantage to the change in the political picture, according to Woodall. “Again, you just have to scratch your head in wonder at their moving forward in the face of such broad-based opposition.”

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WHAT NOW?... from previous page

closed November 14 with a flood of input, and at least 30 Democrat legislators have also expressed concern. "They saw the proposal was out of hand," says Woodall. He's hoping there will now at least be enough votes to defund the effort if not outright stop it. "The reality is, Republicans are much more likely to stop the EPA."

He says at this point in the process, he doesn't see an available compromise. "We've looked at this from every angle, and quite frankly, there's nothing in the rule that can be fixed."

Woodall says the underlying problem is the failure to see the unique circumstances of farming and ranching. "They lump everyone together. They don't understand what we do. That's why the process needs to start again from scratch, and include those unique concerns."

He says with every puddle, pond, and stream on the farm potentially

affected, there is no way to put a dollar estimate on the cost of implementation. But it would likely be massive.

Again, he urges producers to contact their elected representatives. "It's going to be up to Congress to stop this, and they need to hear from their constituents."

And then, there's COOL

"COOL is like prohibition," says Woodall. "They thought they were able to do it at the time because the political climate supported it. But it didn't work. There are too many unintended consequences."

Implemented six years ago, Country of Origin Labeling was intended to pacify the consumer concerned about the source of their food. It was included in the 2002 Farm Bill, but the industry fought implementation. Finally, the 2008 Farm Bill put the measure in place. "But it doesn't work," says Woodall. "It's just added cost, and now, the retaliation starts."

The backlash on the measure hasn't come from just the American public. The World Trade Organization has consistently and repeatedly ruled against it, citing its interference with free trade. And Canada and Mexico have threatened sanctions if the U.S. proceeds.

Beef is at the heart of that response, with beef producers over both borders seeing themselves at a serious disadvantage in their competition with U.S. producers. A Kansas State University study backed up that theory, showing "additional costs that come with the more precise tracking and segregating built into what U.S. feedyards and packing plants are willing and able to pay for animals not born in the United States."

But not everyone thinks it's a bad deal. In a statement issued by the NFU, the group's president Roger Johnson stated, "COOL became the law of the land because consumers want to know where their food comes from and ranchers and farmers are happy to provide that information. Congress understood this basic need and passed this common-sense law. We urge the multinational meat industry to drop the senseless litigation and allow the law to be enforced."

And in November, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia ruled COOL does not violate the First Amendment.

The WTO issued its latest decision against COOL October 20, and the government has 60 days to appeal. Woodall has little doubt that will happen. Then the WTO will take possibly several months to act on the appeal. He says a decision could come anytime next summer or fall. "Then there's nothing we can do but prepare for retaliation." Both Canada and Mexico have issued a lengthy list of products it will ban from importation.

"That could start in 2016," says Woodall. "This just doesn't make any sense."

In the mean time...

The definition of free trade is at the heart of an immediate issue for

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U.S. farmers and ranchers – the importation of cattle from Brazil and Argentina. “There’s nothing protectionist against trade in our stance on this,” says Woodall. “It’s a matter of animal health.”

Foot-and-mouth disease first came to this country on a steamboat from Argentina in 1929. Since then, the U.S. has made great strides in eradicating the disease. Recent cases in South America, and questions about Brazil and Argentina’s diligence in their vaccination programs have once again brought the issue to the forefront.

“The problem is the government’s failure to follow the proper processes,” explains Woodall, who says the USDA claims to have made site visits, but has failed to produce reports. What reports do exist are in Portuguese and Spanish, with no translated versions available. Yet the USDA cites their contents.

“How can you claim there’s no risk if you can’t produce the documentation?” asks Woodall.

With 171 million head of cattle, Brazil is poised to become the largest beef exporter in the world. Argentina ranks about seventh. CattleFax puts the dollar value of international trade access at \$300 per market head.

“These are no small issues,” says Woodall, “But we just can’t afford to put our herd in danger. And the USDA has decided to move forward without documentation. The risk is way too great for that.”

The year ahead

Woodall says the NCBA’s real frustration with these issues is the lack of progress. “Six months from now we’ll still be working on the same issues we’ve been working on for three years.” Added to that, the last two years of any administrations are typically what Woodall describes as “hurry up and get mode.”

His biggest fear is from COOL to the EPA, they may end up spending time and money on litigation, causing the NCBA to invest a minimum of half a million dollars in legal action. “That’s money we could be

using for trade promotion, market access issues, and meeting other challenges of the industry.”

The NCBA will continue to put its efforts toward educating legislators and their staff. “America’s cattle producers need a stable and predictable regulatory and tax framework,” says Woodall, “and that is our message to those making decisions for our nation, regardless

of who is in the White House.”

Woodall adds the real solutions lie, like most things, in the grassroots of the farm and ranch. “It’s imperative every producer become engaged. Join your local and state organizations. Go to town hall meetings. It’s important for our leaders to hear from people back home. You can’t just worry about your own operation any more.” **FL**



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The Dust is Settling

BY BOB MCCAN, NCBA PRESIDENT

With the general election behind us, it looks like the landscape for cattlemen and women may have shifted in our favor. With both expected and unexpected victories and a few still up in air, one thing is apparent: your contributions to the NCBA PAC helped to shape this election and will keep our priorities in front of the new Congress. Building on the success of past cycles, the NCBA PAC set an ambitious goal of raising \$1.25 million dollars this election cycle. And

with nearly two months left in this cycle, we are very close to topping the \$1 million mark. That is a major milestone and I would encourage you to make an NCBA PAC contribution yet this year.

Unchanged by the outcome of the elections, there is still work we need Congress to do in the current lame duck session. We know many in Congress see the need to clear the backlog and allow the 114th Congress to start with a clean slate. Specifically, we need this Congress



to address key tax issues, including extending Section 179 expensing and bonus depreciation, with enough time left to allow producers to adequately plan for the tax year and make needed investments. We need Congress to grant the President Trade Promotion Authority, sending our trade partners a clear signal that we are serious about these agreements and we will act quickly to seize opportunities. We also need this Congress to



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send a clear signal to the USDA and the Administration, that producers do not want greater government involvement in their Beef Checkoff.

When the 114th Congress is seated in January, we expect for the first time in a number of years, they will be able to take up a number of legislative priorities that will help not only our industry, but business and commerce nationwide. Specifically, we are looking to the Hill to give much needed direction to the EPA on their misguided "waters of the United States" rule. We expect trade to remain top of mind, with hope that many pending trade agreements will see resolution. Congress has taken tax provisions piecemeal, addressing expiring provisions and kicking larger issues down the road. But long term stability and a pro-business tax code is desperately needed to address current issues and spur real economic growth. We all know how important sound and viable interstate transportation and international hubs are to our ability to bring cattle and beef to market and sustain our ever increasing export markets. We need Congress to address outdated transportation laws and put in place rules that encourage safe and efficient transportation.

We look forward to working with this Congress to address key issues before the end of the year and we look forward to working with the next Congress, educating new members on the cattle industry and tackling legislative issues that will encourage growth and innovation. **FL**



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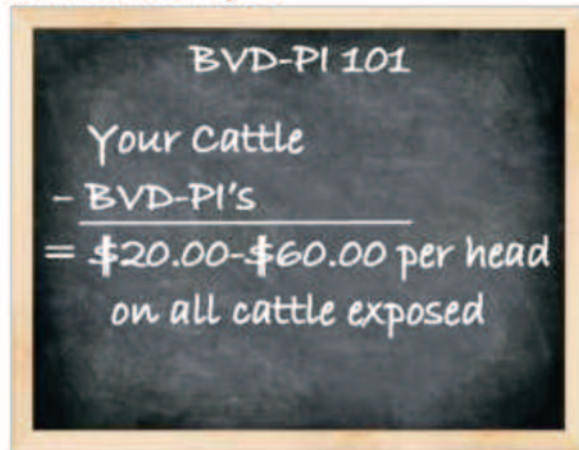
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Know The Facts About Pooling

Understand the risks with pooling for BVD testing

As cattlemen choose to test for PI-BVDV, it's important that best practice protocols are followed to insure the quality of the sample tested. Taking steps to insure samples are preserved appropriately and shipped quickly are all the responsibility of the person submitting the ear notches. And most cattlemen would assume their responsibilities end there.

Or do they? Research in the last few years shows that not all BVD testing is created equal. Different types of tests are available, and some tests are conducted on individual samples, while others are pooled together in groups, and the groups are then tested. This "pooling" is raising concerns among several in the industry.

What is pooling?

Simply stated, pooling is where eight to 10 samples (for Antigen Capture Elisa or ACE testing) or up to 25 samples (for PCR testing) are put in one test well. If

the test result is negative, then one would assume all samples in the well are negative. If the test is positive, then each sample is retested individually to identify which sample in the pool is positive.

Testing by pooling samples is less expensive because a single test is run on several samples, as opposed to a test run on each, individual sample. Pooling is effective in testing for diseases that have a high prevalence.

The logic behind pooling is simple, and one would assume that a single positive animal in a pool would cause the entire pool to test positive. However, Bill Hessman, DVM, with Central States Testing says that's not always the case. When testing for a disease where the prevalence rate is low, it may not be your best option.

"We explored pooling with ACE testing years ago. At that time, we accidentally came across a case where we pooled, and the test missed a sample that we knew was positive," he said. "We did a lot of work to see how that happened, how the positive sample was masked by a single negative sample in the group."

That led to further research by Hessman and others to identify the accuracy of pooling in BVD testing.

Pooling studies

A peer-reviewed study released in The Bovine Practitioner evaluated outcomes between pooled PCR and single sample ACE testing. Authored by Brendan Kraus, DVM, et al., the test monitored 2,424 calves. Samples sent to "Lab A" were tested using the pooled PCR test. Four samples (0.165%) were found to be positive. Duplicate samples were sent to "Lab B" which used single sample ACE testing. There, the same four calves tested positive, as did eight additional calves for a total of 12 positives (0.495%).

One to two months later, new specimens from the same calves – both serum and ear notches – were obtained from the surviving calves and sent to Oklahoma State University. There, OSU labs confirmed the specimens were positive for PI-BVDV.

"In this case, a pooled PCR test did not identify 67% of the PI-positive calves that were sampled," Hessman said.

Another research summary written by Julia Ridpath, Research Microbiologist with the National Animal Disease Center, USDA, and others states "the concentration range of virus in ear notch extractions and the detection limits of real-time PCR suggest that pooling of samples in surveillance programs must be



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approached cautiously.”

The study further states, “Pooling of 10 samples, where a sample pool includes one positive and nine negative samples, could result in the failure to detect 10% of the samples in the study. Pooling of 100 samples, where the sample pool includes one positive and 99 negative samples, could result in failure to detect over 50% of the samples used in this study.”

Dr. Hessman said he is not sure what is causing the false negative results, but it is important cattlemen understand how pooling works and the risks with using pooling in BVD testing. “There have been several papers on clinical research saying we can pool samples together and find the positives. But there are also several papers that show pooling will produce false negatives.

“There are multiple indications that pooling, whether using the ACE or PCR testing, will decrease the accuracy of the test,” he said. “Cattlemen don’t want to have to understand the scientific reasoning behind it, and they shouldn’t have to. But they should know the risks you take when you elect to test by pooling.”

Pooling has gained in popularity due to the decrease in cost with pooling samples, compared to the cost of testing each sample individually. However, Hessman questions if saving a few dollars is worth it when pooling may not provide accurate results.

“Do you want a percentage of positives to fall through the cracks?” he asked. With the idea of BVD testing to identify and remove all PI animals, leaving a single, positive PI calf in a herd negates the money spent on testing.

Either you identified and got rid of all of them, or you didn’t, Hessman said. It’s a risk benefit analysis that a producer has to consider. How much is that one remaining PI going to hurt you if you miss it? **FL**



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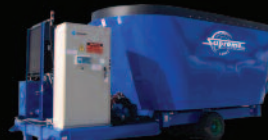
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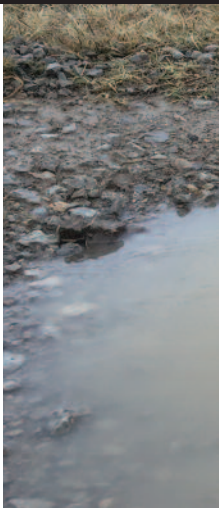




Regulatory Q&A

Q I keep reading and hearing about the EPA WOTUS Proposal. What is it all about?

A Simply put, EPA's "Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) proposal is more of the "Tyranny of Bureaucracy" in the form of "Regulatory Over-Reach."



At the outset, the Clean Water Act (CWA) represented authority only over "Navigable Waters." This of course was not enough authority for EPA so they set about massaging the rules to extend authority over virtually all streams that could float a toothpick, morphing coverage to "Waters of the U.S."

In agriculture, EPA has authority to regulate discharges from confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs). There are relatively few discharges from CAFOs in the U.S. and very little impact on water quality. Even so, EPA chose not to engage with the agricultural community employing sound science and common sense to elevate runoff control performance of CAFOs.

Instead, they have employed heavy handed bureaucracy, requiring all CAFOs over 1,000 animal units to have a discharge permit. The CWA is very clear that facilities which discharge are required to obtain a permit from EPA. For well over three decades, however, EPA imposed a requirement to obtain a permit on all large CAFOs. When a Federal Appeals Court finally recognized this abuse of authority in 2005, the Court essentially ordered EPA to "cease and desist" requiring a permit of facilities without a discharge.

Unfortunately, by that time there were thousands of CAFOs who had been duped into procuring an EPA Permit (it is estimated that 70% or more of those have no discharge). All CAFO permits now also impose

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¹KEYSER ET AL., 2007. J. ANIM. SCI. 85: 1254-1273.



exacting and expensive requirements for nutrient utilization planning and reporting. Most of those permits are still in force in spite of the Appeals Court Order. No wonder everyone who understands how EPA operates is distrustful of their WOTUS proposal which appears to expand their authority to the puddles in your driveway and many other locations not remotely related to the Navigable Waters in the original CWA?

The U.S. House has passed legislation blocking this act of Bureaucratic Over-Reach. It won't go into force, however, unless we achieve companion legislation in the Senate. **FL**

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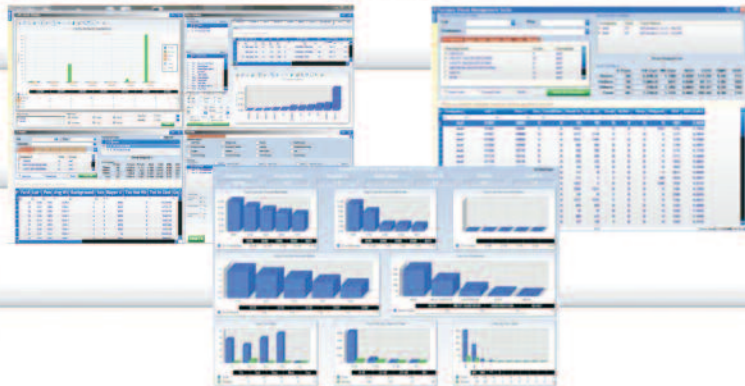
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TAX SAVINGS FOR DROUGHT-RELATED SALES

Ordinarily livestock that are sold on account of drought must be replaced within a four-year period in order to qualify for the tax breaks associated with forced sales. The Internal Revenue Service recently announced that farmers and ranchers who previously were forced to sell livestock due to drought, have been given a one-year extension in which to replace the livestock and

defer tax on any gains that resulted from the forced sales.

According to the IRS, the extension applies to the capital gains realized by farmers and ranchers on drought-related sales of livestock held for draft, dairy or breeding purposes. Unfortunately, sales of other livestock, such as those raised for slaughter, held for sporting purposes or sales of poultry are

not eligible for tax relief.

Under our federal tax rules, Section 1033 generally allows the non-recognition of gain whenever any property is involuntarily converted and replaced with property that is similar or related in service or use. In general, the Section 1033 rules provide that gain from an involuntary conversion is recognized only to the extent the amount realized on the conversion exceeds the cost of replacement property purchased during the replacement period.

The Section 1033, "like-kind" rules state that a sale or exchange of livestock (other than poultry) held by a taxpayer for draft, breeding, or dairy purposes in excess of the number that would be sold following the taxpayer's usual business practices is treated as an involuntary conversion if the livestock is sold or exchanged solely on account of drought, flood, or other weather-related conditions.

If a sale or exchange of livestock is treated as an involuntary conversion and is solely the result of drought, flood, or other weather-related conditions in an area being designated as eligible for assistance by the federal government, the replacement period ends four years after the close of the first taxable year in which any part of the gain from the conversion is realized. Those same rules allow the Secretary of the Treasury to extend this replacement period on a regional basis.

In this situation, relief is available

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for any farmer or rancher located in a county, parish, city, borough, census area or district, listed as suffering exceptional, extreme or severe drought conditions by the National Drought Mitigation Center (NDMC), during any weekly period between September 1, 2013, and August 31, 2014. All or part of 30 states are listed although any county contiguous to a county listed by the NDMC will also qualify for relief.

In most cases, farmers and ranchers in these areas, whose drought sale replacement period was scheduled to expire on December 31, 2014, now have until the end of their next tax year. Because the normal drought sale replacement period is four years, this extension immediately impacts drought sales that occurred during 2010. But because of previous drought-related extensions affecting some of these localities, the replacement periods for some

drought sales before 2010 are also affected. Additional extensions will be granted if severe drought conditions persist.

Determining whether exceptional, extreme or severe drought has been reported for any given location within a region can be determined by referring to the U.S. Drought Monitor maps produced on a weekly basis by the National Drought Mitigation Center (<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu>). The IRS has also issued guidance on this relief that contains the list of counties for which exceptional, extreme or severe drought was reported during the 12-month period ending August 31, 2014. The IRS's guidance also contains the list of counties for which exceptional, extreme or severe drought was reported during the 12-month period ending August 31, 2014.

Bottom-line, farmers and ranchers forced to sell livestock due to the drought now have an extended

period of time in which to replace their livestock and defer tax on any gains that resulted from those sales. **FL**

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APHIS RULE PROPOSAL COULD DEVASTATE AMERICAN CATTLE HERD

BY PETE BONDS, PRESIDENT OF TSCRA

Following is a guest editorial by Pete Bonds, President of Texas & Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association (TSCRA).

On Aug. 29, 2014, the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) published a rule proposal in the federal register that would allow the importation of live cattle and fresh or frozen beef from Northern Argentina.

APHIS would accomplish this by adding the Patagonia areas of Argentina to the list of regions considered free of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD).

TSCRA is deeply concerned with this proposal. FMD is a severe and highly contagious viral disease of cows, pigs, sheep, goats, deer and other animals with divided hooves. It is considered to be one of the most economically devastating livestock diseases in the world and poses a significant risk to not only our country's cattle herd, but also our national food security. FMD could also cost our industry hundreds of millions of dollars.

I am extremely worried if FMD comes into the cattle herds, especially in Texas with the high population of feral hogs, we could see an unstoppable outbreak of the disease. Pigs are more susceptible to the disease than cattle, and with feral hogs being a problem in most of the state, the disease could spread throughout the country.

Also, if an FMD outbreak were to occur in the U.S., I am afraid we wouldn't have the ability or

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amount of vaccine needed to control the disease.

APHIS conducted their risk analysis based on a series of site visits to Argentina to determine the FMD risk status. TSCRA and other cattle industry groups requested written reports for these visits; however, APHIS informed us that written documentation wasn't required for their site reviews. The lack of documentation makes me question their transparency and ability to conduct an accurate and thorough review.

A third party scientific review team from the University of Minnesota (UMN) College of Veterinary Medicine objectively reviewed the APHIS risk analysis.

The U.S. doesn't recognize northern Argentina as being FMD free, because vaccination against FMD is currently taking place in the export region.

The review team acknowledged limited or lacking methodological approaches in performing the risk assessment and poorly defined scope regarding the specific animal types and products for the risk assessment. There was also a lack of sufficient detail for geographical landmarks outlining the Patagonia region in the risk analysis and maps lacking the necessary level of detail to be useful.

APHIS believes the export region in northern Argentina is FMD free because the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) recognizes the region as "FMD free with vaccination being practiced."

However, I disagree. In fact, the U.S. doesn't recognize northern Argentina as being FMD free, because vaccination against FMD is currently taking place in the export region.

Additionally, northern Argentina's extensive border exposure to multiple countries, such as Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay and Brazil, which are not recognized in the U.S. Code of Federal



Pete Bonds

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APHIS rule... from previous page

Regulations (CFR) as FMD free, poses a major risk for the reintroduction of FMD into the export region. The large border area is difficult to control and Argentina has acknowledged that smuggling does occur at the borders.

TSCRA is also very concerned about Argentina's trend of compliance problems and deficiencies with routine USDA and European Commission food safety audits for Argentina.

While TSCRA supports open

trade markets, we must always make certain the foreign countries we are importing beef from have proper animal health and food safety protocols in place. They must also have a proven history of being able to control foreign animal diseases such as FMD. TSCRA believes these protocols should be substantiated by sound, scientific evidence.

Simply put, I don't believe Argentina can meet these critical standards in order to keep FMD out of the country.

TSCRA will be submitting comments expressing concern with the rule, and you can do the same by visiting www.regulations.gov and typing into the search screen, APHIS-2014-0032-0131. The deadline for submitting comments is Dec. 29, 2014.

It is important for you as cattle ranchers to voice your opposition to the APHIS rule proposal. If implemented, this rule could pose a major threat to your cattle herds and detrimentally affect your business.

Protecting the U.S. cattle industry from a catastrophic animal disease, such as FMD, is a major priority for TSCRA. We will closely watch this rule proposal and do everything possible to block implementation so we can continue producing a safe and healthy beef supply worldwide.

Pete Bonds has ranched his entire life. He operates the Bonds Ranch in Saginaw, Texas, where he also lives. Bonds currently serves as the president of the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association. He and his wife Jo have 3 daughters, Missy, Bonnie and April.



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Groups urge Congress to act on tax extenders

A number of agricultural groups including NCBA sent a letter to House and Senate leadership urging both houses to act on expired tax policies before the end of the year. NCBA President Bob McCan says this is a vital issue not just for agriculture, but for all businesses.

"Producers rely on a stable and predictable tax code in order to plan purchases, make investments and grow their business," said McCan. "We are already at the eleventh hour for tax planning, and it is incredibly important that Congress pass these extenders as quickly as possible."

Specifically, the letter asked Congress to focus on Section 179 small business expensing and bonus depreciation. These provisions allow businesses to maximize investments in years where they have positive cash flow, by taking a greater depreciation

amount upfront rather than follow the standard schedule. Set at \$500,000 in 2013, the maximum

amount a small business can currently deduct under Section 179 is \$25,000. **FL**



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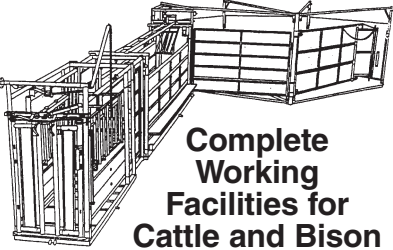
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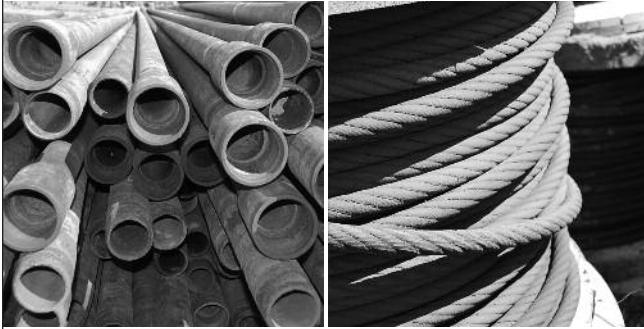
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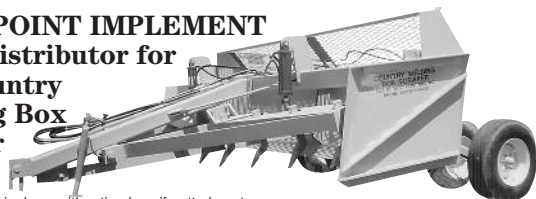


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