

# BEEF BUSINESS

by Shauna Hermel, editor, Angus Beef Bulletin

*In this month's "Beef Business," we present some legislative wins affecting beef cattle producers.*

## PRICE Act introduced

Introduced by Rep. Dusty Johnson (R-S.D.) and bipartisan cosponsors, the *Price Reform in Cattle Economics (PRICE) Act* introduced Oct. 1 addresses several areas of critical importance for cattle producers across the United States. Included in the bill are existing legislative proposals to open new markets for state-inspected beef products, such as the *Direct Interstate Retail Exemption for Certain Transactions (DIRECT) Act*, and new provisions to aid producer-owned beef processing facilities and increase transparency in fed-cattle transactions.

"The Tyson fire in Holcomb, Kansas, and the supply chain disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have brought the issues of price transparency in the cattle markets and beef processing capacity to a boiling point within our industry," said Ethan Lane, vice president of government affairs for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA). "This legislation is a significant step in the right direction as we continue to explore ways to support producers who have been impacted by two major black swan events in an already volatile cattle market."

The bill is cosponsored by Reps. Mike Conaway (R-Texas), Darren Soto (D-Fla.), Glenn "GT" Thompson (R-Pa.), Roger Marshall (R-Kan.), Henry Cuellar (D-Texas), Frank Lucas (R-Okla.), Greg Gianforte (R-Mont.),

David Rouzer (R-N.C.), Rick Crawford (R-Ark.), Jason Smith (R-Mo.), Tom Emmer (R-Minn.), and Jim Hagedorn (R-Minn.). A section-by-section analysis exploring provisions of the bill can be accessed at <https://dustyjohnson.house.gov/price-act-section-section>.

## Protecting calves from vultures

The House of Representatives on Oct. 1 passed bipartisan legislation to protect livestock from predation, compensate livestock producers who experience depredation by federally protected species, and fund methods to reduce conflicts between humans and predators.

Introduced by Senate Environment and Public Works Chairman John Barrasso (R-Wyo.) and Ranking Member Tom Carper (D-Del.), the *America's Conservation Enhancement (ACE) Act* contains a number of provisions designed to address effects wildlife and wildlife management can have on livestock production.

One such provision provides depredation payments for livestock producers who experience livestock losses caused by federally protected species, while also authorizing funding for producers to carry out non-lethal deterrence activities, shared NCBA and the Public Lands Council (PLC) in a joint statement. These are both activities previously funded primarily by affected states, despite the federal protections for

animals causing the predation. PLC and NCBA have worked with Congress and federal agencies to provide relief to states and producers through improvements to federal regulations and through compensation programs, and the ACE Act provides relief in both ways.

"Livestock producers and states face significant burdens when the federal government implements protections for species without any support for the economic and natural resource impacts their decisions can have," said PLC Executive Director and NCBA Executive Director of Natural Resources Kaitlynn Glover. "This is something PLC and NCBA have urged Congress to recognize for years, so this relief comes at a time when producers are contending with losses from multiple events."

Glover applauded the establishment of a specific depredation permitting structure for producers who have experienced losses due to common raven and black vulture depredation specifically.

"Most of these losses occur during calving and lambing season, with producers experiencing tens of thousands of dollars in losses in any given year," she said. "It is imperative that producers have commonsense tools to protect their livestock, their financial security and local wildlife populations."

The ACE Act also includes funding to improve invasive species control and prevention efforts, a provision

designed to develop innovative ways to reduce human-predator conflict, and establishes a task force to address prevailing concerns about chronic wasting disease (CWD) that occurs in cervids like deer, moose and elk. The bill now awaits signature by President Trump.

## New animal rights angle

World Animal Protection (WAP) is taking animal rights efforts beyond Meatless Monday, reports Lisa Keefe on *meatingplace.com*. The United Kingdom (UK)-based group has launched a “Meating Halfway” campaign, promoting the idea of reducing weekly meat protein consumption in half.

## Assistance after hurricanes

The Louisiana Cattlemen’s Association (LCA), in cooperation with the NCBA, worked closely with USDA to ensure cattle producers in the state of Louisiana have access to needed disaster resources.

“It was a major victory to have mosquito death loss included in the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP). Through our coordination with NCBA and USDA, Louisiana producers who dealt with crippling death loss due to the onslaught of mosquitoes now have some protection,” said Dusty Pendergrass, LCA executive vice president. “In order to fit the requirements of LIP, the animal must have been lost within 30 days of the weather event. We already know of roughly 200 head [that] were lost to the mosquito bloom in September.”

At present, there are several programs that may help provide relief from losses incurred as a result of this year’s devastation. Local USDA

Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices can provide specific information about qualification and application for relief.

LCA and NCBA will continue to work to provide relief and funding for producers in the weeks and months ahead, and there are some programs already available. Those programs include:

- **Emergency Conservation Program** — Provides cost-share at 75% to remove storm debris, repair fences, and repair conservation practices.
- **Livestock indemnity program** — Pays for cattle that died due to the storm or were injured and sold at a loss.
- **Emergency livestock assistance program** — Pays for feed or hay when grazing was lost.
- **Emergency loans** — Producers who have questions about these

programs are encouraged to contact their local FSA office or the LCA office at 225-343-3491. USDA has compiled additional resources at <https://www.usda.gov/topics/disaster>.

## Nobel Prize

On Oct. 7, the scientists who invented the “CRISPR/Cas9 genetic scissors” technology were awarded the Nobel Prize. The National Pork Producers Council used the news to restate its position “the continued regulatory land grab by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in claiming jurisdiction over gene-edited livestock has caused American agriculture to fall behind in the global race to develop this technology as countries such as China continue to advance its development.” <sup>AJ</sup>

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