



Beef Business

► A look at current events affecting the cattle industry

Canada releases BSE details

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) released details March 8 regarding the investigation into Alberta's latest case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), the Canadian Press (CP) reported.

The CFIA reported the affected animal was a bull born in 2000 — after implementation of the 1997 feed ban — and the animal did not enter the food chain, CP stated. At press time, the investigation into the area's ninth BSE case was almost complete.

Panel recommends BSE rating change

A World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) panel has recommended the U.S. and Canada be given a favorable rating on BSE safety, *Dow Jones* reported.

According to the article, the organization is proposing both countries get a "controlled" risk rating for the handling of BSE. The OIE will meet in May for its annual general session, where members will approve

or disapprove rating categories being proposed for several countries, including the U.S. and Canada.

CFIA responds to contaminated feed

The CFIA in early March placed precautionary movement restrictions on cattle from nine farms in Saskatchewan because they received feed that did not meet Canada's current feed ban requirements. The CFIA reported that no food safety risk is associated with meat and other products from the exposed animals.

According to the agency, the contamination occurred when misidentified ruminant meat-and-bone meal was distributed from a processor to feedmills. The meat-and-bone meal was subsequently included as an ingredient in certain ruminant animal feeds, which is not permitted under Canada's feed ban. The CFIA was notified by the processor and mills once the error was detected, and an investigation was immediately initiated.

TB confirmed in New Mexico

A case of bovine tuberculosis (TB) was confirmed in Eddy County, N.M., in early March, according to officials at the New Mexico Livestock Board (NMLB).

The disease was discovered in an infected dairy cow during routine testing conducted at a harvesting facility. NMLB and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) have launched an investigation, and State Veterinarian Dave Fly said all appropriate measures have been taken to ensure public health and livestock safety.

At press time, a beef herd in northeastern New Mexico was under surveillance for possible exposure to TB. NMLB reports the last case of TB in the state was more than two years ago.

Scientists define pathogen language

An international group of scientists, funded in part by the USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES), has expanded the universal language for the genes of both pathogenic and beneficial microbes and their hosts. This expanded "lingua franca," called gene ontology (GO), gives researchers a common set of terms they can use to describe the interactions between a microbe and its host.

This new "common terminology" will speed development of new technologies for preventing infections by disease-causing microbes, while preserving or encouraging the presence of beneficial microbes. According to the USDA release, scientists say gene ontology will provide a powerful tool for comparing the functions of genes and proteins in a wide range of disease-related organisms.

Red meat production at record high in 2006

Total red meat production for the United States — including beef, veal, pork, lamb and mutton — totaled 47.7 billion pounds (lb.) in 2006, 4% higher than the previous year, according to USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). Red meat production in commercial plants totaled 47.5 billion lb. On-farm production totaled 139 million lb.

U.S. cattle on feed down 3%

Cattle and calves on feed for harvest in the United States for feedlots with capacities of 1,000 or more head totaled 11.7 million head Feb. 1, 2007. The inventory was 3% below Feb. 1, 2006, figures but 3% above Feb. 1, 2005.

Placements in feedlots during January totaled 1.69 million, 23% below 2006 figures and 10% below 2005. Net placements were 1.59 million head. This is the second-lowest placements for the month of January since the series began in 1996.

Marketings of fed cattle during January totaled 1.84 million, up 2% from 2006 and up 4% from 2005 figures. Other disappearance totaled 97,000 head during January, 17% above 2006 figures, and 33% above 2005.

Table 1: No. of cattle on feed, placements, marketings and other disappearance, 1,000+-head-capacity U.S. feedlots, Feb. 1, 2005-2007

	No. of head (1,000 head)			2007 as % of	
	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006
On feed Jan. 1 ^a	11,299	11,804	11,974	106	101
Placed on feed during Jan.	1,888	2,199	1,690	90	77
Fed cattle marketed during Jan.	1,772	1,810	1,841	104	102
Other disappearance during Jan. ^b	73	83	97	133	117
On feed Feb. 1 ^a	11,342	12,110	11,726	103	97

^aCattle and calves on feed are animals for harvest being fed a ration of grain or other concentrates and are expected to produce a carcass that will grade USDA Select or better.

^bIncludes death loss, movement from feedlots to pasture and shipments to other feedlots for further feeding.

Source: National Agricultural Statistics Service.

Beef production totaled 26.3 billion lb., up 6% from the previous year. Veal production totaled 155 million lb., down 6% from last year. Pork production, at 21.1 billion lb., was 2% above the previous year. Lamb and mutton production totaled 190 million lb., down 1% from 2005.

Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska and Texas accounted for 52% of the United States commercial red meat production in 2006, similar to 2005.

Checkoff report debuts

The Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board (CBB) released its new research annual report, titled "Creating Opportunity with Knowledge." The report details the history of the beef checkoff and its benchmark discoveries gained during the past 20 years.

To view this report online or for more information on other checkoff-funded research, visit www.beefresearch.org or call (303) 694-0305.

USDA releases GIPSA report

USDA's Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) released the "GIPSA Livestock and Meat Marketing Study" mid-February. The study, by RTI International, reports on the use and effects of marketing arrangements in the livestock and meat industries.

According to USDA, overall, the report — mandated by Congress in 2003 — found that alternative marketing arrangements (AMAs) increase the economic efficiency of the cattle, hog and lamb markets, and that these economic benefits are distributed to consumers, as well as to producers and packers who use AMAs.

AMAs are methods by which livestock and meat are transferred through successive stages of production and marketing. They include forward contracting, packer ownership and marketing agreements.

The interim and final reports, including peer reviewers' comments, and additional information about the study are available on GIPSA's web site, www.gipsa.usda.gov, by following the "Marketing Study" link.

Washington Watch



Superfund legislation introduced

Legislation was introduced March 8 to clarify that livestock manure is not a hazardous substance under Superfund laws, according to the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA).

In recent years, some have suggested Superfund laws — the common name for the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) of 1980, and Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Act (EPCRA) of 1986 — should be applied to manure from animal feeding, farming and ranching operations.

However, eight senators and 58 House leaders from both political parties have stated Congress never intended for America's farms and ranches to be slapped with liabilities and penalties under the Superfund law, NCBA reports.



Livestock markets legislation introduced

Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) mid-February introduced legislation aimed at correcting "deficiencies" in the USDA's enforcement of agricultural markets. Known as the Competitive and Fair Agricultural Markets Act, the bill would reorganize and streamline USDA while establishing an Office of Special Counsel, whose sole responsibility would be to investigate and prosecute violations on competition matters. Harkin stated in a release that the position, which would also serve as a liaison between the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), would be appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate.

A USDA Inspector General's report released last year showed widespread inaction, blocking of anti-competitive investigations, and an effort to hide lack of action by GIPSA, according to Harkin's release.



ESA reform revived

Efforts to reform the Endangered Species Act (ESA) have been revived in the 110th Congress, according to NCBA.

Sen. Larry Craig (R-Idaho) and Craig Thomas (R-Wyo.) introduced the Endangered Species Reform Act of 2007 (S.658) on Feb. 16 — a bill that seeks to strengthen species recovery while providing for local community input.

The bill was reported to the Environment and Public Works Committee where, at press time, it awaited further action.

Industry Events



Personnel Management Seminar

April 3-4, Lubbock, Texas

The two-day conference designed to help agriculture human resource managers

will take place at the Ashmore Inn in Lubbock.

The conference, titled "Effective Employee Management in Agribusiness," will feature experts from around the country who will address the issues of hiring, retaining and disciplining employees. Topics will also include issues with a multi-cultural workforce.

The registration fee is \$150 per person.

For a registration form, visit <http://mastermarketer.tamu.edu>. Make checks payable to: TEEF Acct. #8200, and mail to Personnel Management Conference, Box 946, College Station, TX 77841-0946. Contact Margaret Freeman at (806) 677-5600 for more information.



Food composition, consumer health, public policy conference

April 9-11, Berkeley, Calif.

The conference, organized by the Farm Foundation and USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS), will focus on how agriculture and food policies influence market forces, food product composition and consumer health.

The event, titled "Food Product Composition, Consumer Health and Public Policy," will be at the Claremont Hotel in Berkeley, Calif. Program, registration and hotel information is available at the Farm Foundation web site at www.farmfoundation.org/projects/07-24FoodProductComposition.htm.

For more information, contact Walt Armbruster, Farm Foundation, Walt@farmfoundation.org; or Elise Golan, ERS, egolan@ers.usda.gov.



Outreach Seminars

April 14, 28; East Lansing, Mich.; Reno, Nev.

The American Angus Association continues its series of Outreach Seminars.

On Saturday, April 14, a seminar will be conducted in East Lansing, Mich., as part of the Michigan Angus Association's Educational Day. Educational Day activities begin at 10 a.m., with the Outreach Seminar starting at 1 p.m., in Michigan State University's Anthony Hall.

Association staff will also conduct an Outreach Seminar in Reno, Nev. The seminar will be at 6 p.m. April 28 at John Ascauga's Nugget.

Outreach Seminars last about two hours and allow the membership to interact with staff. Watch for additional times and locations at www.angus.org.

