



Beef Business

► A look at current events affecting the cattle industry

Japanese panel declares U.S. beef safe

Members of Japan's Food Safety Commission (FSC) said Oct. 31 they believe U.S. beef imports from cattle aged 20 months or younger present a very low risk of transmitting bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), provided specified risk materials (SRMs) are removed, *Reuters* reported.

After months of deliberation, a subcommittee of the FSC found few differences between risks associated with U.S. beef and those associated with Japanese beef. At press time, the full FSC was to consider the report and to open findings to a month of public comment before making its final approval, the article noted. After reaching a final conclusion, the commission will send its recommendation to the country's government officials.

The move is the first step toward resolving a 22-month-long battle to resume U.S. beef trade to Japan, known as the No. 1 exporter of U.S. beef products prior to its ban on imports beginning December 2003.

Meanwhile, a separate *Reuters* article suggested Japanese consumer groups are geared to boycott U.S. beef should the government resume imports. Some are protesting on the grounds that U.S. beef presents a higher risk for BSE-related illness than does their domestic beef supply.

Thailand lifts beef ban

Thailand lifted its ban on most imports of U.S. beef, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) officials announced Oct. 20.

Prior to the announcement, Thailand had banned imports of U.S. beef since the BSE case of December 2003 in Washington state. Since that time, U.S. officials have been working with Thailand and other countries to remove remaining restrictions imposed on U.S. beef imports.

Hurricane Rita production losses estimated

USDA has released a preliminary assessment of the agricultural production losses caused by Hurricane Rita. To access the assessment, visit www.usda.gov/oc/e/oc/e/Ritadamage_1_1.pdf. An update of production loss estimates due to drought is also included.

USDA responds to threats of avian influenza

Agriculture Deputy Secretary Chuck Conner outlined USDA efforts to protect the U.S. against highly transmissible forms of avian influenza, a disease that commonly affects birds and has been transmitted to humans in Asia.

"Attacking the disease at its source overseas is a main focus for USDA," Conner said. "We also have strict importation restrictions to prevent the spread of the virus in our country and an elaborate surveillance system in place to monitor our bird populations."

Worldwide, there are many strains of the avian flu virus, which can cause varying degrees of illness in poultry. Avian flu viruses can infect chickens, turkeys, pheasants, quail, ducks, geese and guinea fowl, as well as a wide variety of other birds. Migratory waterfowl are also known to carry the less infectious strains of the viruses.

To encourage producers to report sick birds, USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) conducts an outreach campaign called "Biosecurity for

the Birds." Additional surveillance efforts specifically target live bird markets. USDA works closely with the industry to randomly test commercial flocks as well as birds that show signs of illness. USDA scientists have also tested wild migratory birds since 1998 in the Alaska flyway.

APHIS maintains trade restrictions on the importation of pet birds, poultry and poultry products from certain avian flu-affected countries. Also, USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) has developed a rapid diagnostic test for avian influenza that diagnoses the disease within three hours, and APHIS maintains an avian flu vaccine supply for poultry.

Additional information about USDA avian influenza efforts can be found at www.usda.gov/birdflu or at www.nwhc.usgs.gov/research/avian_influenza/avian_influenza.html.

Countries ban Brazilian beef

The European Union (EU) and Argentina joined a growing number of nations that have banned beef from parts of Brazil due to the country's mid-October discovery of

U.S. cattle on feed down slightly

Cattle and calves on feed for harvest in the United States for feedlots with capacities of 1,000 or more head totaled 10.5 million head Oct. 1, 2005. The inventory was slightly below the same time last year but 3% above Oct. 1, 2003, figures.

Placements in feedlots during September totaled 2.36 million, 1% below 2004 and 5% below 2003 figures. Net placements were 2.30 million head.

Marketings of fed cattle during September totaled 1.82 million, 1% above 2004, but 11% below 2003. Other disappearance totaled 57,000 during September, 7% below 2004 and 10% below 2003.

Table 1: No. of cattle on feed, placements, marketings and other disappearance, 1,000+-head-capacity U.S. feedlots, Oct. 1, 2003-2005

	No. of head (1,000 head)			2005 as % of	
	2003	2004	2005	2003	2004
On feed Sept. 1 ^a	9,839	9,988	10,000	102	100
Placed on feed during Sept.	2,474	2,375	2,355	95	99
Fed cattle marketed during Sept.	2,032	1,800	1,816	89	101
Other disappearance during Sept. ^b	63	61	57	90	93
On feed Oct. 1 ^a	10,218	10,502	10,482	103	100

^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.

foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) in the southern part of the state of Mato Grasso do Sul, *meatingplace.com* reported.

According to the site, the EU has banned all livestock, meat or byproducts (harvested after Sept. 30) from three Brazilian states, including Mato Grasso do Sul, Parana and Sao Paulo. The ban could affect more than \$400 million worth of annual beef sales, the article stated. In addition, Argentina has banned product from Mato Grasso do Sul.

As of Oct. 13, the country's agriculture officials had identified 140 head of infected cattle in Eldorado, a municipality in southern Mato Grasso do Sul.

Breed associations create registry

The Gelbvieh, Brangus, Limousin, Salers and Red Angus associations announced they have created a new company, Performance Registry Services. The company plans to provide commercial producers with National Cattle Evaluations (NCEs) providing a single suite of expected progeny differences (EPDs) for all the partner breeds on a single base and scale. Decision-support software and a centralized data warehouse will accompany the EPDs.

R-CALF appeal request denied

The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals Oct. 13 denied Ranchers-Cattlemen Action Legal Fund United Stockgrowers of America's (R-CALF USA's) request for a rehearing, the Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) reported.

R-CALF filed a petition Sept. 8 in reaction to a judgment issued by a three-judge panel in July that overturned a preliminary injunction placed on Canadian beef and beef product imports into the U.S.

The same three-judge panel denied the rehearing request, according to CCA. Stan Eby, CCA president, reported that R-CALF would now have to appeal the case to the Supreme Court if it is to continue its efforts to reverse the overturning of the preliminary injunction.

USDA announces conservation program funding

Deputy Secretary Conner Oct. 14 announced the release of nearly \$1.7 billion in fiscal year (FY) 2006 funding for

voluntary conservation farm bill programs on working lands.

Through cooperative conservation, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will help farmers and ranchers make sound conservation decisions that improve soil, water, air and wildlife habitat on privately owned working lands.

FY 2006 allocations include \$1.345 billion in financial assistance and \$337 million for technical assistance for NRCS voluntary conservation programs. States will receive additional money after Congress makes final funding decisions through the FY 2006 appropriations process.

With financial and technical assistance from NRCS, producers and other landowners will continue to address resource concerns on agricultural working lands, promote environmental quality, address challenges in water quality and quantity, protect prime farmland and grazing lands, and protect valuable wetland ecosystems and fish and wildlife habitat.

Additional information on key conservation programs and specific allocations is available at www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs. Landowners who want specific information on program

participation should contact their local USDA Service Center or NRCS office. To locate an office near you, visit <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app> or search in the telephone book under Federal Government, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Washington Watch



Congress delays COOL

Members of the U.S. House of Representatives Agriculture Appropriations Committee and members of the Senate Committee on Appropriations approved measures for the FY 2006 Agriculture Appropriations bill late October, delaying mandatory country-of-origin labeling (sometimes referred to as COL or COOL) until Sept. 30, 2008.

The bill also provides \$17.1 billion in total discretionary resources, 1.5% more than FY 2005 enacted levels, according to the House. Efforts to detect and prevent BSE are specifically recognized in the bill, with about \$90 million in allocated funds.

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At press time, a conference report was to be sent to both chambers for final approval of the bill.



House passes obesity bill

The U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill Oct. 19 banning obesity-related lawsuits in state and federal courts, according to *The Washington Times*. Approved by a 306-120 vote, the bill would

help protect food makers, sellers or trade associations from obesity lawsuits.



Senators push for possible Japanese beef boycott

Members of the U.S. Senate unveiled a bipartisan bill Oct. 26 to punish Japan should Tokyo not resume imports of American beef by Dec. 31, according to *Reuters*.

Sponsored by Sen. Pat Roberts (R-Kan.), Kent Conrad (D-N.D.) and 16 other senators, the legislation, if passed, would impose tariffs on Japanese products should Japan fail to reopen its markets to U.S. beef.

Hosted by the Missouri Cattlemen's Association, the event will include a "Cattlemen's College" schedule featuring nutritional management simulation, feeding byproducts, nutrition and the immune system, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), and more. The Missouri Beef Industry Council and CattleWomen are also scheduled to meet during the four-day event.



RFID roundtable

Dec. 11-12, Chicago, Ill.

Radio frequency identification (RFID) technology will be the focus of an executive roundtable, titled "RFID: Focus on the Future" and hosted at the Chicago Omni Hotel. Topics of discussion will include Larstan Business Reports' extensive RFID research, which entails in-depth questioning of North American, medium-to-large-sized manufacturers, distributors and consumer retailers concerning RFID implementation. Business objectives, technical requirements and financial benefits of RFID technology will be highlighted. The exclusive roundtable discussion will be a closed-door collaboration of the leading minds in RFID.

For more information contact Jennifer O'Grady at (240) 396-0007, Ext. 902, or joigrady@larstan.net.

Industry Events



Four-State Range Beef Cow Symposium

Dec. 6-8, Rapid City, S.D.

More than 1,000 people are anticipated at the event, which will be at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center in Rapid City. The symposium is co-sponsored by the departments of animal science and the Cooperative Extension services of the University of Nebraska, University of Wyoming, South Dakota State University (SDSU) and Colorado State University.

For more information contact Trey Patterson, SDSU Extension beef specialist, at (605) 394-2236.



MSGA, MGGA joint convention

Dec. 7-10, Billings, Mont.

The Montana Stockgrowers Association (MSGA) and the Montana Grain Growers Association (MGGA) plan to host their 2005 conventions jointly at the Holiday Inn Grand Montana and the Billings Hotel and Convention Center in Billings.

Titled "Teaming Up for Agriculture," the event is expected to attract more than 1,000 attendees and will feature notable speakers, instructive workshops and critical policy development.

For more information contact MSGA at (406) 442-3420 or mgsa@mtbeef.org, or MGGA at (406) 761-4596 or mgsa@mgsa.org.



Missouri Cattle Industry Convention

Dec. 8-11, Columbia

The 2005 Missouri Cattle Industry Convention and Trade Show will take place at the Holiday Inn Select in Columbia.



Energy production meeting

Dec. 14-15, Saint Louis, Mo.

Economic research findings and first-hand energy production experience will be featured at the "Energy From Agriculture" conference, scheduled to take place at the Marriott Saint Louis Airport.

The conference, presented by Farm Foundation and USDA's Office of Energy Policy and New Uses, will provide attendees with practical, science-based information on agriculture's role in energy production. Program topics include economic assessment of current technologies; ethanol, coproducts and market effects; energy production from nontraditional feedstuffs; and farmer/rancher experiences with energy production.

To register for the conference visit www.farmfoundation.org/registration. Interested participants can also print the registration form and mail it, with a check for registration fees, to Farm Foundation, 1211 W. 22nd St., Suite 216, Oak Brook, IL 60523. Hotel reservations may be made at 1-800-228-9290. For more information contact Steve Halbrook at (630) 571-9393.

