



# Beef Business

► A look at current events affecting the cattle industry

## AMI urges Baltimore city public schools to drop 'Meatless Mondays'

The American Meat Institute (AMI) is urging Baltimore Public Schools to reconsider its decision to initiate "Meatless Mondays," noting that meat and poultry products are an essential part of a balanced diet.

"Meatless Mondays" is an initiative sponsored by the Grace Spira Project at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. The name Spira refers to animal rights activist Henry Spira, founder of Animal Rights International. Baltimore's school system is the first to adopt the initiative, and the move means 80,000 students will have no meat option on Mondays. Three out of four students in the Baltimore Public School system are eligible for free and reduced meals and school meals may be the only significant source of meat and poultry in their diets.

"Surely you have always offered a vegetarian option on your menu," AMI President and CEO J. Patrick Boyle wrote in a letter to Andrés Alonso, CEO, Baltimore City Schools. "Now you are removing a meat or poultry entrée on Mondays and depriving children and their parents of the ability to determine what is appropriate for their diets and their own personal circumstances."

Boyle urged Alonso to visit the Project's series of videos at [www.MeatTrix.com](http://www.MeatTrix.com) to better understand the organization behind the initiative. These videos seek to manipulate and mislead children through a cleverly produced but factually inaccurate cartoon takeoff of the film "The Matrix." Ultimately, the group seeks an end to the United States' efficient and advanced food production system that delivers to Americans the most abundant and affordable food supply in the world.

## CWT completes eighth herd retirement round

Farm audits for the second herd retirement implemented by Cooperatives Working Together (CWT) in 2009 have been completed, and the majority of the 74,114 cows that produced 1.5 billion pounds (lb.) of milk have been sent to

processing plants. In addition, 2,958 bred heifers also were removed through CWT's eighth herd retirement round.

In this most recent round, CWT removed 274 herds in 38 states. When combined with the herd retirements completed last winter and earlier this spring, CWT has removed 225,783 cows that produced 4.5 billion lb. of milk. In addition, the nearly 3,000 bred heifers taken in this herd retirement bring the total removed by CWT in the past nine months to 5,016.

CWT received 312 bids from dairies in 39 states during the bidding process in July, which offered a set maximum acceptable bid price. As a result of the selection and auditing process CWT follows, along with some withdrawals by bidders, the final number of bids processed totaled 274, down 20 from the initial tentative tally.

"In recognition of the severity of the financial crisis in the dairy industry, CWT auditors moved quickly to audit the selected farms, completing their task in just 30 days," said Jim Tillison, COO of CWT. "The national dairy herd is 230,000 cows smaller this fall because of CWT's actions since this winter."

As with each of the seven previous herd retirements CWT has carried out, CWT auditors verified the information submitted by bidders, and then applied a special tamper-evident CWT ear tag to every milking cow and dry cow, as well as to the bred heifers, if a producer chose that option.

Tillison said farmers' names from this eighth round will be posted on the web site as they are sent their payments. He noted that additional CWT herd reduction actions are possible in 2009, given the continuing cost of production-milk price squeeze farmers are in.

## Study shows Americans most concerned about economy, but food safety earns rank

Economic issues continue to top the list of consumer concerns, according to the most recent consumer survey by the Center for Food Integrity (CFI). The U.S. economy, rising energy costs, rising cost of food, rising health care costs and personal financial

situation rated the highest level of concern among 11 current issues. Concern about global warming received the lowest rating.

Food safety was the highest rated non-economic issue for the second consecutive year, and again rated higher than consumer concern over military involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Complete survey results were released at the CFI 2009 Food System Summit Oct. 6-7 in Kansas City, Mo. information from the Summit is available at [www.foodintegrity.org](http://www.foodintegrity.org).

A total of 2,018 consumer surveys (sampling error at 95% confidence level  $\pm 2.2\%$ ) were collected via a web survey in August and September 2009.

## Washington Watch



### Senators defend biofuels from EPA regulation

Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), Ben Nelson (D-Neb.) and Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) in September introduced legislation that would prevent the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from proceeding with regulations limiting the production and use of biofuels required by Congress' 2007 energy bill, according to [Meatingplace.com](http://Meatingplace.com).

The EPA regulations would calculate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions created by biofuels, including changes in land use in other countries, such as clearing land for crops caused by increased production of biofuels in the United States.

The proposed amendment would prohibit the EPA, for one year, from spending funds to include international indirect land use, change emissions in calculations to implement the Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS).

The senators argue that data and analytic methodologies for credibly calculating international indirect land use change emissions do not exist and that including them in the EPA's rule would put an unjust burden on the biofuels industry.



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