



# Beef Business

► A look at current events affecting the cattle industry

## Boehringer Ingelheim to acquire portion of Fort Dodge

Boehringer Ingelheim, Ingelheim, Germany, a global pharmaceutical group of companies, together with its U.S. animal health business Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica Inc., Saint Joseph, Mo., announced Oct. 26 that it has closed its deal with Pfizer to acquire a significant portion of the Fort Dodge Animal Health business. The acquisition, which includes products in the United States, Australia, Canada and South Africa, as well as two manufacturing and research facilities located in Fort Dodge, Iowa, significantly increases the size of Boehringer Ingelheim's companion animal and cattle portfolios and strengthens the company's position as a leading vaccine supplier. Terms of the deal were not disclosed. Products being acquired in Europe are still subject to approval by European anti-trust authorities.

## AMI president and CEO defends safety of meat supply

"(The meat industry) has invested tens of millions of dollars over the last 10 years in research programs to make our products safer. And they've shared the results in a noncompetitive environment so we can spread the knowledge throughout the industry," American Meat Institute (AMI) President and CEO J. Patrick Boyle said during an appearance on CNN's "Larry King Live" that aired Oct. 12.

The segment, entitled "Beef: Safe or Scary," was prompted by an Oct. 4 *New York Times* article on ground beef safety by investigative reporter Michael Moss ("Woman's Shattered Life Shows Ground Beef Inspection Flaws").

During the segment, Boyle noted that while the industry has a great deal of sympathy and empathy for those affected by *E. coli* O157:H7, the positive development is that these kinds of tragic illnesses are decreasing in America.

"These illnesses are down 60% in the last 10 years," Boyle said. "And the reason for that reduction in *E. coli*-related illnesses is because the incidence of that pathogen in our beef products has dropped by 45%

during that same 10-year period, and that's not just a random development. It's because of investment, technology, research, more sophisticated process control. So we are making significant progress in taking a very safe food supply and making it even safer."

Boyle said there are two steps available to eliminate *E. coli* in the ground beef supply. One is through irradiation, which is not widely used. And the other is through proper cooking of the product.

King gave Boyle the last word on *E. coli* at the end of the segment.

"The beef supply is safer today in terms of *E. coli* incidents than it was five years ago," Boyle concluded.

## Group suggests undercover activists face punishment

The Animal Ag Alliance is suggesting undercover activists who witness and record animal mistreatment be held accountable and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law for not immediately reporting the incident. Alliance members made the recommendation in light of the growing number of activist groups hiring individuals to seek illicit employment at ranches, feedyards and processing plants solely for the purpose of capturing video that condemns animal agriculture. The video is frequently produced and released to the media months after the alleged mistreatment occurred as activists plan a strategic media campaign.

The alliance strongly encourages all food animal owners to implement care guidelines, provide worker training and establish policies holding all employees accountable for their actions. Employers should screen potential employees closely to protect against illicit employment by activists, according to the Alliance.

## Washington Watch

### Taiwan reopens to U.S. bone-in beef after six-year ban

According to a *Reuters* report, Taiwan will reopen its markets to U.S. bone-in beef,

most likely in November, ending a six-year import ban that was in place over fears of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE).

The *Taiwan News* reported that Senior Media Affairs Liaison Nefeterius Akeli McPherson of the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) expressed welcome to Taiwan's decision to further open its market to U.S. beef based on scientific evidence and policies that are in line with World Organization of Animal Health (OIE) standards.

## Meat industry urges USDA to develop age-verification program

The U.S. government should establish an age-verification Quality System Assessment (QSA) Program for Taiwan to ensure an orderly expansion to a full market opening to U.S. beef products, according to a letter to Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack that was signed by AMI, the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) and the National Meat Association (NMA).

The three groups sent the letter following Taiwan's Oct. 22 announcement that it will expand access to its market to permit imports of U.S. beef and beef products consistent with the guidelines of the OIE for BSE.

"While U.S. exporters are confident that all beef and beef products produced in the United States are safe regardless of age, the U.S. beef exporting industry is prepared to temporarily limit beef exports to Taiwan to products from cattle less than 30 months of age under a program verified by U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) as a transitional measure to ensure an orderly expansion to a full market opening," said AMI President J. Patrick Boyle, USMEF President and CEO Philip Seng and NMA CEO and Executive Director Barry Carpenter.

They asked that as soon as the "Protocol of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE)-Related Measures for the Importation of Beef and Beef Products for Human Consumption from the Territory of the Authorities Represented by the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT)," which allows for expansion of market access for U.S. beef, becomes effective, the age verification program be developed and put in place. The letter noted that USDA's Agriculture Marketing Service has confirmed that it is taking the steps necessary to establish the QSA program.

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