



Beef Business

► A look at current events affecting the cattle industry

Japan opens borders to U.S. beef

After approximately two years of hard-fought negotiations between U.S. and Japanese officials, the Japanese government Dec. 12, 2005, declared its borders open to U.S. beef imports. The government made the announcement just days after its Food Safety Commission (FSC) declared U.S. beef to be as safe as its own.

At press time, Japanese media were predicting the country would begin receiving U.S. and Canadian beef before the end of December 2005.

As the national cattle industry rejoices, both U.S. and Japanese officials are quick to point out the market arrangement has its limitations. The border has opened only to U.S. beef from cattle aged up to 20 months, provided specified materials are removed from product being shipped. Plus, many Japanese consumers have voiced concern about eating U.S. beef.

Yasuhiro Yoshikawa, a member of the FSC panel that considered the safety of U.S. beef in relation to bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), told *The Associated Press* (AP) that more than 50% of public comments the commission collected prior to making its decision were against the resumption of U.S. imports. Consumers voiced similar concern in a *Kyodo News* survey in early December, the article noted, with three-fourths of respondents saying they would be unwilling to eat U.S. beef.

Government officials and commission members have defended their findings, however, maintaining that U.S. beef poses no greater risk of BSE infection than Japanese beef, provided import restrictions are met.

USDA amends restrictions on Canadian beef, ruminants

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in mid-November proposed lifting all BSE restrictions on imported Canadian cattle older than 30 months, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Administrator Ron DeHaven said.

The restrictions, in place since Canada's first case of BSE was disclosed in 2003, were previously eased to allow cattle younger than 30 months to enter the U.S. DeHaven expects the new rule will be proposed within the next few months and will be followed by a public comment period.

"There would still be an age ceiling, because they'd have to be animals born after Canada instituted an effective feed ban. So, only animals born after 1997 could cross," USDA spokesman Hallie Pickhardt said.

APHIS also announced it is amending regulations regarding the handling of shipments of ruminants from Canada and the transloading of ruminant products and byproducts that travel across the United States by land from Canada to Mexico or to another country.

In the interim rule, the agency proposes the seals on vehicles used to move animals from Canada — either to a feedlot or to a harvesting facility — must be broken by an authorized USDA representative to allow animals in transit to be offloaded in a timely manner at their destination, while still maintaining the integrity of the shipment.

An authorized USDA representative is defined as an APHIS Veterinary Services (VS) employee; a USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) inspector; a state representative; an accredited veterinarian; or an employee of an accredited veterinarian, harvesting establishment, or feedlot who is designated by the accredited veterinarian or management of the harvesting establishment

or feedlot to perform the function involved.

Visit www.regulations.gov for more information.

Mineral recommendations available

The University of Kentucky (UK) College of Agriculture's Beef Integrated Resource Management (IRM) program released recommendations aimed at providing the most up-to-date mineral information available to beef producers.

There are three formula recommendations from UK, including a basic cow-calf formulation, a pre- and early-lactation high-magnesium (Mg) formula to use when conditions for grass tetany exist, and a formula containing monensin for stocker cattle.

Visit www.ca.uky.edu/agc/news/2005/Nov/mineral.htm for more information.

Researchers test retinal scan technology

New Mexico State University (NMSU) researchers are testing advanced retinal imaging technology on cattle and studying its applications for a national animal health tracking system.

The project, the first of its kind, included tests on 35 market steers using eye-scanning

U.S. cattle on feed up 1%

Cattle and calves on feed for harvest in the United States for feedlots with capacities of 1,000 or more head totaled 11.5 million head Nov. 1, 2005. The inventory was 1% above the same time last year and 4% above Nov. 1, 2003, figures.

Placements in feedlots during October 2005 totaled 2.80 million, 3% above 2004 figures and 1% above 2003 figures. Net placements were 2.74 million head.

Marketings of fed cattle during October 2005 totaled 1.74 million, 3% below 2004 figures and 6% below 2003 figures. This is the second-lowest fed-cattle marketings for the month of October since the series began in 1996. Other disappearance totaled 58,000 during October 2005, 12% below 2004 figures and 43% below 2003 figures.

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

	No. of head (1,000 head)			2005 as % of	
	2003	2004	2005	2003	2004
On feed Oct. 1 ^a	10,218	10,502	10,482	103	100
Placed on feed during Oct.	2,781	2,701	2,795	101	103
Fed cattle marketed during Oct.	1,855	1,803	1,744	94	97
Other disappearance during Oct. ^b	101	66	58	57	88
On feed Nov. 1 ^a	11,043	11,334	11,475	104	101

^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 BUSINESS

technology alongside radio frequency identification (RFID) ear tags for animal ID evaluation, NMSU reports.

The retinal imaging technology flashes a beam of light into the animal's eyeball and records the unique pattern of veins in the eye. The image is downloaded to a computer database, providing quick, accurate and traceable animal ID.

For more information visit <http://spectre.nmsu.edu:16080/media/news2.lasso?i=844>.

\$2.7 billion available for voluntary conservation

Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns announced the release of nearly \$2.7 billion in fiscal year (FY) 2006 for voluntary conservation programs on working lands.

The early release of funds ensures farmers and ranchers in the nation's 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Pacific Basin have more time to make sound decisions regarding their conservation practices. States will receive their allocations much earlier than in the past.

With financial and technical assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), farmers, ranchers 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 wetlands ecosystems and wildlife habitat.

Additional information about NRCS programs is available at www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs. Landowners who want specific information regarding program participation should contact their local USDA Service Center or NRCS office.

South Dakota beef program gains momentum

Participants in the South Dakota Certified™ Beef program say the state project to promote local beef is beginning to pay off, AP reported.

South Dakota Agriculture Secretary Larry Gabriel said approximately 90 ranchers have been trained and licensed for the program, and about 6,000 cattle have been enrolled. According to the article, ranchers must use RFID tags on all enrolled cattle. Four small plants in South Dakota are processing the beef products.

USDA awards grants for rural development research

Secretary Johanns announced Dec. 2,

2005, eight grants totaling \$2.4 million for research on rural development.

According to the USDA, the funded rural development projects examine the social, economic, technological and demographic factors that affect quality of life for rural Americans. Topics covered include land use at the rural/urban fringe; investments of financial, social and human capital for rural economic development; and intergenerational assistance among rural and farm families.

The average award size was \$299,000. Descriptions of funded awards are available at <http://cris.csrees.usda.gov>. Visit www.usda.gov/2005/12/0522.xml for more information.

Funds designated for markets, trade research

Secretary Johanns also announced 11 grants totaling \$2.2 million awarded for research on agricultural markets and trade. The grants support research examining trade barriers, consumer behavior and choice, market mechanisms, and organizational structures of agriculture and agricultural research investments, according to USDA.

USDA reports that research from the grants will benefit, among others, the livestock sector in addition to producers of genetically modified grain and consumers around the world. The average award size was

CONTINUED ON PAGE 152

▶ BEEF BUSINESS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 151

\$199,500. Descriptions of funded awards are available at <http://cris.csrees.usda.gov>. Visit www.usda.gov/2005/12/0524.xml for more information.

Washington Watch



House discusses manure use

The U.S. House of Representatives Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Environment and Hazardous Materials conducted a hearing in mid-November regarding the regulation of rural livestock

manure, titled “Superfund Laws and Animal Agriculture.”

According to a National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA) release, some members of Congress are considering regulating manure applications on ranches and farms under Superfund waste laws — accompanied by reporting requirements created to provide for cleanup of toxic waste dumps and hazardous chemical spills.

According to NCBA, if manure use falls under such regulations, every livestock and poultry operation or farming operation could become subject to comprehensive cleanup guidelines. For more information visit <http://hill.beef.org>.



Grizzlies could be removed from ESA list

NCBA reported that Interior Secretary

Gale Norton proposed removing the greater Yellowstone population of grizzly bears from the list of federal endangered species.

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) listings often require that ranchers remove livestock from grazing areas determined to be “conflict areas.”

The proposal to delist the grizzly bear was published in the *Federal Register* on Nov. 17. More information is posted at <http://mountain-prairie.fws.gov>.



GAO asked to evaluate animal ID

Senator Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) has asked the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to evaluate the USDA’s plans for the National Animal Identification System (NAIS).

Harkin is asking GAO to evaluate and

determine the cost of implementing NAIS, costs to producers and government, and to determine how effectively USDA has used money for developing NAIS.

“After two years of discussions, USDA has no clear plan for moving forward with a workable system. Producers are getting upset that they still don’t know how much the system will cost them and who will run it,” Harkin said.



Senate urges USDA to consider digital RFID

The U.S. Senate has set aside more than \$33 million for projects related to the NAIS in its version of the FY 2006 Agriculture Appropriations Bill, according to *Yahoo Financial News*.

According to the news service, the Senate’s version suggests USDA consider Digital

Angel Corp.’s RFID technology. The company currently provides the government with electronic tags and scanners to track salmon in Northwest fisheries.

Industry Events



Four-State Beef Conference

Jan. 11-12, Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri and Iowa

The 22nd annual beef conference, designed to update cow-calf and stocker producers on current industry topics, will begin in Tecumseh, Neb., Jan. 11, then it travels to Holton, Kan. On Jan. 12, the conference will begin in Savannah, Mo., followed by Lewis, Iowa, in the afternoon.

Topics during the sessions will include sire selection and expected progeny

difference (EPD) interpretation, marker-assisted selection for tenderness and marbling, minimizing calf health losses, and summer feeding alternatives for the cow herd.

Registration, which will begin at 9:30 a.m. for morning sessions and at 3:30 p.m. for afternoon sessions, is \$25 per person and is due Jan. 6. Registration includes a meal and a copy of conference proceedings.

For more information or to register, contact your local county Extension office or the Jackson County Extension office at (785) 364-4125. Visit www.extension.iastate.edu/feci/4StBeef for further information.



NDSA Feeder Council meeting

Jan. 12, Bismarck, N.D.

The North Dakota Stockmen’s

CONTINUED ON PAGE 154

▶ BEEF BUSINESS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 153

Association (NDSA) Feeder Council will host a free educational seminar, titled "Beyond the Bunk: Advice for the Cattle-Feeding Professional," beginning at 10 a.m. Thursday at the Doublewood Inn in Bismarck.

Program topics will include financial programs available to producers, new programs available for cattle feeders from the Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME), feeder procurement and marketing alternatives, managing operational margins, current nutrition trends in the feeding sector, and more.

Registration for the free seminar will be taken on site. For more information call Scott Ressler at (701) 223-2522.



2006 R-CALF National Convention

Jan. 18-21, Denver, Colo.

Ranchers-Cattlemen Action Legal Fund United Stockgrowers Association (R-CALF USA) will host its 2006 national convention at the Doubletree hotel in Denver.

The convention will begin with officer and committee reports, a country-of-origin labeling (also referred to as COL or COOL) panel, a trade panel, animal ID discussions, and BSE-related issues. Regional caucuses will take place, and policy development and nominations for directors are scheduled. Social events, an awards banquet, fundraisers and a tradeshow are also scheduled to occur during the four-day convention.

Early registration is \$50 per attendee, plus

meals. After Jan. 10, the registration increases to \$60 per person. Call (406) 252-2516 to register.

Visit www.r-calfusa.com/Events/2006_convention.htm for more information.



2006 Intermountain Nutrition Conference

Jan. 24-25, Salt Lake City, Utah

The eighth annual Intermountain Nutrition Conference will take place at the Red Lion Hotel, at 161 W. 600 S., Salt Lake City. The conference will provide current information on nutrition and nutrition-related management issues pertaining to the dairy and beef industries.

Topics to be addressed include selenium nutrition, understanding cow behavior, variations in silage quality, fat and fatty acid

digestion in ruminants, and feed management.

The conference is approved for eight American Registry of Professional Animal Scientists (ARPAS) credits. Registration is \$100 if received by Jan. 7, and \$120 thereafter. The early registration fee for students is \$30. It is \$50 for regular, on-site student registration. Registration for farmers and ranchers is set at \$50.

A block of rooms at special conference rates will be reserved through Jan. 3. Contact Red Lion Hotel at (801) 521-7373 to make reservations.

For more information, visit www.usu.edu/trdhirman/IMNC/Imnc.htm or contact Karma Wood at (435) 797-2145 or karmaw@ext.usu.edu.



2006 Cattle Industry Annual Convention

Feb. 1-4, Denver, Colo.

NCBA, the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board (CBB), American National CattleWomen Inc. (ANCW), National Cattlemen's Foundation (NCF) and Cattle-Fax will host the conference, themed "Cowboy Up!" at the Colorado Convention Center in downtown Denver.

The event will begin Wednesday morning with the popular Cattlemen's College®, sponsored by Pfizer Animal Health, at the National Western Stock Show (NWSS) Complex. Low-stress animal handling demonstrations are scheduled, and breakout sessions will cover animal ID, weaning strategies, live-cattle and feeder-cattle contracts and more. A Cattle-Fax outlook

seminar will also offer insights on cattle markets.

Policy issues will be discussed throughout the event, with international trade, BSE testing and regulatory policy, animal ID, environmental issues and property rights taking center stage. NCBA members will determine organization policy and review checkoff-funded programs during the convention.

A trade show featuring more than 250 exhibitors will also take place, and an NCBA-PAC/PEF bull sale is scheduled for 2 p.m., Thursday.

For more information about the event, contact NCBA's Convention Department at (303) 694-0305 or visit www.beefusa.org/annualconvention.aspx.

