



# Beef Business

► A look at current issues affecting the cattle industry. Compiled by **Shelby Mettlen**, assistant editor

## KLA leaders discuss disaster programs in Washington, D.C.

Kansas Livestock Association (KLA) volunteer leaders and staff participated in the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) Legislative Conference recently in Washington, D.C. The conference provides an opportunity to discuss important legislative and regulatory issues affecting the livestock industry with members of Congress and federal agency personnel.

Issues important to Kansas livestock producers were discussed during meetings with each member of the Kansas congressional delegation. The KLA group highlighted the need for flexibility in administering USDA disaster programs available to ranchers impacted by wildfires. KLA expressed the need for a commonsense approach to fencing requirements and that payment limits for disaster programs should recognize the needs of multi-family ranching operations.

KLA leaders shared with USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) personnel concerns about the administration of disaster programs available to ranchers affected by wildfires. The group again highlighted the need for flexibility in applying payment limits and requirements for repairing and replacing damaged fences.

"We appreciate the assistance of the Kansas congressional delegation in making

disaster programs more effective for Kansas ranchers," said KLA President David Clawson of Englewood. "We saw firsthand the strong working relationship between KLA and our members of Congress."

The KLA group also asked the Kansas delegation to be active in efforts to achieve comprehensive immigration reform. Members emphasized the need for a guest worker program that accommodates the year-round labor needs of livestock operations.

*Source: Kansas Livestock Association.*

## EPA administrator addresses cattlemen

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt addressed cattlemen and women at the NCBA annual legislative conference March 30 in Washington, D.C. In his remarks, Pruitt said he is working to build a partnership between the agency and the men and women who serve as the stewards of our natural resources.

"In Oklahoma, I saw firsthand that cattlemen care deeply about a clean and healthy environment, because their livelihoods depend on it," said Pruitt. "Looking forward, we will build a partnership with landowners across the country and create commonsense rules that protect our environment."

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**— Scott Pruitt**

Craig Uden, NCBA president, said he appreciated the candid comments and looks forward to working in collaboration with the administration.

"After eight years of aggressive regulatory overreach, it is reassuring to have an administrator that wants to work with our nation's farmers and ranchers," said Uden. "We are the front line in terms of environmental stewardship. A one-size-fits-all approach to environmental conservation simply doesn't work, and we look forward to working with Administrator Pruitt to create an environment that incentivizes voluntary conservation and provides the flexibility needed for cattlemen and women to care for their land."

*Source: NCBA.*

## Georgia to host BIF Symposium

The University of Georgia will host the 2017 Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) Symposium and Convention May 31-June 3 at the Classic Center in Athens, Ga. Online registration is available for the event at <http://beefimprovement.org/library/registration-info>.

The conference will open with a Young Producers Symposium on Wednesday, May 31, designed to network and equip young cattle producers with essential knowledge as they grow their role in the business.

Thursday morning's general session is titled "The promise of genomics for beef improvement" and will be led by Keith Bertrand and Daniela Lourenco of the University of Georgia. Friday's general session will focus on "Profitability using the tools we have." Afternoons are filled with breakout sessions focusing on a range of beef production and genetic improvement topics. The conference will wrap up with a tour of the Georgia beef industry on Saturday morning.

Online and PDF registration options are available at [www.beefimprovement.org](http://www.beefimprovement.org).

For more conference details, including registration information, complete schedule and lodging information, visit [www.beefimprovement.org](http://www.beefimprovement.org) or contact University of Georgia host Ronnie Silcox at [rsilcox@uga.edu](mailto:rsilcox@uga.edu) or 706-542-9102.

Angus Media will provide online coverage of the event at [www.bifconference.com](http://www.bifconference.com).

*Source: BIF.*

## Farm Bureau praises EPA chlorpyrifos decision

American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) President Zippy Duvall recently applauded EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt for rejecting a petition that would have eliminated the use of chlorpyrifos in agriculture.

"Farmers nationwide depend on chlorpyrifos in managing their crops," Duvall said. "It is widely and safely used for a wide range of crops, including alfalfa, citrus, vegetables, soybeans, almonds and others. It also protects hundreds of thousands of acres of grass seed production, where it controls aphids, cutworms and other pests. As USDA has noted, chlorpyrifos has been used as a part of environmentally friendly IPM (integrated pest management) programs for nearly 50 years."

Duvall noted that the chemical is still subject to registration review and any

## USDA authorizes emergency grazing

The USDA, acting in response to a directive from President Donald Trump, authorized emergency grazing on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) lands located in Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas — the three states most heavily impacted by the wildfires that began March 6, 2017. USDA Acting Deputy Secretary Michael Young issued a memorandum authorizing the emergency grazing of cattle by ranchers, who are facing the ruination of their herds due to lack of sufficient grazing land. The authorization is pursuant to appropriate restrictions and conservation measures.

“Ranchers are facing devastating conditions and economic calamity because of these wildfires and they need some relief, or else they face the total loss of their herds in many cases,” said Young. “These measures will allow them to salvage what remains of their cattle and return to the important business of feeding Americans and the rest of the world. I commend and thank President Trump for acting decisively in response to this dire situation.”

The USDA action is required to direct the Farm Service Agency (FSA) to permit the grazing on lands covered by the CRP, which exists to conserve and improve wildlife resources. In this case, the grazing will overlap with the primary nesting season of the lesser prairie chicken. CRP has procedures in place, already developed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, to permit emergency grazing on protected lands during nesting season. The lesser prairie chicken’s nesting season runs in Texas from March 1 to June 1, in Kansas from April 15 to July 15, and in Oklahoma from May 1 to July 1.

Ranchers and farmers are only now able to begin to estimate losses, since the fires are still burning in some places and access to the lands to survey the damage has been limited. Damages in the states are expected to grow, but are now estimated as follows:

### Kansas

- ▶ Counties affected include Clark, Comanche, Ellis, Ellsworth, Ford, Hodgeman, Kiowa, Lane, Lincoln, Meade, Ness, Russell and Seward.
- ▶ An estimated 630,000 acres burned, primarily pasturelands.
- ▶ Estimated livestock loss is between 3,000 and 9,000 head of cattle.
- ▶ Large volumes of hay and feed destroyed.
- ▶ Estimated cost of fencing destroyed exceeds \$36 million.

### Oklahoma

- ▶ Counties affected include Beaver, Ellis, Harper, Roger Mills, Woodward and Woods.
- ▶ An estimated 389,533 acres burned.
- ▶ Estimated livestock loss is 3,000 head of cattle.
- ▶ An estimated cost of structure loss of \$2 million.
- ▶ Estimated cost of fencing destroyed exceeds \$22 million.

### Texas

- ▶ Counties affected include Armstrong, Carson, Collingsworth, Donley, Gray, Hansford, Hemphill, Hutchinson, Lipscomb, Moore, Ochiltree, Potter, Randall, Roberts, Sherman and Wheeler.
- ▶ An estimated 550,000 acres burned, affecting 346 farms and ranches.
- ▶ Estimated livestock loss is at least 3,000 cattle and 1,900 swine.
- ▶ Thousands of miles of fences expected to be a total loss, but so far unable to be surveyed.

The Acting Deputy Secretary’s memorandum can be found on the USDA website.

*Source: USDA.*

concerns about its safe use can be addressed in that process.

*Source: AFBF.*

## SD Stockgrowers call for ban on Brazil beef and reinstatement of COOL

The South Dakota Stockgrowers Association (SDSGA) called on Senators Thune and Rounds, and Congresswoman

Kristi Noem to implement an immediate ban on Brazilian beef imports and work to reinstate labeling for beef in the United States. The request came in response to news reports that Brazilian meat companies JBS and BRF bribed government officials to allow rotten, chemically treated and unsafe beef products to enter their food supply.

“Given these allegations from Brazil, the

members of the South Dakota Stockgrowers Association are seriously concerned about consumer confidence given the lack [of] country-of-origin labeling on beef products,” said SDSGA President Bill Kluck in a letter to delegates. He urged Thune, Rounds and Noem to support legislation by Senator Jon Tester to ban Brazilian beef imports until

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USDA can investigate the allegations and assure that no tainted beef entered the United States.

Additionally, SDSGA called for reinstatement of labels on beef products in the United States.

Kluck said, “We believe that the recent developments in Brazil clearly prove the need for country-of-origin labeling to reassure consumers that their beef is born, raised and harvested in countries that have not violated critical standards.”

Twenty-one Brazilian beef plants have been implicated in the scandal that revealed bribery and corruption at high levels of the companies and government authorities. USDA officials have said no beef from those 21 plants was imported to the United States and USDA has implemented additional testing protocols of beef coming from Brazil.

However, SDSGA doesn’t believe that is enough.

*Source: South Dakota Stockgrowers Association.*

### **NFU urges administration to keep COOL as a priority for trade agenda**

The Trump administration the week of March 22 released a list of 24 trade practices,

including country-of-origin labeling (COOL), that trade negotiators should prioritize in future negotiations, reported the National Farmers Union (NFU). The organization urged the administration to keep COOL on the list, and to ensure a reinstatement of COOL would be allowable under any renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

“For 30 years, NFU has championed country-of-origin labeling, and we strongly believe the issue is important to American producers and consumers alike,” said NFU President Roger Johnson. “American producers raise the best beef and pork in the world, and they believe consumers should be able to know where the meat at the grocery store came from.”

Mandatory COOL, first passed in 2002 and then again in 2008, required that muscle cuts of meat and some vegetables, nuts and fruits sold at retail must contain a label informing consumers about the country where the product was sourced. A May 2013 opinion poll indicated more than 90% of consumers supported the law.

The COOL law was repealed by Congress in December 2015 after a lengthy World Trade Organization (WTO) dispute with

Canada and Mexico and pressure from multinational meatpackers. Faced with either making the law compliant by switching it to a voluntary system, paying more than \$1 billion in retaliatory tariffs, or repealing the law, Congress chose to repeal the law. When doing so, they even removed COOL labels from meats like ground beef and ground pork that were never at issue with the WTO.

“The U.S. Congress kowtowed to threats from an international tribunal and foreign governments, even as one of those foreign governments maintained a country-of-origin labeling system in their own country,” said Johnson. “The current administration has an opportunity to right an important consumer right-to-know and serious sovereignty issue here, and that is the ability of foreign governments or institutions to dictate the laws of our land.”

The administration’s priority list came just days after Brazil’s largest food-processing giants, JBS and BRF, were raided by government authorities for allowing rotten meat to be distributed in Brazil and exported to Europe.

*Source: NFU.*

