



OCA Weekly Update – February 22, 2008

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Visit <http://www.cattle.guelph.on.ca/weekly-updates/weekly-update.asp> to download archived OCA Weekly Updates as PDF files. They are posted by 5pm on the day of issue.

In Brief:

Cattlemen Elect New President, Hear from Minister of Agriculture, US Consul General

February 22, 2008 (Guelph) – More than 500 beef farmers from across Ontario congregated in Toronto this week for the Ontario Cattlemen's Association (OCA) Annual General Meeting. Guest speakers at the meeting included Ontario Minister of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs, The Honourable Leona Dombrowsky and Mr. John Nay, US Consul General to Canada. Major topics of discussion included the need for longer-term funding to beef producers who are currently suffering crippling pricing lows. The financial crisis is due to a number of factors including: changes in government regulations; impact of the ethanol industry; trade complications, and the rapid rise of the Canadian dollar.

This year's AGM also included a special panel discussion entitled "Meeting Our Challenges". Panelists included Alistair Polson of Wanganui, New Zealand; Mike Buis, former OCA President and Advisory Councillor from Kent County; and Jim Oehmke of the George Morris Centre. Given the financial crisis in the beef industry, they spoke about what they are doing to face challenges personally, and challenges and opportunities in the global economy.

Leading the 2008 Board of Directors is President, Gord Hardy of Middlesex County. Along with his family, Hardy operates a feedlot near Lucan.

"I'd like to thank the beef producers of this province for their confidence and faith," says Hardy. "I know that times are tough for all of us. But, we are in this together and my commitment to all of them is that the 2008 OCA Board will work hard on their behalf *with* government to create solutions and help meet our challenges in the immediate future."

"I look forward to working closely with Gord in meeting the needs of producers of the next year," says Curtis Royal, Feedlot Director from Simcoe County, who begins his first term as Vice-President. "I don't expect it will be easy and I know there are a lot of tough decisions ahead for the OCA Board. But I also know that OCA's Board is dedicated, and, along with the OCA staff, we are in a good position to achieve some great things."

Ian McKillop, former President stepped down this year, as did John Newman, who was Director for Eastern Ontario.

Re-elected to the Board was Doug Kaufman representing Feedlot producers. Doug and his family live and operate their farm in Oxford County. New to the Board are Rick Hobbs (cow/calf) from Ottawa District, Bill Herron (backgrounder) from Grey County, and Hank Hiddink (Eastern) from Prince Edward County. Continuing to serve out their terms are cow/calf producers Kim Sytsma of Leeds County and Dan Darling of Northumberland; Feedlot Directors, Curtis Royal of Simcoe County and Paul Sharpe of Wellington County. Gord Hardy of Middlesex County continues to serve as Director from the South and Jim Martin of Manitoulin Island as Director from the North. Rounding out the Board of Directors are Directors-at-Large Bob Gordanier of Wellington County and John Gillespie of Waterloo County.

Following a 2003 restructuring of the organization, OCA's Board of Directors consists of 12 elected officials – three from the cow/calf sector, three from the feedlot sector, one from the backgrounder sector; three representing geographic regions of Ontario and two elected on an At-Large

basis. Directors are elected for three-year terms on a rotating basis. Each year, voting delegates to the AGM elect three members to the Board.

The Ontario Cattlemen's Association represents the interests of 19,000 Ontario beef producers.

The complete 2007 OCA annual report can be viewed on the OCA Web site at www.cattle.guelph.on.ca after March 7th.

St. Marys Farm Family Wins Prestigious Environmental Stewardship Award

February 20, 2008 (Toronto) – The Ontario Cattlemen's Association (OCA) is pleased to announce that Dwain and Nancy Smith and family are the winners of this year's Environmental Stewardship Award (TESAward), sponsored by RBC Royal Bank and OCA. The award was presented at the OCA Annual General Meeting on February 20th, by Sheila Smart of RBC Royal Bank.

Dwain Smith is a third generation cattle producer from St. Marys, Ontario and, along with his wife Nancy and their children Brittany, Michael and Zachary, were nominated for the award by Craig Merkley, Conservation Services Specialist with the Upper Thames Conservation Authority and David Ainslie, a retired high school teacher from the area. The Smiths own and operate a beef farm in the south end of Perth County near the town of St. Marys. The farm is located on 100 acres of rolling land with two watercourses running across the property.

"We're extremely excited and appreciative to receive this award," says Dwain. "On our farm, we make it a priority to raise top quality cattle - economically and feasibly - in an environmentally responsible manner, and in a setting which is enjoyable to ourselves, the producer and to the cattle we raise."

The Smith family has made numerous enhancements on-farm to improve their pastures and quality of life for their livestock. They have limited access to water ways while making use of a water pump to provide their cattle with clean, fresh water. By rotating their grazing land it has allowed for pastures to better rejuvenate resulting in more grazing days per acre. There is limited access to rivers; this has allowed the banks to stabilize promoting better fish habitats and less river bank erosion. More cement yards and the use of eaves troughs has improved run-off and erosion problems as well as eliminating stream contamination. The Smiths have cleaned ditches and added windbreaks to prevent flooding and erosion problems. Their manure storage system eliminated the need to spread during the winter months minimizing contamination through runoff.

The Smiths have also been involved in various workshops, courses and organizations to increase their awareness of food safety as it pertains to cattle production and cropping practices. They have completed the Verified Beef Production - Quality Starts Here workshop, Livestock Medicines Education Program course, Pesticide Safety course, and have documented and completed both the Environmental Farm Plan and Nutrient Management Plan.

In the past, the Smiths have hosted an open house on-farm which gave guests the opportunity to hear Jack Kyle, Grazier Specialist for OMAFRA, speak about the benefits of rotational grazing. Attendees were able to see Smith's rotational grazing operation up close. Dwain was also a guest speaker at the 2006 Grazing Profitability seminar speaking about his experience shifting from traditional grazing to controlled grazing.

In his nomination letter, Craig Merkley writes "*I feel Dwain provides good examples for others to follow. Through his work the water quality in the Thames River will benefit locally and on a watershed scale*".

The Smiths will go on to represent Ontario at the National Environmental Stewardship Award competition to be held August 11th-15th, in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

TESAward recognizes the outstanding environmental stewardship of an Ontario cattleman. Special consideration is given to producers who have taken innovative approaches to environmentally sustainable cattle production.

The deadline for applications for the 2009 Environmental Stewardship Award is
November 28, 2008.

For details visit the OCA Web site at www.cattle.guelph.on.ca after March 1st.

Northumberland County Beef Farmer Wins 2008 Ontario Pasture Award

February 21, 2008 (Toronto) - The sponsors of the Ontario Pasture Award - the Ontario Cattlemen's Association (OCA), MAPLESEED and the Ontario Forage Council (OFC) - are pleased to announce that Scott Honey of Loyal Farms near Warkworth, in Northumberland County, is the winner of the 2008 Pasture Award. The award was presented today at the OCA Annual General Meeting. For his environmental and pasture improvements and management, Scott will receive a cash award of \$750 and a bag of forage seed.

Scott Honey is the fifth generation to farm the lands at Loyal Farms. The operation consists of a cow/calf operation of 85 beef cows. About 2000 acres is cash cropped and consists of corn, soybeans, wheat and hay. Much of the hay is exported to the United States for the horse market. In addition to the work on their own operation, the Honey's are involved in working about another 1500 acres of custom planting and harvesting in the local area.

As Scott says, "Every time I subdivide a pasture field into more paddocks, it increases production. The farm has gone through many changes, and in the past 14 years, we have increased our beef cow numbers from 35 to 85. A good rotational pasture management system is the key to the success of our pasturing operation".

The pastures consist mainly of an alfalfa/orchard grass mix, and are over-seeded in the spring using a mix of Red Clover, Orchard Grass and Ladino Clover.

The livestock are restricted from a woodlot on the property as well as the springs and swamp areas of the farm. The pasture area is divided into 18 paddocks, which allows an adequate rest period for each paddock after being grazed.

"I believe the intensive rotational pasture system, combined with clean water that is closely accessible at all times, has contributed greatly to improved herd health and improved daily gain," Scott comments. Scott has also had a major focus on extending grazing days by using a variety of different crops to greatly minimize his costs.

Steve Bent, Sales Manager with MAPLESEED, thinks Scott Honey is an ideal candidate for this year's award, because of the innovation he has demonstrated in his farming operation and his willingness to share ideas, for the benefit of agriculture and the industry in general.

Ray Robertson, Manager of the Ontario Forage Council, said that as producers try to cope with challenging times, they will look to practical and sustainable management practices like these to maximize their net returns.

The deadline for applications for the 2009 Ontario Pasture Award is November 21, 2008.

For details, call the Ontario Forage Council at 1-877-892-8663 or visit either the Ontario Forage Council's Web site at www.ontarioforagecouncil.com or the Ontario Cattlemen's Association Web site at www.cattle.guelph.on.ca after March 1st.

Provincial Funding Announcement: December 14, 2007

Specific information for producers on the new Ontario Cattle, Hog and Horticulture Payment is available by calling Agricorp at 1-877-838-5144.

A PDF is also posted on the OCA Web Site at <http://www.cattle.guelph.on.ca/PDFs/2008/InfoSheet-Dec.14Announcement.pdf>

Changes to Regulation 54 of the Beef Cattle Marketing Act Came into Effect on January 1, 2008

Please note that due to GST reduction from 6% to 5% on January 1, 2008 and changes to regulations of the Beef Cattle Marketing Act (check-off increased to \$3.00/head on January 1, 2008), OCA has developed revised check-off forms which will be applicable to all transactions made on or after January 1, 2008.

- OCA Check-off Deduction Remittance Report for Individuals
- OCA Check-off Deduction Remittance Report for Licensed Dealers

The new check-off forms, as well as more detailed information, are now available at <http://www.cattle.guelph.on.ca/Checkoff2008/index.asp>, as PDF files.

Canadian Farm Business Management Council Agriwebinar Series

The Canadian Farm Business Management Council is again this year promoting their Agriwebinar series. All sessions are free. In order to view the webinars you must register, but only once for all of them. For more information and to register go to <http://www.agriwebinar.com/>

2007/2008 CFBMC Agriwebinar Schedule - Each Monday at noon EST

February 25

Mara Jernigan *Fairburn Farm, BC*
Slow Food: Good, Clean and Fair

March 3

Paul Paquin *Institut des nutraceutiques et des aliments fonctionnels, Université Laval*
Dairy Ingredients Issues

Oxford Steps to Leadership 2008 – It's Back

Who?

Any community-minded resident of Oxford County. Maximum of 25 participants will be accepted, including up to 5 students age 15-19 years.

Why?

To encourage the personal development of Oxford County residents; to expand the leadership skills of community-minded individuals; and to initiate organizational and community involvement in Oxford County.

Where?

Each session will be in a different location throughout Oxford County. The program will include a 1-day workshop and a 1-day educational bus tour throughout the County.

On people's list of fears, it's number one! Learn tools and techniques to speak effectively in a large or small group setting including tips for thanking and introducing guest speakers. This session will also give you the tools to write an effective media release to communicate with the media.

Find out more about Oxford County and its many assets. Economic, agriculture, agri-business, historical and cultural aspects will be highlighted on this tour.

"Effective Organizations" - Learn ways to make meetings more productive and how you can help create an organization that can make a difference.

Find out how to run your organization smoothly while dealing with community issues.

Saturday, February 23rd, 2007 – 9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. "1-Day Workshop" - *Mt. Elgin Community Centre, Mt. Elgin*

"Responsibilities and Liabilities of Directors" - What is your responsibility and liability as a board member? Responsible procedures for organizations and individuals elected to a board will be discussed using case study examples.

“Stress & Time Management and Conflict Resolution” Time management tips that will help you meet your goals successfully and not stress you out! Learn how organizations and individuals can resolve conflicts effectively.

“Marketing & Fundraising for your Organization” - Learn ways to market your organization to create community awareness and build sustainability. Fundraising is often necessary—learn the essential features for any successful activity.

Monday, March 3rd, 2007—7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. – *Fusion Youth Centre, Ingersoll*
“Working with the Media”

Print, radio and TV—learn to utilize the press to your advantage. In addition, learn ways to achieve clear writing.

Monday, March 17th, 2007—7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. – *County Building, Woodstock*
“Community Issues and the Political Process”

Group discussion on local and organization issues and how to deal with them. What is the process and how do you effectively lobby for change? How do you foster greater involvement in the democratic process to the benefit of individuals and the community?

Monday, March 31st, 2007—7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. – *North Blenheim Insurance, Bright*
“Ironing Out Community Issues”

Learn some effective problem solving techniques that will help you formulate an action plan for your community.

Monday, April 7th, 2007—7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. – *Ingersoll Creative Arts Centre, Ingersoll*
“The Challenge - Shaping Our Future”

Where will you go from here? Organizations that will be successful in the future need to think creatively and be willing to adapt to change. A motivational speaker will put the program into perspective and challenge participants to strive for excellence. Graduation ceremony will follow.

How?

For more information or to obtain an application form, contact: Brenda West or Patti Arts, Program Co-ordinators, Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs (519) 537-6621. brenda.west@ontario.ca or patti.arts@ontario.ca

Cost?

(Including all resource materials)

\$200.00 per participant (Due November 30th, 2007 or \$250.00 after November 30th, 2007)

Student (age 15-19) \$100.00 (Due November 30th, 2007) or \$150.00 (after November 30th, 2007)

Note: If financial constraints are a concern, please contact us.

Participation in Steps to Leadership Will:

- Build self-confidence and leadership skills
- Allow you to learn from other local leaders
- Help you and/or your organization become more effective and
- Involve you in the planning of your local community

Don't Sit Back! Get Involved! Registration is limited, so APPLY NOW!

Ottawa's Central Experimental Farm Marks 10 Years as a National Historic Site

OTTAWA, Ontario, February 19, 2008 – February marks the 10th anniversary of Ottawa's Central Experimental Farm (CEF) as a National Historic Site.

“Not only is the Central Experimental Farm one of the most scenic places in the Ottawa area, it is also one of the most historically significant,” said the Honourable Gerry Ritz, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board. “Canadian farm families have been feeding Canadians and the world for years. The excellent research being done by our scientists here on the Farm and at our centres across the country will ensure the supply of high quality food continues for years to come.”

“As an Ottawa-area Member of Parliament, I know how important the Central Experimental Farm is to residents of our community,” said the Honourable John Baird, Minister of the Environment. “Back in 2006, I was pleased to help in getting \$8.4 million in funding for a new greenhouse at the farm. It's true that many people treasure the Experimental Farm, not just across Ottawa, but across Canada as well. It really is an island of rural life in the heart of our city.”

Though the CEF has roots dating back to 1886, it was not until February 1998 that it was officially named a National Historic Site. The designation was made, in part, because as a cultural landscape the 400-plus hectare farm reflects the 19th century philosophy of agriculture. It includes a mix of research and administrative buildings with an arboretum, ornamental gardens, display beds and experimental fields all in a picturesque composition.

The National Historic Site reassures Canadians that the site known as "Ottawa's Farm" will remain an important part of the country's landscape for generations to come. An eight-member advisory council advises the department on development proposals for the CEF and the National Capital Commission has final federal land use approval. The goal is to ensure any future changes will not endanger the heritage status of the site.

In the past decade, the CEF has received six certificates of merit from the Ottawa Architectural Conservation Awards honouring restoration work. In the coming months, three new state-of-the-art greenhouses will open in the area bordering Carling Avenue. These greenhouses and indoor growth facility will ensure research will continue on the Farm.

The CEF is also known for its Explorer Roses, developed by Dr. Felicitas Svejda, starting in 1961. Over the years, about 25 of the winter-hardy roses, named for such explorers as Henry Hudson, John Cabot and Martin Frobisher, were developed on the CEF and still bloom every spring in the rose garden. Beyond that, a rare example of a farm within a city, the CEF has become a symbol of the central role agriculture has played in shaping the country. The CEF is a working agricultural research farm within the Nation's Capital and is designed to showcase Canadian agricultural technology to national and international audiences.

This particular location was originally selected because of the diversity of soil types and access to land, water and rail transport; and because from this location it could serve farmers in both Ontario and Quebec. Now, the Farm provides educational opportunities for visitors, most of whom are city dwellers, to experience a farm, find out where their food comes from, and discover achievements in agricultural research, science and technology that affect them every day.

The CEF is among 24 Ottawa sites designated as National Historic Sites by Parks Canada. For more information on the CEF, visit www.agr.gc.ca/cef-fec

Federal Government Fuels Ethanol Production

OTTAWA, Ontario, February 21, 2008 - The Government of Canada knows farmers are proud to be stewards of the land and we are proud to work with them to protect Canada's environment with strong leadership on biofuels.

Biofuel production delivers real benefits across the country; be it through urban job creation, rural market variety or simply by providing a cleaner-burning, renewable energy source to protect our environment.

The economic benefits for farmers are clear: more buyers bidding for crops means farmers are getting a better return for their efforts and investments. The environmental benefits for Canadians are clear: biofuels reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Government's actions for the country are clear: a balanced and focused plan that includes biofuels.

The Renewable Fuels Bill was tabled last December proposing we mandate a 5 per cent renewable content in gasoline by 2010 and a 2 per cent renewable content in diesel and heating oil by 2012. In addition, since taking office, \$2.2 billion has been announced to support the development of Canada's biofuels industry.

By investing in farmers and in biofuel production we will reduce Canada's greenhouse gases by 4 megatonnes annually – the equivalent of taking almost one million cars off the road.

The Government of Canada is taking real action with the environment and biofuel development is a key part of that plan.

Growing Your Opportunities, Traction and AgriBusiness ecampus

Growing your Opportunities:

This workshop is for Farm and rural based entrepreneurs who want to learn how to tap into new value added opportunities from idea to market.

Over The Two Days You Will:

- Learn how to identify, find and evaluate new value added ideas
- Learn how to put your ideas into action using the seven step value added development process
- Learn how to connect with the right market channels
- Learn how to find innovative ways to market your products and services
- Learn how to build a business that can support your new idea
- Learn how to create a dynamite, but simple business plan
- Learn how to finance the different stages of your new ventures
- Learn how to save time and money in the development process
- Learn how to price your products properly
- Learn how to manage your risk
- Explore case studies of how innovative rural and farm businesses that have developed their value added ideas and opportunities
- Follow a new product from conception to integration into the marketplace

Growing your Opportunities

Orangeville

Day 1: Sat. Feb. 23

Day 2: Sat. Mar. 1

\$75 per person (includes \$3.57 GST)

Growing your Opportunities

Hanover

Day 1: Mon. Feb. 25

Day 2: Mon. Mar. 3

\$75 per person (includes \$3.57 GST)

Growing your Opportunities

Clinton

Day 1: Tues. Feb. 26

Day 2: Tues. Mar. 4

\$75 per person (includes \$3.57 GST)

Growing your Opportunities

Port Hope

Day 1: Thurs. Feb. 28

Day 2: Thurs. Mar. 6
\$75 per person (includes \$3.57 GST)

Growing your Opportunities

Napanee Area
Day 1: Mon. Mar. 17
Day 2: Fri. Mar. 28
\$75 per person (includes \$3.57 GST)

Growing your Opportunities

Tillsonburg
Day 1: Wed. Mar. 19
Day 2: Wed. Mar. 26
\$75 per person (includes \$3.57 GST)

Traction

Traction: Skills to Grow is a program developed by Guelph-based Juice Inc. The program has been well received by farmers and producers within the agricultural community, who are attending with their spouses and family members to ensure they are aligned in the planning of their farm's future. Traction participants, ranging in age from their early 20s to their late 60s from various commodity groups, have consistently rated the program a 4.9 on a five-point scale. Uniquely designed in conjunction with producers, advisors and industry leaders, Traction provides a pragmatic and process-based approach to four main areas:

- Taking stock
- Innovation
- Communication
- Goal Setting
- Planning

What participants are saying:

- "Seeing the real life examples helped me to see how understanding the other person's point of view can solve problems that otherwise seemed impossible to solve."
- "This gave me a whole new way of approaching problems and relationships".
- "Problems just don't seem to be overwhelming after taking this course. Our family left with tools to help us keep unstuck and moving ahead more smoothly."
- "Being successful as a farmer requires ongoing development of not only your industry knowledge but your communication skills. This high energy program gave me new tools to take home that will keep the ideas flowing."

AgriBusiness eCampus Project
<http://agribusinesssecampus-com.rkd.ca/default.aspx>
Your Home – offered by the University of Guelph, Kemptville Campus
Launch date – early February
variable

AgriBusiness eCampus Project

The AgriBusiness eCampus (ABeC) is a web-based and face-to-face learning centre offering a range of topics to assist farmers in managing their farm business in today's increasingly complex

environment. The ABeC offers a “one-stop-shop” for practical, real-world business solutions through life-long learning in agribusiness management and entrepreneurship.

Our eCourses are designed by top experts in the agribusiness field with you in mind. Our focus is on developing skills that are immediately applicable to you and your farm business. Courses are self-paced and self-assessed, allowing you to fit your learning around other farm and family commitments. Courses provide you with networking opportunities through question and answer sessions and streamed discussion with industry experts and peers. Course facilitators are always just a phone call or click away to answer your questions and assist you with any course-related or technical problems.

Courses are currently being offered in: Strategic and Business Planning, Succession Planning, Domestic and Global Marketing, Commodity Marketing, and Human Resources.

University of Guelph Beef Cattle Transportation Study: Assistance of Beef Producers Requested

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is currently assessing how cattle are transported in Canada with intentions of changing the laws and regulations that govern the industry. Changes proposed by CFIA may increase trucking costs for beef producers. In an effort to better understand current transportation conditions for the movement of cattle in Canada, the Ontario Cattlemen's Association is funding a University of Guelph research study to examine how current transportation conditions (space/loading densities and travel time) impact animal welfare, health, and performance for weaned calves and yearlings (500-900 lbs). The objectives of this research are to determine if current procedures for transporting cattle ensure animal welfare and how they impact health and performance after arrival. The ultimate goal of this work is to ensure animal welfare while increasing the demand for Ontario grown beef.

The help of beef producers is needed in this study to collect data on cattle loads that are received at feedlots and to follow their health for approximately 8 weeks after arrival. Surveys have been constructed to collect data from producers and truckers on the same loads of cattle during transit and following arrival. The more information that can be collected on how cattle are transported in Canada will provide CFIA with industry data that will support current trucking regulations without the need for the proposed costly changes. Please consider participating in this research study to provide valuable information on the Ontario Beef industry. If you would like to participate in this benchmark study or desire more information, please contact one of the University of Guelph researchers involved in this study by telephone or e-mail: *Matt Thrower* (519- 827-1346 or e-mail mthrower@uoguelph.ca); *Ken Bateman* (519-824-4120, Ext 5-4006; kbateman@ovc.uoguelph.ca), *Ira Mandell* (519-824-4120, Ext 5-3337; imandell@uoguelph.ca), *Tina Widowski* (519-824-4120, Ext 5-2408; twidowsk@uoguelph.ca)

The Ontario Co-operative Association invites you to a Co-operative Development Toolkit Workshop

- Learn more about co-ops
- Connect with local business resources
- Discover why the co-op model works

Due to February winter conditions this workshop has been rescheduled for Wednesday March 26, 2008. All of the other details remain the same: same location, the W.I.S.H Centre, Chatham and same time: 1 to 4pm. Please see the attached invitation for more information about the workshop. This workshop is FREE. However, we ask that you pre-register to allow us to adequately prepare. To register or if you have questions please call 1.888.745.5521 ext. 31 or reply to this email to indicate your attendance.

Using the following link, <http://maps.google.com/> you can type in your beginning address and then the end address: 177 King Street East, Chatham, ON to get directions to the workshop.

Tanya Gracie
Ontario Co-operative Association
tgracie@ontario.coop

1-888-745-5521 ext. 31

The On Co-op Co-operative Development roadshow/workshop is coming to a city near you. Visit www.ontario.coop/Toolkit to learn more.

Willabar Ranch Long Yearling Black Angus Bull Sale

March 18

at the ranch
Claresholm, AB
Contact: (403) 625-2060

**Saunders Andemar 3rd Annual
Purebred Charolais Bull Sale**

March 8th 2008 at 2pm
Keady Livestock Market.
Be our guest for lunch 11:30am sale day
Contact: Brent: (519) 986 4165 or Pete: (519) 871 4703

Northern Powerpac Bull and Heifer Sale

2 p.m. Saturday, April 12, 2008
Temiskaming Livestock Exchange
New Liskeard, Ontario

Your Source For Success Bull Sale

Red/Black Simmentals & Polled Herefords
March 29, 2008 @ 2:00pm
at the farm, Indian River, ON (Just East of Peterborough)
Join us for lunch!
for more info contact Billy Elmhirst
Tel: 705-295-2708 Cell: 705-761-0896
Email: ircc@nexicom.net
website: www.indianrivercattlecompany.com

Also I am the secretary for the Ontario Simmental Association and our Annual Meeting is coming up, could it get listed also?

Ontario Simmental Association Annual Meeting

March 1, 2008 @ 1:00pm
Otonabee Best Western Inn
Peterborough, ON
Everyone welcome!
Please book your supper tickets ASAP.
More info at www.ontariosimmentalassociation.com

Cedardale Charolais 5th Annual Bull Sale

The Nesbitt Family
Saturday, April 19th, 2008

Offering 20 Purebred Charolais Yearling Bulls
and 15 Elite Open Heifers

Open House 11 am, Sale 1 pm at the farm
Nestleton, ON

Contact: (905) 986-4608 for more information or a sale catalogue
or visit our website @ www.cedardalefarms.ca

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This report prepared with the assistance of Dr. Doug Powell's team at the Universities of Guelph and Kansas State. This service does not allow emails to be sent by responding to this email directly. If you have questions or comments, please contact Lianne Appleby at lianne@cattle.guelph.on.ca

A) CALIFORNIA: Cattle inspections thwarted

20.feb.08

Los Angeles Times

Victoria Kim

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-beef20feb20,0,23013,full.story>

Slaughterhouse workers, according to this story, watch every move of federal inspectors. They know when they take bathroom breaks. They use the radio to alert one another to the inspector's every step. They even assign the pretty talkative woman to work next to the inspector to distract him from his mission to safeguard the nation's food supply.

The story says that cat-and-mouse game is portrayed by past and current inspectors, lawmakers and an audit report that say the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety Inspection Service is easy to bypass and was failing to screen potentially sick cattle long before this week's beef recall, the largest in U.S. history.

A 2006 audit reviewed 12 slaughterhouses and showed that, despite federal regulations banning all cattle that cannot walk from the human food supply, 29 so-called downer animals were slaughtered. Of those, 20 had no documented physical injury that would demonstrate that they were not diseased, according to the report by the USDA's office of inspector general.

"Should serious animal diseases be detected in the United States, USDA's ability to quickly determine and trace the source of infections to prevent the spread of the disease could be impaired," the audit report says.

Shortcomings in the system have come under harsh light in the wake of the recall of 143 million pounds of beef from a Chino slaughterhouse, where an undercover investigator for the Humane Society of the United States https://community.hsus.org/campaign/CA_2008_investigation%3Fqp_source=gaba89 downer cattle being forced into the slaughter line.

Authorities said the health risk for the public was minimal and that most of the recalled meat may already have been consumed.

The federal Government Accountability Office launched investigations Tuesday into the USDA's oversight of food purchased for federal programs, including school lunches, after numerous lawmakers expressed outrage that weak dairy cattle were slaughtered at Hallmark/Westland, a major supplier of ground beef to the National School Lunch Program.

One USDA inspector, who asked not to be named because he is employed by the Inspection Service, was cited as saying the agency did not have the adequate staff and resources to enforce multiple regulations on meat production given workers' efforts to dodge oversight, adding, "They know where I'm at. If I'm headed to the plant, they've got the radios to say, 'This guy's headed out to the pens.' " Slaughterhouse employees often struck up conversations with inspectors to keep them from going to parts of the plant where workers were doing something against regulation, the inspector said. At Hallmark/Westland, five on-site inspectors oversaw around 100 employees.

But with limited staff, monitoring the workers' treatment of animals often took a back seat to inspecting the carcasses of cattle after slaughter.

"If you look on paper, [the inspections are] getting done, but we're not given the ability to do the zero-tolerance audits," said the inspector, who has worked for the USDA for more than 15 years.

At one point last year, seven of the 24 inspection positions at a large Midwestern slaughterhouse were vacant, said the inspector, adding that staff shortages began about three years ago. With the limited number of personnel, inspectors are routinely outwitted by slaughterhouse workers, he said.

Amanda Eamich, a spokeswoman for the USDA's inspection service, was cited as saying that last year, 9% of inspector positions nationwide were vacant. In the district that includes Hallmark/Westland Meat, the average vacancy rate was 12%, said Stan Painter, president of the inspector's union. Eamich said that the vacancy rate is low compared with previous years and that the agency is recruiting aggressively to fill the vacancies.

Dean Cliver, professor emeritus of food safety at UC Davis and advisor to the USDA, was cited as saying authorities need to rethink how meat inspections are conducted, adding, "Both laws and regulations are predicated on an adversarial 'gotcha' relationship. Some kind of a teaching relationship is what you need. You ought to be doing a better job of explaining what is wrong and how to do it right."

American Meat Institute spokeswoman Janet Riley was quoted as saying, "Obviously we had a system failure here. However, we will not accept it as a poster child for our industry. It's absolutely not how we operate."

B) Maryland. seeks to sell raw milk

20.feb.08

wjz.com

Suzanne Collins

<http://wjz.com/local/raw.milk.2.658848.html>

Lawmakers are deciding if Maryland dairy farmers should, according to this story, be able to sell directly to the public and even sell raw, unpasteurized milk.

Don Everett from Apple Valley Creamery in Pennsylvania was quoted as saying, "We were not planning on selling raw milk when we first opened the creamery. We had so many customers--one in four we estimated--wanted raw milk. We said, 'hey this is what the consumer wants, is there a safe way we can do it?' We researched it."

The advent of pasteurization prevented many bacterial illnesses from milk, but some people believe the healthy benefits of raw milk outweigh the dangers.

Some lawmakers in Maryland are trying to legalize direct milk sales and the sale of raw milk here.

It would be regulated carefully, as in Pennsylvania where the state tests it twice a month.

There are also warnings on the raw milk. People who are pregnant or with weak immune systems should avoid it.

At a hearing in Annapolis, consumers and some farmers testified in favor of the bill, but the farmers

association was worried if anyone got sick from raw milk it might hurt the dairy industry.

C) USDA tests system that could replace human graders

15.feb.08

Meatingplace.com

Lisa M. Keefe

<http://www.meatingplace.com/MembersOnly/webNews/details.aspx?item=19832>

A video analysis instrument — which grades beef carcasses by analyzing a digital video image it takes of the ribeye portion — could become a widely used substitute for U.S. Department of Agriculture graders, according to a USDA official.

The systems have been tested for "accuracy, precision and repeatability" of results in a laboratory setting, Marty O'Connor, chief of the standards analysis and technology branch of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, told Meatingplace.com.

USDA is rolling out commercial tests of the video grading system in four major processing facilities: National Beef Co. and Cargill Meat Solutions in Dodge City, Kan., Nebraska Beef Co. in Omaha, Neb., and JBS Swift Group in Grand Island, Neb.

The goal is for grading to be more uniform, precise and accurate across the country than has proven possible with human graders performing subjective evaluations, O'Connor said.

Assuming the technology stands up under commercial testing, it could be used by any company that grades its beef according to USDA standards. Nationwide, about 160 USDA graders now evaluate about 94% of the steer and heifer slaughter.

The greater efficiencies made possible with the video imaging technology means that the agency could begin to cut back on the number of graders it employs within a year, O'Connor said. In three to five years, if the technology proves reliable enough, the USDA could move to a system of auditing the grading results, further reducing its head count in that area.

The video technology already is installed in many large processing facilities, for in-house sorting, for example.

D) MASSACHUSETTS: State says Hadley farm sold raw milk illegally

15.feb.08

The Republican

http://blog.masslive.com/breakingnews/2008/02/state_says_hadley_farm_sold_ra.html

BOSTON -- The state Department of Agricultural Resources was cited as alerting consumers to the possible illegal presence of antibiotics in unpasteurized milk purchased directly from Hartsbrook Farm in Hadley. Hartsbrook had been selling raw milk without a valid state permit, according to the DAR.

A routine sample of milk, taken by a state-certified laboratory Monday, confirmed the presence of antibiotics. Milk is tested for antibiotics under U.S. Food and Drug Administration and state guidelines, and there is zero tolerance under the regulations for the presence of antibiotics in raw milk. Antibiotics entering the food chain may lead to allergic reactions in humans and to the development of antibiotic resistant strains of bacteria.

E) PENNSYLVANIA: Raw milk activist gives PASA keynote address

15.feb.08

Northern Editor

Tracy Sutton

<http://www.lancasterfarming.com/node/1093>

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. — Raw milk dairyman Mark MacAfee rallied the sustainable ag community last Saturday, giving the keynote address to end the five-day Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA) conference. MacAfee is co-owner of Organic Pastures, near Fresno, California and an outspoken raw milk activist.

PASA president, Brian Snyder, described MacAfee's personal narrative as one of "perseverance to do what is right."

For 15 years MacAfee served as a paramedic and assisted thousands of people, sadly watching many of

them die. It struck him that many folks died despite "all these pills" he'd notice in their homes. The story says this experience galvanized him to take a deeper interest in preventative medicine and in 1999 he converted his organic dairy to a raw milk dairy, convinced by customers who approached him for raw milk sales, that there was a both a health benefit to and a market for raw milk. At first, he said, out of ignorance, he sold raw milk on the black market.

F) US: Huge beef recall issued

18.feb.08

Los Angeles Times/New York Times/USA Today

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced the largest beef recall in its history Sunday, calling for, according to these stories, the destruction of 143 million pounds of raw and frozen beef produced by a Chino slaughterhouse that has been accused of inhumane practices.

However, the USDA said the vast majority of the meat involved in the recall -- including 37 million pounds that went mostly to schools -- probably has been eaten already. Officials emphasized that danger to consumers was minimal.

The recall applies to beef slaughtered at the Hallmark/Westland Meat Packing Co. since Feb. 1, 2006.

The company has produced no meat since Feb. 4 of this year, when operations were suspended.

The action came nearly three weeks after the Humane Society of the United States released a video showing workers at the plant using forklifts and water hoses, among other methods, to rouse cattle too weak to walk. In addition to issues of animal cruelty, the video raised questions about whether so-called downer cattle were entering the food chain in violation of federal regulations.

Although the Humane Society said at least four non-ambulatory cattle had been slaughtered for food, the USDA had repeatedly said it had no such evidence. On Sunday, federal officials said for the first time that they had evidence such cattle from Hallmark had been processed for food.

Downer cattle are not supposed to be used as meat unless a veterinarian determines that the animal stumbled or fell because of injury -- a broken leg, for instance -- that would not affect the safety of their meat. Cattle weakened by disease are not supposed to enter the food supply, although their risk of harming humans is still fairly low. There is, however, a slightly higher possibility that such cattle are suffering from bovine spongiform encephalopathy, better known as mad cow disease.

Steve Mendell, president of Hallmark Meat Packing and its distributor, Westland, declined to comment. The company has refused to answer questions about its practices since the Humane Society video surfaced.

The stories go on to say that Hallmark/Westland meat was also sold to restaurant chains, including In-N-Out Burger and Jack in the Box, but both of those companies said they stopped using it early this month after the first reports of problems at the plant.

The amount of beef affected by the recall may be far larger than 143 million pounds because meat from different companies is often mixed as it goes through numerous processors. Such mixing makes it extremely difficult for consumers to know whether meat products came from a particular plant.

At a USDA telephone briefing Sunday for retailers, school districts and food safety experts, a Costco representative raised concerns about beef that gets "commingled," according to Humane Society President Wayne Pacelle, who participated in the conference call. He said the Costco representative estimated that the amount of beef recalled may top a billion pounds.

Four senior Democrats in Congress, including Assistant Senate Majority Leader Dick Durbin, told the General Accounting Office on Thursday to investigate the safety of meat in the school lunch program in light of the Hallmark/Westland case.

The video was embarrassing for the Department of Agriculture, as inspectors are supposed to be monitoring slaughterhouses for abuse. It surfaced after a year of increasing concerns about the safety of the meat supply amid a sharp increase in the number of recalls tied to a particularly deadly form of the E. coli pathogen.

Cows that cannot walk are banned for use in the food supply because they pose an added risk of mad cow disease, or bovine spongiform encephalopathy, a fatal disease that eats away at the brain. There have been three confirmed cases of infected cattle in this country since 2003.

One consumer advocate questioned whether the likelihood of danger from the recalled meat was as low as the USDA contended.

Caroline Smith DeWaal, food safety director for the Center for Science in the Public Interest, a

Washington-based consumer advocacy and research organization, was cited as saying federal regulators "really don't know what conditions were making the cattle sick."

James O. Reagan, chairman of the Beef Industry Food Safety Council, issued a statement saying he supported the recall. "At the same time," he was quoted as saying, "we can say with confidence that the beef supply is safe." He said there were "multiple interlocking safeguards" in every beef processing plant so that a single lapse would not endanger consumers.

"We don't know exactly where all the product went" but will "cast a wide net to make sure that we can find all the product that we can find," Ken Petersen at the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service was cited as saying in a conference call with reporters Sunday.

"The recall is obviously the big news," Wayne Pacelle, president and chief executive of the Humane Society was quoted as saying, adding, "The longer-term problem is the inadequacies of the inspection system. How can so many downers have been mistreated day after day within a U.S.D.A. oversight system that was present at the plant?"

"We need more boots on the ground at the plants," he was quoted as saying.

Agriculture officials said in a statement that they thought the case was "an isolated incident of egregious violations to humane handling requirements and the prohibition of non-ambulatory disabled cattle from entering the food supply."

G) SOUTH DAKOTA: Judge asked to stop older Canadian cattle imports over mad cow concerns

19.feb.08

Associated Press

Carson Walker

http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/local/6420ap_sd_cattlemen_lawsuit.html

Lawyers representing cattle, consumer and health interests urged a federal judge Tuesday to stop imports of older Canadian cattle because of the potential threat of mad cow disease.

The story says that an attorney for the government countered that U.S. District Judge Lawrence Piersol should not grant the preliminary injunction, saying rules and changes in the industry adequately protect American animals, people and markets.

The lawsuit, filed last fall in federal court in South Dakota, seeks to suspend a U.S. Department of Agriculture rule that went into effect Nov. 19 allowing Canadian cattle more than 30 months old into the U.S. market.

The change exposes consumers to a fatal disease linked to eating meat contaminated with bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or BSE, increases the risk that U.S. cattle would be infected with the disease, and could harm the U.S. cattle market, according to the lawsuit.

The lawsuit was filed by Ranchers-Cattlemen Action Legal Fund, or R-CALF; United Stockgrowers of America, based in Billings, Mont.; South Dakota Stockgrowers Association; four South Dakota cattle ranchers; the Center for Food Safety; the Consumer Federation of America; the Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease Foundation; and Food & Water Watch.

Russell Frye, one of the lawyers for the plaintiffs, was cited as saying BSE can incubate in humans for years, so even though changes have been made to protect against it, allowing older cattle into the market increases the chance it can be introduced into American herds.

"There are certainly cases out there where the rules aren't being followed," Frye was quoted as saying, citing the government's recall of 143 million pounds of beef from a California plant where undercover video showed workers shocking, kicking and shoving debilitated cattle that were slaughtered.

Lisa Olson, a U.S. Justice Department lawyer, said there's no way to get 100 percent compliance with any rule.

"All we can do is redouble our efforts to enforce these regulations," she said, Besides the health concerns, cattlemen worry that cheap Canadian beef will depress domestic prices, reduce exports to countries with tougher standards and steer consumers away from beef.

H) US: The biggest beef recall ever

21.feb.08

New York Times

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/21/opinion/21thu1.html?ref=opinion>

A nauseating video of cows stumbling on their way to a California slaughterhouse has finally, according to this editorial, prompted action: the largest recall of meat in American history. Westland/Hallmark Meat Company has issued a full recall of more than 143 million pounds of beef produced over the last two years, including 37 million pounds that went to school-lunch programs.

The question Congress needs to ask is how many people need to get sick or die before it starts repairing and modernizing the nation's food safety system?

Instead of strengthening the government's regulatory systems, the Bush administration has spent years cutting budgets and filling top jobs with industry favorites. The evidence of their failures keep mounting: contaminated spinach, poisoned pet food, tainted fish.

At Westland/Hallmark, the latest horrors were secretly videotaped by the Humane Society of the United States, which said it had chosen the plant at random. The video showed workers kicking and using forklifts to force so-called "downer" cows to walk. The government has banned the sale of meat from most of these cows.

Officials have been busy assuring consumers that this massive recall is an "aberration." "Whistling in the dark" — that is how Caroline Smith DeWaal of the Center for Science in the Public Interest describes such assurances. "The fact that they have failed here so miserably makes you start to question what else is going on that we don't know about."

The Westland/Hallmark plant had five federal inspectors on hand, including at least one veterinarian whose job was to make sure that diseased cows did not make it into the meat supply. But where were these inspectors when workers were abusing these poor animals in order to get them to the slaughterhouse? Investigations have already begun in California and Washington.

The editorial says that whatever the outcome with this particular plant, the larger point is that Congress needs to overhaul the entire food inspection program. That includes giving the Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration more power to demand mandatory recalls. Food producers should be able to track their supplies in order to more quickly root out problems. And foreign suppliers would have to create and implement a workable food safety plan that can be monitored better by federal inspectors.

I) Central coast cattlemen respond to shocking video of animal cruelty at southern CALIFORNIA slaughterhouse

20.feb.08

KSBY News

Melissa Mecija

<http://www.ksby.com/global/story.asp?s=7902004&ClientType=Printable>

SANTA YNEZ -- At a meeting on the Central Coast, representatives from the California Cattlemen's Association were cited as saying in this story, they are disgusted by an undercover video showed animals being kicked, shocked, and shoved, and add they are working to gain your trust back.

"You can only describe the video as entirely inappropriate. The treatment of animals that's displayed there is entirely abhorrent, and it's entirely correct that there should be an outcry," Matt Byrne, Executive Vice President for the California Cattlemen's Association was quoted as saying.

A picture worth a thousand words: a video affecting the entire industry.

"It's an example that is by no way indicative of what's happening around the entire country, but at the same time, any instance of this is one time to many," Byrne added.

Bruce Hafenfeld, President of the California Cattlemen's Association was cited as saying that he knows many customers are upset, adding, "Out of the bad will come the good. The good will be, we will tighten things up in the industry, and if we got problems, we need to face them on right up front."

J) KANSAS: Research headed by K-STATE veterinarians leading to tools for managing bovine respiratory disease complex, a costly ailment

19.feb.08

From a press release

Bovine respiratory disease complex has multiple causes.

It's sometimes hard to classify and predict. It also costs the beef industry more than any other disease -- an estimated \$690 million in 2006, according to one report.

That's why a team of Kansas State University researchers is stepping in. Using a three-year, \$375,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the team is analyzing data from feedlots to develop decision-making tools that will make it easier for producers to manage the health of their cattle. The research team is led by K-State College of Veterinary Medicine's David Renter, assistant professor of diagnostic medicine and pathobiology, and Brad White, assistant professor of clinical sciences. Using existing data, the researchers are working toward several objectives, including developing a system to classify distributions of disease events within feedlot pens. The researchers also are working toward generating estimates of what effect certain risk factors have on the multifaceted bovine respiratory disease complex. By better understanding the data, the researchers hope to create decision-making tools that will let feedlot producers compare their data with the average and therefore make more informed decisions about managing and treating their herds. With cooperation from producers, the researchers are looking at data that feedlots collect, such as how many cattle get sick and when the problems are most likely to occur. The problem, Renter said, is that it is challenging for feedlots to analyze this information on a daily basis. Rather, they take data that is cumulative over an entire feeding period. The ability to analyze data in real time could lead to effective treatment and disease management decisions, he said. "In terms of a system, right now there's not something producers can go to like software that tells them that cattle in this particular pen are experiencing more disease than expected, for instance," Renter said. Producers are somewhat able to predict which cattle are likely to get sick. But bovine respiratory disease complex has so many variables that this isn't easy. "It's not a simple, contagious infection like the chicken pox," Renter said. Instead, bovine respiratory disease complex is caused by multiple pathogens, both viruses and bacteria, that are commonly found in the feedlot. Some of them can even be cultured from healthy cattle. Also, factors like immunity, feed intake and even the weather can influence which cattle get sick, as can stressors like being weaned or moved from farm to feedlot. "Part of the cost associated to producers is that we can't predict as well as we want to," Renter said. "There's so much variability in how many cattle will get sick." Renter said the research done at K-State will supplement the work being done by producers and consulting veterinarians. What makes the research at K-State so valuable is that the team is looking at data from multiple sources, and the researchers will share their tools with people in the industry. With the groundwork laid by researchers at K-State, further work could yield software or other decision-making tools, Renter said. Other K-State collaborators are: Abram Babcock, doctoral student in pathobiology; Suzanne Dubnicka, assistant professor of statistics; Robert Larson, professor of clinical sciences; George Milliken, professor emeritus of statistics; Christopher Reinhardt, assistant professor of animal sciences and industry; Michael Sanderson, associate professor of clinical sciences; and Dan Thomson, assistant professor of clinical sciences.

K) WALES: Stay firm on Brazilian beef ban

19.feb.08

Western Mail

Jill Evans

TOGETHER with other Euro-MPs and representatives of the farming unions Evans, vice-president of Plaid Cymru and represents all of Wales in the European Parliament where she is a member of the Environment Committee writes in this op-ed, I have long been calling for a ban on the import of Brazilian beef to the European Union.

The Commission has at last listened to reason and announced a total – if temporary – halt to imports from the end of last month.

Last September in Strasbourg I joined forces with Euro-MPs from Scotland, England and Ireland to launch a parliamentary campaign for a ban.

Even then, when we raised an Irish Farmers Association study which had raised concerns about foot-and-mouth disease, the use of growth hormones and the lack of traceability of the Brazilian beef herd, the Commission refused to act.

We called for a ban because of serious and well-founded concerns about animal health and hygiene standards in Brazil.

What gives new cause for concern is Brazil's recent decision to lodge a complaint with the World Trade Organization alleging that the European ban breaches trade rules. This is bizarre given that the US, Australia, Japan and South Korea all have similar bans in place.

What is absolutely vital is that the Commission remains firm in the face of this attack from the Brazilian government. We must make sure of that – there is too much at stake. Welsh livestock farming continues to struggle to recover from the movement ban that followed last year's Pirbright foot-and-mouth outbreak. Yet all the while Brazil beef imports to the EU were allowed to continue when documented concerns about the existence of foot-and-mouth in Brazilian cattle was being highlighted. Such apparent double standards are disappointing.

Evans goes on to say that questions were asked as to why one set of rules should be applied to farmers in the EU, while an altogether more lax regime has been allowed to develop for imports.

The European Commission's decision to ban Brazil beef imports is welcome. They acted in the interests of the consumer and of the farming industry. Now they must remain firm.

L) ITALY: Mad cow disease: The "real" t-bone is back after 7 years

19.feb.08

AGI

<http://www.agi.it/italy/news/200802191718-cro-ren0062-art.html>

Rome -- Following a seven-year ban, it is, according to this story, now possible to sink your teeth into a "fiorentina" steak from an full-grown animal of up to 30 months old. This had been prohibited ever since 31 March 2001, as a consequence of the outbreak of Mad Cow Disease (BSE). The European Council for Agriculture has indeed given a green light to a motion raising the age of cattle whose meat may be traded with the spinal cord from 24 to 30 months of age. The new regulation is to appear on the official European Gazette, and will come into force by March this year. The return of the T-bone of up to 30 months of age - says Italy's farmers' federation, Coldiretti - is an acknowledgement of breeders efforts on the front of the quality, traceability, genuineness, and of the safety of their products, with a drastic reduction in the BSE phenomenon: from the fifty cases discovered in 2001 to the two cases in the first nine months of 2007 on around 450,000 tests carried out on animals

M) Notice of availability of a risk analysis for the Foot-and-Mouth Disease status of the Republic of SOUTH AFRICA

18.feb.08

Federal Register

<http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20081800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2008/E8-2912.htm>

[Federal Register: February 15, 2008 (Volume 73, Number 32)]

[Page 8844-8845]

[DOCID:fr15fe08-23]

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: We are advising the public that a risk analysis has been prepared by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service concerning the foot-and-mouth disease status of the Republic of South Africa and the related disease risks associated with importing animals and animal products into the United States from the Republic of South Africa. This risk analysis will be used as a basis for determining whether to relieve certain prohibitions and restrictions on the importation of ruminants and swine and the fresh meat and other animal products of ruminants and swine into the United States from the Republic of South Africa. We are making this risk analysis available to the public for review and comment.

DATES: We will consider all comments we receive on or before April 15, 2008.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments by either of the following methods:

Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to

<http://www.regulations.gov/fdmspublic/component/main?main=DocketDetail&d=APHIS-2008-0001> to submit or view comments and to view supporting and related materials available electronically.

Postal Mail/Commercial Delivery: Please send two copies of your comment to Docket No. APHIS-2008-

0001, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3A-03.8, 4700 River Road Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238. Please state that your comment refers to Docket No. APHIS-2008-0001. Reading Room: You may read any comments that we receive on the risk analysis in our reading room. The reading room is located in room 1141 of the USDA South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC. Normal reading room hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. To be sure someone is there to help you, please call (202) 690-2817 before coming.

Other Information: Additional information about APHIS and its programs is available on the Internet at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Javier Vargas, Animal Scientist, Regionalization Evaluation Services Staff, National Center for Import and Export, VS, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 38, Riverdale, MD 20737-1231; (301) 734-0756.

N) WALES is free of Bluetongue disease

18.feb.08

News Wales

<http://www.newswales.co.uk/?section=Agriculture&F=1&id=13347>

Wales is, according to this story, free of the animal disease Bluetongue, said Rural Affairs Minister Elin Jones today.

"We cannot be complacent as the disease remains a significant threat," the Minister was quoted as saying, adding, "We must remain vigilant and I continue to call on the Welsh livestock industry to consider whether they really need to source animals from areas infected by Bluetongue. "

A sheep in Llandysul, Ceredigion, one of a flock of 14 moved from the Netherlands, tested positive for Bluetongue recently and was slaughtered.

"The remaining animals have all tested negative," said the Minister was further quoted as saying.

O) SCOTLAND: NBA asks Defra to review bluetongue vaccine decision

17.feb.08

The Herald

Rog Wood

http://www.theherald.co.uk/business/farming/display.var.2046511.0.NBA_asks_Defra_to_review_bluetongue_vaccine_decision.php

The National Beef Association (NBA) has, according to this story, renewed its call for the Scottish Government to order bluetongue vaccine.

The move follows the announcement by the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) that bluetongue restrictions have been extended into Devon and south-east Wales after the discovery of an outbreak in Dorset. The Dorset case was one of four confirmed on Wednesday.

All of the infected animals were found as a result of pre-movement testing required before taking animals out of restricted zones in the vector-free period.

advertisement

The total number of confirmed cases now stands at 79.

NBA Scotland cannot understand the risk the Scottish Government is prepared to take by not ordering bluetongue vaccine for general use on livestock farms this summer.

NBA Scotland was cited as saying it is unrealistic for Rural Affairs Secretary Richard Lochhead to expect farmers to be able to counter the advance of bluetongue virus, which has the potential to inflict disastrous economic and animal welfare damage on their businesses, without access to an effective restraint.

P) iFSN: Animal welfare shouldn't be a downer

18.feb.08

International Food Safety Network

Commentary from the International Food Safety Network

Doug Powell

<http://barfblog.foodsafety.ksu.edu/2008/02/articles/culture-of-food->

safety/animal-welfare-shouldnt-be-a-downer/index.html

In 1184, city leaders in Toulouse, France, introduced some of the first documented measures to oversee the sale of meat: profit for butchers was limited to eight per cent; the partnership between two butchers was forbidden; and, selling the meat of sick animals was forbidden unless the buyer was warned.

By 1394, the Toulouse charter on butchering contained 60 articles, 19 of which were devoted to health and safety. As outlined by Madeleine Ferrières, a professor of social history at the University of Avignon, in her 2002 book, *Sacred Cow, Mad Cow: A History of Food Fears*, the goal of regulations at butcher shops -- the forerunners of today's slaughterhouse -- was to safeguard consumers and increase tax revenues. Animals from the surrounding countryside were consolidated at a single spot -- the evolving slaughterhouse, originally inside city walls -- so taxes could be more easily gathered, and so animals could be physically examined for signs of disease.

It's no different today: slaughterhouses are common collection points to examine animals for signs of disease and to collect various levies. And like medieval times, one of the most basic rules is animals that cannot walk are forbidden from entering (the slaughterhouse or city).

So when Hallmark/Westland Meat Packing Co., a Chino, Calif., establishment that is (was) the second-largest provider of beef to the U.S. school lunch program was caught breaking the rules, the U.S.

Department of Agriculture on Sunday announced the firm was voluntarily recalling two-years worth of production, or approximately 143 million pounds of raw and frozen beef products. USDA had determined the meat to be unfit for human food because the cattle did not receive complete and proper inspection.

But it wasn't the inspectors and veterinarians who work for USDA, those who are paid to be present in the slaughterhouse to inspect and verify compliance, who busted the case. It was an undercover employee of the Humane Society of the United States who obtained footage which prompted USDA to act (the original video is available at: https://community.hsus.org/campaign/CA_2008_investigation?qp_source=gaba89). The slaughterhouse was found using a variety of distasteful techniques such as electric prods, nudging with a forklift and waterboarding, to get non-ambulatory animals to walk one last time, and just in time for the USDA-type to notice.

A non-ambulatory animal is also called a downer. Federal regulations forbid downed cattle from entering the food supply because they may have higher levels of E. coli, salmonella or mad cow disease.

A 2004 review of meat inspection in Canada found that cattle become non-ambulatory at all ages and for a variety of reasons, and that banning these animals from the food chain could encourage illegal slaughter and the sale of uninspected meat processed under unhygienic conditions. "However," the report stated, "most downer animals are dairy cows that are at the end of their productive lives and are being sent for slaughter to salvage what little value remains. The quality of their meat is low and although it cannot be said that this

meat is unsafe, there is a heightened risk."

That's why they're supposed to be kept out of the food supply. In the Middle Ages, violation of regulations ranged from fines to flogging to banishment.

Hallmark/Westland Meat Packing Co. will be flogged in the media and the two-year recall should effectively banish the company. But unlike 12th century France, USDA has access to the same video technology that a single undercover worker was able to use to bring down a large corporation. Producers and processors who say their food is safe should be able to prove it. Producers and processors who say they treat animals humanely should be able to prove it.

Q) CALIFORNIA: Cruelty charges filed against slaughterhouse boss

15.feb.08

Los Angeles Times

Victoria Kim

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-beef16feb16,1,2285591.story?ctrack=1&cset=true>

San Bernardino County prosecutors today filed felony charges against a former Chino slaughterhouse manager who allegedly used cruel methods to force at-risk cattle into the slaughter box. A videotape taken at the facility has led to schools nationwide pulling beef from cafeterias.

In what prosecutors called unprecedented charges, 49-year-old Daniel Ugarte Navarro of Pomona faces up to eight years and eight months in prison if convicted of five felony counts of animal cruelty and three misdemeanor counts of illegal movement of a non-ambulatory animal. Navarro, who was a head pen

manager at Hallmark Meat Packing, was fired last month after the release of the video by the Humane Society of the United States.

Dist. Atty. Michael A. Ramos was quoted as saying at a news conference today, "It makes your stomach turn to see what they did to the cows in this situation. We want to send the message that this kind of behavior will not be tolerated."

Authorities today also filed three misdemeanor counts against 32-year-old Luis Sanchez of Chino, who worked directly under Navarro and was also fired last month. Sanchez faces up to three years in prison if convicted.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture last week suspended inspections at Hallmark, which in effect closed the plant. The USDA inspector general is investigating the case, but this week several members of Congress also called for an independent federal investigation of the safety of food the USDA supplies to schools.

Hallmark was the second-largest supplier of ground beef to the National School Lunch Program.



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