



**October 3, 2008**

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### **COOL Update**

On Tuesday, September 30, mandated Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) finally found its way to the store front. Initially becoming law in the 2002 Farm Bill, the implementation of country of origin labeling was delayed for many commodities covered by the legislation due to much heated debate. In the 2008 Farm Bill the issue was re-adopted and the USDA developed the regulations. The new COOL mandate requires proof of origin on fruits, vegetables, nuts, muscled cuts of beef, pork, lamb, chicken, and goat meat, as well as ground meats and both wild and farm raised fish. Processed meats, food products and goods produced before September 30 are exempt from the labeling process.

Any animal that is born, raised and slaughtered in the US will be considered a "product of the US." However, ground meats that could come from several different countries will be labeled accordingly. Although COOL applies to meat retailers and packers who supply meat to consumers and not specifically to livestock producers, retailers must maintain records that document the origin of meat products, therefore, livestock producers will be expected to provide country of origin verification documents upon request. Furthermore, individual records are not required but producers may find compliance with COOL easier to with more detailed farm records. In addition, paperwork must be kept for 1 year from the date of the transaction.

The main paperwork that producers will liable for is an affidavit, which is the legal document that certifies the authenticity of the information. The person signing the affidavit must have first hand knowledge of the origin of

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the animal. Acceptable documents which can be used as verification include: birth records, receiving records, purchase records, animal health papers, sales receipts, feeding records, branding records, breeding stock information, etc. To conform with COOL requirements producers will have to be able to trace animal movement one step back and one step forward. Affidavits do not have to be written by an attorney but must be completed and either kept on file or presented to a livestock purchaser upon request.

As an entity Missouri Cattlemen's Association submitted its concerns to the Agricultural Marketing Service of the USDA regarding COOL implementation.

- MCA is concerned with the overall effectiveness of Country-of-Origin-Labeling or the lack thereof.
- MCA is also worried about the cost associated with the implementation of COOL not only to the producer but to the consumer.
- MCA suggested that the governing body of COOL wait until the 6 month education and outreach processes are completed before making changes or reacting to the current legislation.

For more information on COOL, and an affidavit please visit [mocattle.org](http://mocattle.org) and scroll down on the home page to the "COOL" section and click on the link.

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**Register Your Premise**

As cattlemen we encourage all producers to take part in premise registration as it is the best method for immediate notification in case of a disease outbreak. MCA takes animal health very seriously in order to protect the state's livestock industry. Registering your premise is a primary step in accomplishing this goal. To register your premise visit the [Missouri Department of Agriculture website](#).

**Producers Enrolled in QSA or PVP have Advantage as Mandated COOL Takes Affect**

Producers currently enrolled in either Quality Systems Assessment or Process Verified

Program are better off as COOL implementation begins to take affect. Through enrollment in one of these programs producers are compliant with COOL requirements. Therefore use of 840 tags is unnecessary. In addition to having source records, enrollment in Missouri Cattlemen's Association Source and Age Verification Program or similar programs also enables producers to market cattle abroad due to age verification and the requirements of major export markets.

*Please note: Although QSA or PVP participants are compliant with COOL, Country of Origin Affidavits are still required by the law.*

For more information or to enroll in MCA's Source and Age Verification Program visit [www.mocattle.com](http://www.mocattle.com) or contact Rachel Bartholomew at (573) 499-9162 or [rachel@mocattle.com](mailto:rachel@mocattle.com).

### **Full House Action Avoided on Horse Processing Bill**

NCBA successfully delayed full U.S. House action on a bill that would have banned horse slaughter for human consumption. HR 6598 previously passed the House Judiciary Committee, but now has been sequentially referred to the U.S. House Agriculture Committee for consideration.

Lobbyists representing NCBA are working to ensure members of Congress and the public are aware the bill will result in unintended inhumane consequences for the horse population. Since state legal action closed the nation's last three horse processing plants, the number of abandoned, neglected and starving horses has dramatically increased.

*Released by Kansas Livestock Association.*

### **Bill to Amend Beef Checkoff Introduced**

Montana Senator Jon Tester has introduced the Beef Checkoff Modernization Act, a bill that would amend the beef checkoff. In Billings, Montana on Tuesday, Sept. 30 announcing the legislation, the Montana Democrat called the amendments, "common sense modifications."

"The first one would require at least 30 percent of the beef checkoff money be used to promote U.S. beef, the second one would allow cattle producers to hold a referendum every seven years or sooner if it is petitioned to change the beef checkoff," Tester said.

The third modification would allow industry organizations that are in existence today to bid on contracts to promote U.S. beef.

"When the beef checkoff was enacted it would allow bids to promote beef with agencies that existed in 1986, and that's the way it has been the last 22 years, this will allow other organizations to bid that weren't around in 1986," said Tester.

The Senator said the modifications will make the beef checkoff stronger and benefit not only U.S. cattle producers but consumers as well.

*Written by Dave Russell, released by Brownfield Network on 9/30/08.*

## **Commission Queried on Attitude toward Production Agriculture**

The Barton County Commission generally agreed to keep an open mind toward the introduction of more production agriculture into Barton County. The matter was raised by Darrell Robertson during a one-hour discussion with the commission at its Monday meeting. Robertson will be representing the Missouri Commodities Group at the World Dairy Expo in Madison, Wisc., October 1 - 4, with an objective of attracting more production agriculture to Missouri in general and southwest Missouri in particular. The Missouri Commodities Group represents the interests of soybean, corn, and wheat growers as well as producers of poultry, swine, dairy, and beef cattle.

Robertson said production agriculture must have an adequate supply of water, and the part of Missouri south of the Missouri River best meets that need. North Missouri, Kansas, and Oklahoma are all facing shortages. He said the most ideal areas of southwest Missouri are Vernon, Barton, and Jasper counties, along with a portion of Cedar County and the northern part of Newton County.

Commissioner John Stockdale said the commission is elected by all the people of Barton County, and all of their interests must be protected. He added that he is willing to keep an open mind and consider all possible operations on a case by case basis. Presiding Commissioner Mike Davis said he would want to see the plans of any production agriculture operator wanting to enter the county, and if the plans indicated he would be a good steward of the land and the citizens' interests, he would be willing to talk with them. Commissioner Dennis Wilson listened attentively, reserved comment, and thanked Robertson for his presentation.

Robertson said if he shows available land to a prospective operator following the Dairy Expo, he wants to be certain in advance that the operator will not be confronted with a predetermined policy of opposition from the commission. He seems to have secured this. He added that he will only show land that has adequate separation from surrounding citizens' interests. He also noted that most of the personnel who will work in production agriculture operations will be legal Hispanics.

The Missouri Commodities Group is supported by the Missouri Farm Bureau, MFA, the College of Agriculture at the University of Missouri, and the Missouri Department of Agriculture.

*Written by Richard Cooper and released by The Lamar Democrat 10/1/08.*

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### University of Missouri: Decoding the Cattle Genome

As a treasure map may lead to buried treasure, scientists are following genetic markers to predict the genetic makeup of agriculturally important animals. The next generation "map" of genotyping and genome sequencing technologies may identify the traits that underlie the expression of growth, development, reproduction, and the onset of complex disease. This knowledge will revolutionize the livestock industries.

With funding from USDA Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, a team of scientists in Missouri are using the bovine genome sequence to create a new series of diagnostic tools to improve animal products and production efficiency.

All living organisms contain DNA, which is the blueprint of life. Within the DNA are chromosomes that house neatly packaged genes. Each gene is a segment of DNA that accounts for an inheritable trait. The genome of an organism is the complete assemblage of all of the chromosomes found in that organism.

Variations in a gene can reduce or intensify the importance of an agriculturally important trait, such as growth or disease tolerance. These variations are caused by single nucleotide polymorphism (SNP, or "snip"). Genes are complex structures; a snip is a variation of a single link in that structure. The type of link can differ between members of the same species as well as within the chromosome of the same animal.

Scientists are closing in on a final draft of the whole genome sequence for many agriculturally important animals, including cattle, swine, chicken, and horses. These draft sequences, however, represent only a single individual from each species. Variations within the genome, some of which are responsible for economically important traits, are mostly unknown. To compensate for this, scientists use well-known genetic markers to identify variation within a trait.

Tracing the inheritance of these markers through generations allows scientists to develop inheritance patterns that can detect the presence of genes associated with economically important traits.

At the University of Missouri, Jerry Taylor and his colleagues have constructed a snip test to identify variations in Angus cattle. Results from this test helped create a genetic map within the genome of the Angus. Researchers are now using this map to test for the presence of genes that cause variation in economically important traits, such as the efficiency of growth and carcass composition.

"The importance of this [test] is not only that it makes genotyping so much simpler and it combines the mapping and fine-mapping phases of a gene discovery project," Taylor said, "but that it may also be used to develop diagnostics to predict the genetic merit of animals."

Scientists are also using this tool to develop genetic tests that will predict the total genetic merit of important production and product quality traits in beef and dairy cattle.

The Missouri group joined a consortium involving scientists from the USDA's Agriculture Research Service facilities at Beltsville, MD, the Roman L. Hruska U.S. Meat Animal Research Center at Clay Center, NE, and the University of Alberta to develop the high-density SNP assay for cattle.

CSREES funded this research project through the National Research Initiative Animal Genome program. Through federal funding and leadership for research, education, and extension programs, CSREES focuses on investing in science and solving critical issues impacting people's daily lives and the nation's future.

*Source: USDA*

## **Treating Pneumonia In Beef Cattle**

Pneumonia in cattle is a common and sometimes frustrating problem. Use of antibiotics to treat these cattle is just as common and sometimes can be just as frustrating. Most of us think of pneumonia as a single condition, because that is the way we perceive it. Calves and older cattle exhibit an increased respiratory rate (rapid breathing rate or panting), fever (rectal temperature > 102.5°F, often > 104°F), coughing, loss of appetite, and nasal discharge (mucous). Pneumonia has several different causes and varies in severity from mild to rapidly fatal. We all know from experience the condition can be unpredictable.

Pneumonia is an inflammation of the tissues of the lungs that results from the response of the animal to an infectious agent, either a virus or bacteria, or in most cases both. Common viruses that can initiate pneumonia in cattle include: IBR (infectious bovine

rhinotracheitis virus; a herpes virus), BRSV (bovine respiratory syncytial virus), PI3 (parainfluenza 3 virus), BVD (bovine virus diarrhea virus), certain rhino viruses, and a host of uncommon viruses that can affect cattle. Often the virus infection will cause damage to the lung tissue and then bacteria will invade the compromised tissues. The bacteria most often involved include Mannheimia hemolytica (formerly Pasteurella hemolyticum), Pasteurella multocida, and Histophilus somni (formerly Hemophilus somnus). These bacteria are never far from cattle and are particularly adept at invading lung tissue damaged by viruses. Other bacteria commonly involved in pneumonia include Mycoplasma bovis and Arcanobacterium pyogenes (formerly Actinomyces pyogenes). These are more Latin names than anyone really wants to consider; however, the principal organism involved can influence treatment options.

As you recall, antibiotics have no effect on viruses (IBR, BRSV, etc) and will kill bacteria only if that particular strain of bacteria is susceptible to the antibiotic drug being used. Also, the dose of the antibiotic must be high enough and must be given long enough to kill the bacteria involved in the pneumonia. Bacteria can develop resistance to certain antibiotics and this resistance can be transferred from one generation of bacteria to the next. Therefore, strains of antibiotic-resistant bacteria can develop.

*Released by CattleNetwork.com 10/2/08.*

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### **The Importance of Good Records in Feedlot Management**

We've all heard that "One can only improve what is measured." Therefore, good (i.e., complete and accurate) record keeping is crucial to the success of any business. During times of high-cost inputs, this is particularly important for feedlot managers. Good records are essential to monitor measures of production and allow for informed management decisions and planning. Cattle feeders use feedlot close-out information for economic evaluation of pens. However, frequently monitoring feedlot performance and costs as cattle are still being fed not only tells you where the feedlot is currently, but also allows managers to make fast mid-course corrections as feed costs or cattle prices

change. Knowing the current cost of production is essential for making timely marketing decisions and decreasing corn use (Doran and Loy, 2008).

Good records help feedlot managers to answer important questions about the operation's financial health, and effective management will depend on accurate measurement of production and financial variables. This data, compared to appropriate industry averages, helps managers to pinpoint both the strong and weak characteristics of the operations. The use of these comparisons is called "benchmarking." Benchmarking records is important to evaluate the competitiveness of a particular operation, and to allow for the comparison of a feedlot to others in the industry. This allows for management decisions and plans based on good historical data.

Information in today's world is generated quickly. Therefore, it can be challenging to manage the volume of information available in ways that make the information understandable and manageable. However, once collected, information is of little value unless it is used to monitor progress, make decisions, and evaluate alternatives (Lawrence, 2006). Feedlot managers should continue to invest in methods of managing information. The manager should also communicate the critical importance of accurate information from various input points in the feedlot (Albin, 1996).

### **Tips**

What types of information should feedlot managers keep? When should they be reviewed? How can they compare their data with other feedlots data? Some suggestions include (Iowa Beef Center, 2008):

- Cost of gain and breakeven should be continually monitored. Feedlots should work with projected breakeven and marketing date/weight.
- Employees should be trained and should make decisions based on management input provided weekly.
- Inventory analysis should be conducted daily or weekly.
- Feed mixing and weighing of ingredients should be monitored.
- Cattle intake should be evaluated daily, and ration bunk samples should be analyzed frequently.
- Feed waste should be measured, and adjustments should be made.
- Cattle gain and performance should be estimated with the use of software. Previous closeouts and records on cattle from a specific source could be used to estimate future performance.
- Feed purchases and waste should be monitored monthly for billing or cost of feed adjustments.
- Health management program effectiveness should be evaluated annually.
- Non-feed costs should be monitored and adjusted annually using feedlot figures.
- The charge of feed costs should be based on updated fixed and variable costs.
- Databases should be maintained and reviewed regularly.
- It is important to evaluate the database of grid premiums by the type of cattle and feeding programs.
- It is helpful to feedlots to belong to a benchmarking program.

When facing difficult economic times all aspects of the operation should be evaluated. Sound economical decisions are made based on what we can measure and identify as not profitable. Accurate evaluation of all processes and reevaluation of current practices is the way progress can be achieved for an individual feedlot, and because of this, good records are essential to maximizing productivity.

*Written & researched by Dr. Judson Vasconcelos, Feedlot Specialist  
University of Nebraska, Panhandle research and Extension Center, Scottsbluff, NE  
Released by University of Nebraska-Lincoln on beef.unl.edu.*

## **Sustainability Showdown**

Even though there's a demand for grass-finished and organic grass-finished beef, is it cost effective for beef producers to provide that kind of product?

That's the question a Midwest beef study hopes to answer. Terry Gompert, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension educator, says a Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) grant is providing funds for a 2008-2009 study involving beef producers in Iowa, Wisconsin, Nebraska, Kansas and South Dakota. Margaret Smith, Iowa State University (ISU) Extension program specialist, and Laura Paine, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture Division of Agricultural Development, are also serving as study coordinators.

"We're gathering data from producers involved in three types of beef production," Gompert says. "We want to analyze a comparative study that looks at both input costs and overall profits for organic grain-fed, organic grass-fed and grass-fed beef. The data will tell us if there's enough profit, or any profit, for low-input producers who use a forage system to fatten their cattle."

Gompert is assisting 12 producers in completing detailed documentation that will provide the study's analysis data. Smith and Paine are working with similar groups.

The study's first challenge was to develop the structure of the form used to gather study information. "What we found in developing the form was that nearly all existing forms were used to gather information on feedlot production," Gompert says.

In creating the study questions, Gompert says administrators realized the complexity of documenting costs and profits from a grass-finished beef operation.

"How do you allocate part of the ranch assets to ensure the accuracy of your figures?"

Gompert asks. "If you're raising annual crops to finish your beef, how do you accurately allocate those costs in your operation? We eventually came up with those answers because we want to make sure the study documentation reflects real numbers."

Gompert holds degrees in beef production with a focus on grazing management. He also owns a grass-fed beef operation.

### **Producer input**

One portion of the project includes publication of case studies documenting several participating producers. The information should further assist beef producers involved in or considering a grass-fed operation.

"It's no secret every beef producer has variations in their operation," Gompert says. "In South Dakota, we're gathering data from Pukwana grass-finished ranchers Julie Williams (DVM) and her husband Larry Wagner. We're also obtaining information from Tim Eisenbeis at Marion, who produces organic beef."

"Neither Larry nor I like the numbers side of our operation," Williams says. "This will force us to take time to document our cost information. We feel like we have a lot more money when we're using solar collector leaves to produce most of our feed. What we really need to know is what it costs us per pound to raise a calf. That information will help us determine the value of our animals when we sell them."

Gompert says the data from participating producers will be very valuable, even though the operations are very different. "A comparative study of the two processes with specific input costs and sales prices is what producers need in order to decide the kind of operation they're going to use," Gompert says.

Although there are completed studies regarding the cost of producing beef, the researchers couldn't locate a study with the same focus as the one they developed. "We want producers who are considering grass-fed and/or organic beef to be able to review this study's results and identify the questions they need to ask before making any changes," Gompert says. "This study should help them decide if some aspects of grass-fed or organic beef are too expensive for them, especially if they have to make use of stored forage."

Gompert reports he found it difficult to locate organic grain-fed cattle because the cost of organic grain currently is about 50% higher than the cost of traditional grains.

"Organic grain-fed beef is absolutely not profitable right now," Gompert says. "Corn is just too high; consequently it's pretty clear to producers that they're not going to make a profit with that type of product in the short run."

Organic grass-fed beef producers face entirely different issues than organic grain-fed, beef producers. They need to carefully analyze input costs and operational requirements and changes to make the right decisions for their operation.

The issue of forage supply

"The biggest challenge grass-fed producers face is having a high-quality chain of forage available 12 consecutive months," Gompert says. "We can put together high-quality silage and hay, windrow grazing and plant annual crops and graze them late into the fall. We can use native plants and improved pastures and manage all of them appropriately so we have the highest quality feed."

"High tech" isn't a term producers think of when considering grazing management, but Gompert says learning to effectively produce and use forage requires a significant amount of planning and strategic development.

"Some of this doesn't come naturally and we're really in the learning stages of knowing how to make the most of our forages," Gompert says. "We need to consider a large variety of forage types and forage-management plans in order to fully explore our options."

While he doesn't have the data he needs to begin developing an analysis, Gompert believes grass-finished beef will prove to be more cost-efficient than other types of production. He says consumer demand is pushing producers toward grass-finished and organic beef products. However, if costs are prohibitive, consumers won't actually purchase those types of beef.

"Consumers have to realize the cost of producing this kind of meat might be more expensive than traditional methods," Gompert says. "If they're willing to pay the added cost, producers will do well. But if the costs prove too high, that market will go away."

"Feedlots have been popular because producers could efficiently produce lower-cost meat with a high-quality feed," Gompert says. "It's been a good model, but some other models are being expressed right now and we need to seriously consider them."

*Written by Loretta Sorensen, released by beefmagazine.com on 10/1/08.*

### **Definitions**

*Grass-fed beef* is fed solely on forage. The most difficult element is developing a 12-month forage supply of the quality cattle need to gain.

*Organic grass-fed beef* is fed on forage certified as organic, which means the land has had no type of chemical applied to it for a specific number of years and no chemicals are used to manage the grasses.

*Organic grain-fed beef* is fed on grains certified as organic, which means the cropland was chemical free for a specific number of years and no chemicals were used to produce the grain.



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### 2009 Missouri Beef Ambassador Contest

The 2009 Missouri Beef Ambassador Contest will be held on December 13th at the Missouri Cattle Industry Convention & Trade Show in Springfield, Missouri. The Missouri Beef Ambassador program is open to all youth, including 4-H, FFA, FHA and other youth organizations. Participants must be at least 16 years of age and no older than 19 on January 1, 2009. The contest is made up of a speech, question session and an interview panel. Winner of the Ambassador Contest will receive a \$250 cash award and a expense paid trip to the National Contest in the fall of 2009 to compete for over \$5,500 total cash awards.

**The deadline for entry is November 1st.**

For more information and the entry form please visit:

[http://www.mocattle.org/MCW/2008\\_beef\\_ambassador.htm](http://www.mocattle.org/MCW/2008_beef_ambassador.htm)

### Convention 2008 - "Succeeding During Challenging Times"

#### 2008 Missouri Cattle Industry Convention & Trade Show

December 12 & 13

University Plaza Hotel/Springfield Expo Center - Springfield, MO

#### ***"Succeeding During Challenging Times"***

For more information and a schedule of events please visit [www.mocattle.org](http://www.mocattle.org).

**ATTENTION AFFILIATES: Be sure to complete the new and improved Awards for Excellence Application. The application is due December 1st.**

If your county has not received the application please contact the MCA Office.

We are **currently accepting nominations** for 2nd Vice President and Regional Vice Presidents as well as for the Cattleman of the Year and Pioneer Awards.

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The Schering-Plough "Wheels for Bucks" program, Missouri Cattlemen's Association and Missouri's Cattlemen Foundation join together to raise money for the Missouri's Cattlemen Foundation Scholarship Fund and the Missouri Cattlemen's Association Leadership, Education and Youth Programs.

For every 10 used Ralgro wheels, and every 5 used Magnum Strips, Schering-Plough will donate 1 full Ralgro wheel to be auctioned off during the Foundation Auction on the evening of December 12th at the Missouri Cattle Industry Convention.

Please encourage your veterinarian, neighbors, and friends to save Ralgro wheels and Magnum strips and bring them to the MCA Office or to the Convention prior to noon on Friday, December 12.

If you would like to be an exhibitor in our Trade Show or know someone who would please contact Lesley at the MCA Office (573) 499-9162.

### **Upcoming Cattlemen's Events & Meetings**

**Southwest Cattlemen** - October 7, 7:00 PM

Aurora American Legion Hall, Aurora

**Audrain County** - October 12, 5:30 PM

Jim & Mila Lowry's, Mexico

**Dallas County** - October 13, 6:30 PM

Engles Center, Buffalo

**Macon County** - October 13, 6:30 PM

Lolli's Livestock Market, Macon

**Bates County** - October 14, 7:00 PM

MO-Kan Livestock Market, Butler

**St. Clair County** - October 14, 7:00 PM

Smith's Restaurant, Collins

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