



April 10, 2009

### In This Issue

[FDA Ignoring Environmental and Economic Impacts of Feed Ban](#)

[Clean Water Restoration Act Introduced in Senate](#)

[National Animal Identification System Privacy Ruling](#)

[Beef AI Just Got Easier](#)

[ATTENTION: Junior Cattlemen](#)

[A Dozen Ways to Improve Beef Heifer Fertility](#)

[February Beef Exports Maintain Strong Momentum](#)

[NCF's Scholarship Programs](#)

### Upcoming Events & Meetings

#### Texas County

April 9, 7:00 PM

Golden Hill Trail Rides

#### Dallas County

April 14, 6:30 PM

## FDA Ignoring Environmental and Economic Impacts of Feed Ban

Released by NCBA 4/7/09

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) criticized yesterday's decision by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to solicit public comments solely on delaying the implementation of a new feed ban, rather than soliciting public comment on the ban itself.

NCBA has been opposed to the enhanced feed ban since it was originally proposed in 2005 and continues to urge FDA to open the rule to public comment and delay implementation until they have had adequate time to consider the many problems caused by the ban.

"Cattle producers across the country have been suffering as a result of this proposed rule months before it is scheduled to take effect," explains Dr. Elizabeth Parker, Chief Veterinarian for NCBA. "Members of Congress and the Senate have joined NCBA in petitioning the FDA to reopen the rule itself for public comment so that the people impacted by the rule can share their stories. Instead, the FDA is only allowing seven days of comments on whether to delay the implementation of the rule by 60 days. This is a weak and ineffective response to the issues already arising from this ill-considered action."

Over the past two decades industry and government have worked together to put in place science-based measures which have proven successful in preventing and reducing the spread of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) in the U.S. Furthermore, the incidence of BSE worldwide has dramatically decreased due to the many measures put into place, including a series of interlocking safeguards and science-based mitigation practices.

"We must continue to look to the science to avoid over-regulating the industry and creating policy that doesn't meet our objective of a safer animal health system," says Dr. Parker.

Since 1997, the U.S. has prohibited ruminant feed from including parts of other ruminants. This proactive "ruminant to ruminant" feed ban, combined with other government and industry safeguards, has proven to be highly successful in limiting BSE in the U.S. herd. The U.S. has an extremely low level risk of BSE, as demonstrated by years of robust USDA surveillance and confirmed by the U.S. "BSE Controlled Risk" designation by the OIE, the international animal health standard setting body.

Prairie Grove School, Buffalo

**St. Clair County**

April 14, 7:00 PM

Smith's Restaurant, Collins

**Bates County**

April 14, 7:00 PM

MO-Kan Livestock Market,  
Passaic

**Greene County**

April 16, 7:00 PM

Darr Center

**Vernon County**

April 16, 7:00 PM

Vernon County Fairgrounds

**Johnson County**

April 17, 6:30 PM

Phelp's Charolais Ranch

"The FDA did not do a risk assessment for this so-called enhanced feed ban," says Dr. Parker. "The prevalence of BSE in the healthy cattle population of the United States is negligible, and globally this situation has nearly been eradicated."

The enhanced feed ban would move beyond the current ban in that it would prohibit certain cattle-derived risk materials from all animal feed. As such, the enhanced feed ban would provide negligible benefits to animal health or food safety. It would also create tremendous costs for ranchers, exacerbate disposal issues, and generate environmental concerns.

Beginning as early as December 2008, many renderers stopped picking up dead livestock because of the severe economic realities of this proposal. For several months, NCBA has received numerous reports from producers and veterinarians having increased difficulty in getting dead animals picked up, and if they are able to find pick-up services, the prices charged by the haulers and renderers are significantly higher than they ever have been.

"This rule has essentially ended rendering services in many parts of the country, and left producers with no legal alternatives," Dr. Parker says. "These are 1200 pound animals. It is unrealistic and simplistic to think that producers can dispose of them in their backyards. The environmental and economic consequences are enormous and FDA has the responsibility to consider those concerns before implementing this rule."

FDA estimates the new regulations would generate an additional 28 million pounds of prohibited material derived from healthy cattle at the slaughter plant level and will create an estimated 26.2 - 41.6% decrease in cattle carcasses being picked up by rendering services, which translates into an additional 369 - 577 million pounds annually that will have to be disposed by some other means. This is in addition to the approximately three billion pounds of ruminant carcasses resulting annually from natural causes. While FDA acknowledges these very real concerns, it has yet to identify any viable solutions.

This rule, as originally proposed in October 2005, failed an economic cost benefit analysis as required by the Office of Management and Budget and was sent back to FDA for revision. The revised final rule published in April 2008 was a political decision, disregarding the economic consequences of such a rule, as well as ignoring risk analysis, the current U.S. herd BSE status, the current world BSE status and ignoring the facts of the multiple firewalls existing in this country for decades, including a strong, historical and existing feed ban compliance.

"FDA says they have no jurisdiction over these disposal issues," Dr. Parker says. "But that does not absolve the Federal government from their responsibility to provide solutions to the problems this rule creates if they go ahead with implementation."

## CALL TO ACTION: Contact FDA TODAY!!

Yesterday, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) published a notice proposing to delay the effective date of the enhanced feed ban. This action by the FDA IS NOT a 60 day delay in the implementation of the enhanced feed ban, it is only a seven day comment period to determine whether or not they will actually delay the effective date from April 27, 2009 to June 26, 2009. FDA is only taking comments from now until midnight on Thursday, April 16th.

Even though the rule was not set to go into effect until April 27th, the cattle industry is already feeling the negative effects of this rule. Nationwide, cattle producers have seen sharp increases in the fees from haulers as well as renderers that simply won't take their animals. This has left cattle producers to find other disposal options for their carcasses.

**WE NEED YOUR HELP IN TELLING THE FDA TO NOT ONLY DELAY THE RULE BUT TO REOPEN THE RULE FOR COMMENT.**

In order to convince FDA to delay the effective date, we need your comments to focus on the disposal issues and economic impact you are seeing. You must state that you request FDA to delay the effective date of the enhanced feed ban from April 27, 2009 to June 26, 2009. In addition, in order for your comments to be considered, you must include the agency (Food and Drug Administration), the Docket Number (Docket No. FDA-2002-N-0031), and the Regulatory Information Number (RIN 0910-AF46) in the title and body of your comments.

Below are step by step instructions on how to submit comments to the FDA on this rule. Attached to this email is a template that you can use in submitting your comments. To use these draft comments please click:

**Template Comments on FDA Enhanced Feed Ban:**

April XX, 2008

Food and Drug Administration  
Division of Dockets Management (HFA-305)  
5630 Fishers Lane  
Room 1061  
Rockville, MD 20852

RE: Food and Drug Administration (FDA)  
Docket No. FDA-2002-N-0031  
RIN 0910-AF46

I am writing in response to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) notice entitled "Substances Prohibited From Use in Animal Food or Feed; Final Rule: Proposed Delay of Effective Date" published in the Federal Register on April 9, 2009; Docket No. FDA-2002-N-0031, RIN 0910-AF46. I appreciate the opportunity to provide comments regarding a 60 day delay of this very important rule.

I am a cattle producer from [NAME YOUR STATE AND ANY OTHER PERSONALIZING STATEMENT SUCH AS 4TH GENERATION, COW-CALF ETC]  
My family and I take great pride in raising healthy cattle and producing the world's best, safest, wholesome and quality beef. It is a responsibility and a way of life.

As a producer, I have serious concerns about the enhanced feed ban and have already experienced negative consequences as a result of this rule, months before it was scheduled to go into effect. This rule has caused very real economic problems for me and my family as well as disposal problems and I am concerned about the environmental consequences if there are no solutions soon.

*[PUT DISPOSAL PROBLEMS HERE - SAY IF YOU NO LONGER HAVE DISPOSAL OPTIONS OR IF YOU HAVE LESS DISPOSAL OPTIONS, SAY WHAT THOSE ARE; IF RENDERERS NO LONGER PICK UP, CAN YOU PUT IN LANDFILL IN YOUR STATE/COUNTY? CAN YOU BURY? OTHER OPTIONS? IF THERE ARE NO LONGER ANY LEGAL OPTIONS SAY THAT. DISPOSAL PROBLEMS SPECIFIC TO YOUR COUNTY AND/OR STATE AS WELL AS YOUR OPERATION AS A RESULT*

*OF THIS RULE IS VERY IMPORTANT TO DESCRIBE. IF OTHER LIVESTOCK SPECIES ARE ALSO AFFECTED IN YOUR COUNTIES YOU CAN ADD THAT TO SHOW SCOPE OF PROBLEM]*

The economic problems caused by this rule are an added challenge to my operation and family at a time when everyone in the U.S. is struggling to make ends meet.

*[PUT SPECIFICS OF ECONOMICS HERE - IF RENDERERS ARE STILL PICKING UP, HOW MUCH MORE DOES IT COST YOU? IF YOU NOW HAVE TO USE OTHER LEGAL DISPOSAL OPTIONS AND THAT COST MORE PLEASE SPECIFY]*

These economic and disposal problems are happening to my neighbors and cattle producers all across the country as a direct result of the enhanced feed ban rule. FDA knew that this was going to happen when they published the final rule but have not provided any solutions. A year ago FDA said they intended to work with relevant local, state, and other Federal agencies concerning disposal issues. To date they have not. FDA acknowledges the problems they have created by insisting on this unnecessary rule, but have not followed through on their responsibility to work with others and help provide solutions to the very real problems that cattle producers are personally experiencing.

Animal health and food safety is of utmost importance to me, my family, and everyone in the cattle industry. We have demonstrated this for decades as it relates to Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) and the proactive measures we all agree have been necessary to take in order to protect our U.S. herd and human health. That is why the U.S. cattle industry has worked so diligently over the past two decades with our government partners.

Working together, industry and government have put in place science-based measures which have proven successful in preventing and reducing the spread of BSE in the United States. FDA's own records have shown for many years that industry has an extremely high compliance track record on the current feed ban. The combined efforts by all have worked, and the U.S. has a negligible BSE risk. In addition, the disease is being eradicated worldwide.

Despite very effective BSE control protocols, and strong industry compliance and partnership, FDA seems intent on moving forward with this unnecessary and problem-causing rule. The FDA says these additional regulations are intended to provide an additional safeguard against BSE. Meanwhile, FDA has failed to produce any evidence that the new guidelines would further that goal, or that they would provide any meaningful improvements to animal health and food safety as a whole. But the proof is already in the countryside, in my family's finances, and in my state that this rule is causing very serious economic, disposal, and environmental problems.

Therefore, this rule should be delayed longer than the 60 days which FDA is contemplating. I encourage FDA to listen to cattle producers' experiences and concerns and delay the rule for as long as it takes for FDA and the federal government to provide appropriate, workable, legal, environmentally responsible, and producer-friendly disposal options.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on a federal government regulation that is important to our nation, my family, my livelihood, and my cattle herd.

Sincerely,

-----

Using the online submission method for your comments is the fastest and most reliable way to ensure your voice is heard.

Please help fellow cattle producers who are being negatively affected by this

rule by writing to the FDA TODAY!

If you have any questions, or need any additional information, please feel free to contact me, Elizabeth Bostdorff, at ebostdorff@beef.org.

#### **THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!**

##### **Online**

1. Between April 9th and midnight on April 16th, log onto <http://www.regulations.gov>
2. Type this docket number in the search field: FDA-2002-N-0031
3. Select the small box under the docket number you just typed that says "Select to Find Documents Accepting Comments or Submissions"
4. Click on "Go"
5. Under the title "Substances Prohibited From Use in Animal Food or Feed; Final Rule: Proposed Delay of Effective Date - Notice of Final Rule", click on the text that says "Send a Comment or Submission "
6. Complete the fields noted with the "\*" as shown below, with your contact information:
  7. You have the option to either type your comments in the "\* General Comments" field that is provided (pictured below) OR attach them as described below in numbers 7a and 7b. NOTE: If you fill out this box, you DO NOT have to follow items 7a and 7b.  
NOTE: You must include the agency name (Food and Drug Administration), the docket number (Docket No. FDA-2002-N-0031), and the RIN (RIN 0910-AF46) in the body of your comments or they will not be considered!
    - 7a. You may also attach your comments as a file - first click on the "Browse" button
    - 7b. Locate your file on your computer, select it, and click on "Open" the file name will appear in the field provided - then click on "Add Attachment"
  8. Next, click on "Next Step" to review your submission (to ensure that your contact information and comments are in order). The final step will be to click "Submit" in order to submit your comments and information.  
Note: After your comments are submitted you will receive a confirmation page. Please print this page for your records.

##### **Written**

Written comments may be sent by mail or faxed to the FDA. All comment submissions need to be **received or postmarked by midnight on April 16, 2009.**

Mail: Division of Dockets Management (HFA-305), Food and Drug Administration 5630 Fishers Lane, Rm. 1061 Rockville, MD 20852  
Fax: 301-827-6870 Phone: 301-827-0124

**NOTE: You must include the agency name (Food and Drug Administration), the docket number (Docket No. FDA-2002-N-0031), and the RIN (RIN 0910-AF46) in the body of your comments or they will not be considered!**

## Clean Water Restoration Act Introduced in Senate

Released by NCBA: Cattlemen's Capitol Concerns 4/9/09

Last week, Senator Russ Feingold (D-WI) introduced the Clean Water Restoration Act (S. 787) in the Senate.

Currently, waters under the jurisdiction of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA) are defined as "navigable waters of the United States." The legislation would remove the word "navigable" from the definition, thereby drastically expanding federal regulatory control over all wet areas.

Removing the word "navigable" essentially removes all recognized exclusions from federal jurisdiction, so the CWA could easily be interpreted to cover groundwater, manmade ponds, wet farmland, treatment ponds, and other wet areas.

Passage of this legislation could mean that cattle producers would be required to manage around mud holes in the middle of fields, streams and drainage ditches that are only wet during certain times of the year, and road ditches.

As such, NCBA has opposed all efforts to redefine waters of the United States and will continue to do so.



## National Animal Identification System Privacy Ruling

Released by NCBA: Cattlemen's Capitol Concerns 4/9/09

A federal court has ruled that records collected under the National Animal Identification System (NAIS) will be protected by the U.S. Privacy Act, meaning they will be exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

This is a positive decision for producers' privacy rights under NAIS, because sensitive information about their premises, businesses, and animals will be shielded from public release.

"It is important that our producers can trust that confidential business information will be protected from FOIA requests," explains NCBA Executive Director of Legislative Affairs Colin Woodall. "Nevertheless, this decision can be appealed, and we will be closely monitoring that to ensure that producers' privacy rights are upheld."

NCBA supports a voluntary adoption of individual animal identification programs that support genetic improvement, source verification, and disease surveillance. "The private sector should have a role in providing identification solutions that fit the varying needs of America's cattle producers," Woodall

says.

Under a private sector plan, state and federal government officials would be provided with adequate information to improve the nation's animal health surveillance systems. NCBA remains concerned that any system fully contained under the umbrella of the federal government risks producer privacy, whether through FOIA requests or accidental release of sensitive information.

"From our conversations with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, we understand that it is easier to protect sensitive data from FOIA requests under a voluntary system," explains Woodall. "This is one more reason to support voluntary identification systems rather than a government mandate."

## Beef AI Just Got Easier

CattleNetwork.com: Cow Calf Segment; Mark Stewart, Livestock Specialist

Central Missouri cow/calf producers interested in using artificial insemination (AI) and estrus synchronization to increase genetic quality and consistency in their herds now have access to tool and facilities to help. Through grant funding a single stall artificial insemination barn is now available to cow/calf producers in the central Missouri region. The cost is \$25.00 per day which will cover maintenance and upkeep on the barn.

The AI barn keeps cattle quieter during the insemination process, making the insemination process safer and quicker for the inseminator as well. The dark environment the barn provides the cattle makes them easier to handle and inseminate along with providing an indoor environment for the inseminator to work in.

Extension livestock specialists can also assist producers in setting up a synchronization calendar utilizing a planning tool from the Iowa Beef Center. The Estrus Sync software helps producers select the most appropriate synchronization protocol for their management and schedule the steps necessary for the protocol to be effective.

To use the Central Missouri AI barn:

-Contact your local livestock specialist or the Callaway County Extension Center at (573) 642-0755.

-The charge to use the barn is \$25 per day of use.

-The barn is located at the Boone County Extension Center.

-To pull the barn, a half-ton pickup with a receiver hitch is required. A drop hitch is provided.

## ATTENTION: Junior Cattlemen

All-Breeds Junior Show & Missouri Beef Leadership Conference around the corner

The **2009 MCA All-Breeds Junior Show** will take place June 12-14th at the Missouri State Fairgrounds in Sedalia. Registration information was mailed out this week so be looking out for it in your mail box and it is also available online at [www.mocattle.com/jrshow.htm](http://www.mocattle.com/jrshow.htm). Again this year we will be doing the

"Design a T-shirt" contest where the winner of the contest will see their creativity on the shirts of all the exhibitors during the weekend.

The first **Missouri Beef Leadership Conference** is also scheduled for this coming June in Columbia, Missouri. If you haven't signed up yet be sure to do so. This event will be full of educational, informational and fun events. This year's MBLC theme is "Show-Me Beef Leadership" and will be held on June 4-6. For more information visit

<http://mocattle.org/jrleadersconf.htm>.

## A Dozen Ways to Improve Beef Heifer Fertility

Released by CattleNetwork.com; Source: Geni Wren, Bovine Veterinarian

How the first-calf heifer performs in the breeding season and beyond begins long before that. Bob Larson, DVM, PhD, Kansas State University, says a goal to shoot for is over 90% of cross-bred heifers pregnant in a 60-day breeding season. If the heifers are examined prior to breeding to remove any questionable breeders, the success should approach 93-95%. "If the breeding season is confined to 45 days, I would expect a lower percent pregnant," Larson notes.

Dan Goehl, DVM, Canton Veterinary Clinic, Canton, Mo., often artificially inseminates the heifers. "Timed AI has become very popular due to labor issues," Goehl says. When timed AI is used, he plans to get 60% conception on Day 1. "These rates will vary but 60% is very attainable and often we can get higher conception rates than this. If we can get 60% AI on Day 1 and 70% of the remaining 40% at (or around) Day 21 then we would strive to attain 85-90% in the first 21 days and should have 95% or greater by Day 45." Goehl notes that this is on optimally managed heifers. They will have been tract scored to remove free martins, marginally mature heifers, etc.

In order to reach those goals, Larson and Goehl offer these 12 ways to help clients improve beef heifer fertility:

1. Select cross-bred heifers from dams with sound feet, legs, and udders that conceive early in the breeding season with minimal supplementation, and have producers by-pass heifers from cows that have had vaginal prolapses and other health issues.

It is important when retaining heifers from within your herd to select animals that are from parentage with the traits you wish to propagate. This can be done with computer records, a notebook or any system that identifies these animals. "Ideally we would have records of conformation, reproductive performance and growth/ performance potential," Goehl says. Recording birthdates or at least birth week is useful because heifers born early in the calving season will have an age advantage relative to females born at the tail end of the season.

Larson suggests also having producers mark dams (with an ear notch, special colored ear tag, etc.) from which heifers should not be retained.

2. Select heifers that will be at least 13 months of age at the start of the breeding season.

Larson notes that both age and weight are important for reaching puberty. "A tight calving season will result in a high percentage of heifer calves that will

meet the target age."

Tightening the calving season will increase age and weight of the calves, Goehl says. "This is beneficial because it will increase the number of heifers available that meet the criteria needed for early breeding. It will also increase the age/weight of the entire calf crop, improving profitability."

3. Provide adequate nutrients post-weaning to reach 60% of mature weight by a month prior to the start of the breeding season for *Bos taurus* breeds and 65% for Brahma or Brahma-cross heifers.

Goehl says traditionally we have always thought of protein as the limiting factor in most rations, but with the use of new feedstuffs, "we now see energy being the limiting factor more often."

Larson agrees that energy is probably the most likely to be deficient in post-weaned heifers. "Energy or protein deficiencies are most likely to be associated with poor fertility, but a diet that provides sufficient energy, protein, and minerals is necessary for best reproductive performance."

4. At about yearling age, vaccinate the heifers against diseases that can cause abortion or infertility such as IBR (infectious bovine rhinotracheitis), BVD (bovine viral diarrhea), vibriosis, and leptospirosis. Some herds may elect to vaccinate against trichomoniasis.

A BVD biosecurity plan needs to be in place, Goehl states. This can vary depending on the ongoing herd health plan of a herd. "Purchased animals need to be tested unless coming from a herd that previously tested or that you have total confidence in their BVD biosecurity plan. In herds that we work with our biosecurity plan may not always include a test of every replacement if we are confident in our level of security."

Larson adds that PI testing of home-raised replacement heifers prior to the start of the breeding season may be beneficial in some herds and should always be done with purchased heifers.

5. Start the heifer breeding season approximately one month prior to the adult cow breeding season.

Heifers are more likely to have calving difficulty than adult cows, therefore by breeding heifers before the mature cows, attention and labor can be concentrated on the population with the largest risk of dystocia. "Heifers need extra TLC," Goehl says. "Also, nutritional requirements are different from that of mature cattle and these animals need to be segregated from each other both leading up to, during and after calving."

In addition, the second pregnancy is the most difficult to conceive. "These heifers are growing, milking and trying to breed back, and reproduction is the lowest priority for the animal," Goehl explains. "A heifer that calves late in the calving season will have a very difficult time breeding back on time to be in the calving season the following year. Managing heifers to breed with the second calf is one of the biggest if not the biggest challenge of heifer management."

Because heifers take longer after calving to resume fertile cycles than mature cows, by calving heifers ahead of cows, it is more likely that they will have resumed cycling by the start of the next breeding season, Larson adds.

And finally, because calves from heifers are at greater risk of developing calf scours, by having heifers calve early in the calving season while environmental contamination with scours-causing pathogens is minimal, disease risk is reduced.

6. Utilize estrous synchronization and artificial insemination (AI) to high-accuracy calving ease bulls if possible.

Having heifers calve early in the calving season allows them more time to resume fertile cycles before the start of the next breeding season. Estrous synchronization and AI allows producers to breed more heifers during the first week of the breeding season and increases the number of heifers that have had two chances to conceive by the 25th day of the breeding season.

7. Palpate the heifers approximately six weeks prior to breeding to determine breeding soundness (reproductive tract score)-particularly if utilizing AI.

Finding freemartins, very immature heifers, or pregnant heifers prior to the start of the breeding season will increase the success of an estrous synchronization and AI program as well as allow more appropriate management of these non-breeding animals. "The expense of a non-breeding heifer is exaggerated when AI is used, but these animals need to be culled no matter if you are utilizing AI or natural service," Goehl says.

Eliminating non-breeders as early as possible will help the bottom line. "Nothing is more frustrating than managing a heifer all the way through until calving to find out she is a non-breeder," Goehl states.

8. Breed heifers to bulls with high calving ease EPDs (or low birthweight EPDs).

Successful heifer management does not end until the heifers have a live calf at side and are re-bred early in the breeding season for their second pregnancy. Larson explains that calving difficulty is a greater risk for heifers than for adult cattle because heifers have not reached their full skeletal size; therefore selection of bulls that are not likely to contribute to calving difficulties is more likely to result in the birth of a live calf, a short postpartum period until fertile cycles are resumed, and heifers becoming pregnant early in next breeding season.

9. Limit heifer breeding season to no more than 70 days (many producers prefer a 50-day heifer breeding season).

Heifers that calve late in the calving season are often not able to resume fertile cycles in time to have two or more opportunities to be mated in the subsequent breeding season. To prevent heifers from having one calf and then being culled from the herd for being open after their second breeding season, they should ideally calve in the first 50 days or less of the calving season and no later than by day 70.

10. If utilizing AI, palpate about 100 days after breeding to accurately determine if heifers settled to AI mating.

It is easier to accurately determine the approximate length of gestation if the heifers are palpated when the fetus is 40 to 100 days of age. By palpating early and identifying those heifers that became pregnant to an AI mating, the success of the synchronization and AI breeding can be determined (and any problems investigated), early calving heifers can be identified for close observation as the calving season starts, and breeding success of the natural service bulls can be easily distinguished from the AI success.

Goehl notes to remind producers that even if they have 100 heifers AI bred on one day, there is still a bell-shaped curve calving distribution over approximately 14-21 days (10 days either side of date conceived).

11. Maintain heifers on a plane of nutrition that allows them to reach 80% of mature weight by the start of calving.

In order for heifers to calve in good body condition so that they are less likely to have calving difficulty and can resume fertile cycles by the start of the next breeding season they need to be gaining enough weight to reach 80% of their mature weight by calving. Body condition at calving has a strong

influence on the length of time it takes for heifers to resume cycling. "Heifers that are thin at calving are less likely to be cycling at the start of the next breeding season than heifers in good body condition," Larson says.

12. Do not allow heifers to lose weight between calving and the start of the next breeding season.

Heifers that lose excessive weight after calving are much less likely to become pregnant early in the next breeding season. If available forage is not adequate to maintain body condition, harvested forage or supplement will be necessary to achieve satisfactory reproductive performance.



**Missouri Farmer Today**  
www.missourifarmertoday.com  
for more industry news and events

## February Beef Exports Maintain Strong Momentum

Released (in part) by US Meat Export Federation 4/9/09

Total beef exports were up slightly for the month on a year-over-year basis: 4 percent in volume and just under 1 percent in value. The trend, however, was the reverse of the pork model with beef muscle cut exports increasing nine percent while variety meat declined slightly.

USMEF President and CEO Philip Seng noted that the slumping currencies in both Mexico and Canada have been affecting U.S. beef exports to those two markets, but said that situation is starting to improve. "We are also seeing some impact from the declining volume of live cattle imports from those two countries, which is increasing their own domestic beef supplies," he said.

### ***Korea, Vietnam Lead Beef Exports Upward***

Increased beef exports to South Korea and Vietnam helped overcome declines in the beef industry's leading markets of Mexico and Canada. February beef plus beef variety meat exports increased 4 percent in volume (66,155 metric tons or 145.8 million pounds) and showed a slight increase in value (\$220.5 million) over February 2008. Contrary to the trend in pork exports, beef muscle cut exports increased by 9 percent in volume to 40,964 metric tons (or 90.3 million pounds) and 7 percent in value to 172.9 million, while beef variety meat exports dropped slightly in volume to 25,191 metric

tons (or 55.5 million pounds) and declined nearly 17 percent in value to \$47.6 million. Year-to-date, beef muscle cut exports have increased 11 percent in both volume and value over the same period last year, while variety meat exports have declined 11 percent in volume and 20 percent in value.

Beef exports to Korea slumped near the end of 2008, with December results totaling 3,335 metric tons (7.4 million pounds) valued at \$15.2 million. But the new year has seen a rebound in exports to Korea, with the January-February monthly average now standing at 6,550 metric tons (14.4 million pounds) with an average value of 24.9 million. This places Korea third among all destinations for U.S. beef - trailing only Mexico and Canada - in both volume and value.

Vietnam ranks fourth in volume and fifth in value for U.S. beef plus beef variety meat exports, with year-to-date exports to Vietnam doubling in volume over 2008 (to 10,972 metric tons or 24.2 million pounds) and increasing 174 percent in value to \$36.2 million.

Japan continues its steady rise as a destination for U.S. beef exports, with 2009 totals through February increasing by 19 percent in volume (to 8,056 metric tons or 17.8 million pounds) and 17 percent in value (to \$43.3 million).

The strong performance of these markets helped offset a slowdown in exports to Mexico, Canada and Taiwan. Though Mexico and Canada have held their position as the top two destinations for U.S. beef, year-to-date exports to Mexico have declined 22 percent in volume (to 51,238 metric tons or 113 million pounds) and 17 percent in value (to \$179.1 million). Export volume to Canada declined 14 percent (to 18,116 metric tons or 39.9 million pounds) and by 22 percent in value (to \$73.1 million). Beef exports to Taiwan have dropped even more sharply, declining by 29 percent in volume (to 2,750 metric tons or 6.1 million pounds) and 28 percent in value (to \$13.3 million).

While consumers in some global markets are "trading down" in terms of the U.S. beef cuts they are purchasing, Seng noted that customers in Taiwan are not as well-positioned to do that because of market access limitations.

"We are still restricted in Taiwan to boneless beef from cattle under 30 months of age," he said. "If we are able expand our market access there, I feel we can reverse any further declines in that market by exporting a strong volume of short ribs and other bone-in beef cuts."

Despite continued economic uncertainty in key markets, Seng reiterated USMEF's commitment to recapturing U.S. beef market share and growing the reach of high-quality U.S. middle meats.

"Certainly it's a tough marketing environment for beef right now, both globally and domestically," he said. "But we currently have some high-end cuts to offer at very competitive prices, and USMEF is having notable success with those cuts in certain markets. We are also encouraged to see the currencies of some of our key trading partners beginning to stabilize. That will also help make U.S. beef more affordable overseas."

## National Cattlemen's Foundation Scholarship Programs

APPLY NOW! Deadline April 15th.

**W.D. Farr Scholarship**

The National Cattlemen's Foundation is honoring the successful career of the late W.D. Farr of Greeley, Colorado through two annual \$12,000 graduate scholarships bearing his name. We lost a true industry leader and friend with W.D.'s passing on August 13, 2007, at the age of 97. Farr, a third generation Coloradan, pioneer rancher, statesman and banker is known for his extraordinary vision. His dedication to improving agriculture, livestock and water development has resulted in significant changes in farming methods that have influenced the practices of ranchers and farmers throughout the nation. All submissions must be postmarked by April 15, 2009. More information and applications are available at [NCF Website: W.D. Farr Legacy Scholarship](#).

#### **Fort Dodge Animal Health Legacy Scholarship**

The National Cattlemen's Foundation and Fort Dodge Animal Health are proud to announce the 2009 -2010 Fort Dodge Animal Health Legacy Scholarship. Through producer participation, Fort Dodge Animal Health will sponsor five scholarships of \$5,000 each. Three scholarships will be directed to veterinary school students who have designated an emphasis in beef production. Two scholarships will be directed to undergraduate students enrolled in an animal science program. The 2009-2010 Fort Dodge Animal Health Legacy Scholarship applications must be postmarked by April 15, 2009. More information and applications are available at [NCF Website: Fort Dodge Animal Health Legacy Scholarship](#).

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

As always, MCA Membership is the key to the success of the organization. Without producers who back our association our voice is not as strong. Ask your friend, neighbor and fellow cattlemen to join the thousands of cattlemen in supporting the Missouri Cattlemen's Association.

#### **For more industry news visit:**

[Missouri Cattlemen's Association Website](#)

[Missouri's Cattlemen Foundation Website](#)

[Missouri Beef Industry Council Website](#)

[National Cattlemen's Beef Association Website](#)

[Missouri Department of Agriculture Website](#)

This newsletter is a publication of the Missouri Cattlemen's Association. All rights reserved - this newsletter may not be reproduced, in whole or in part, without permission of the Missouri Cattlemen's Association.

Do you have questions, comments or suggestions?

Would you like to advertise in our newsletter?

If so, please contact Maureen Hamill at (573) 499-9162 (Ext. 233) or [maureen@mocattle.com](mailto:maureen@mocattle.com).