

NEWS & NOTES

Industry tidbits from around the country

Compiled by Shauna Hermel, editor

▶▶▶ USDA invests in control of destructive feral swine

The USDA is investing \$11.65 million in 14 projects to help ag producers and private landowners trap and control feral swine as part of the Feral Swine Eradication and Control Pilot Program. This investment expands the pilot program to new projects in Alabama, Hawaii, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Texas.

This pilot program is a joint effort between USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). This second round of funding is for partners to carry out activities as part of the identified pilot projects in select states.

Similar to the first round, NRCS

will provide funding to partners who will provide financial assistance, education, outreach and trapping assistance to participating landowners. All partner work will be closely coordinated with the APHIS operations in the pilot project areas.

Between the first and second round of funding, there will be a total of 34 active projects across 12 states for the life of the 2018 Farm Bill. Additional information can be found at www.nrcs.usda.gov/FSCP.

▶▶▶ NCBA rolls out new event for 2021

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) is hosting a two-day virtual event for cattlemen and women across the country to come together for industry news, updates, education and networking.

The 2021 Cattle Industry Convention Winter Reboot, scheduled for Feb. 23-24, provides

opportunity to connect with NCBA and serves as a kickoff event for the Cattle Industry Convention & NCBA Trade Show that will take place Aug. 10-12 in Nashville, Tenn., at the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center. Winter Reboot attendees will receive a sneak peek into plans for the convention and the Cattlemen's College®.

Sessions include an NCBA D.C. issues update and expectations with the new administration. Ten educational programs will be offered covering topics such as sustainability, as well as a tech tool introduction. A virtual marketplace will be featured during the Winter Reboot to allow attendees interaction with leading agribusinesses.

Registration is open, and details about the event can be found at www.convention.ncba.org/winter-reboot.

▶▶▶ Select Sires hires Hamilton, Krick

Reneé Hamilton joins Select Sires' beef department as a beef acquisition and product management specialist. Hamilton is working toward her bachelor's degree in ag at Ohio State



Reneé Hamilton

University. She started working at Select Sires as a livestock technician in June 2020.

Hamilton has been active in the National

Junior Angus Association, Ohio Cattlemen's Association and Agriculture Future of America. In addition to her role as a livestock technician with Select Sires, Hamilton has on-farm experience working for Painter Farms in Hebron, Ohio.

▶▶▶ Wilks Ranch purchases 2021 Angus Foundation Heifer Package

Since 1980, the Angus Foundation Heifer Package has been sold to generate funds to support the Angus Foundation's mission of youth, education and research. This year, Wilks Ranch of Eastland, Texas, bought the elite opportunity to choose a heifer from the 2020 heifer crop of Benoit Angus, Esbon, Kan. The Foundation Heifer Package generated \$35,000 to support educational programs and scholarships.

The package sold Friday, Jan. 8, prior to the National Angus Bull Sale at the Cattlemen's Congress in Oklahoma City, Okla. It included 30 days of insurance from American Live Stock Insurance Co., Batavia, Ill.; transportation to the buyer's ranch provided by Lathrop Livestock Transportation, Dundee, Ill.; and an advanced reproductive technology package from Trans Ova Genetics, Sioux Center, Iowa.

The 2021 Angus Foundation Heifer offering was donated by Everett and Bonnie Benoit, their sons Doug and Chad; and their families. The reputation of the Benoit family program is proven through the success of their commercial customers with Benoit females and bulls. The Benois have extensively reported data on their entire herd, making performance a top priority.

"The most generous and thoughtful donors, like Wilks Ranch and the Benoit Family, are found right here in the Angus breed," said Thomas Marten, Angus Foundation executive director. "Year after year, buyers and contributors continue to step up to help further the future of the breed, and again this year, we are so grateful for those individuals."



Pictured are (back row, from left) Aaron Kiser, Wilks Ranch; Doug Benoit, Benoit Angus; Josh Jasper, National Junior Angus Board (NJAB) director; Walker McDermott, NJAB director; Garrett Schuering, NJAB director; Nicholas Pohlman, NJAB chairman; Barry Pollard, Angus Foundation chairman; Mark McCully, American Angus Association CEO; and Thomas Marten, Angus Foundation executive director; (front row, from left) Alexandria Cozzitorto, NJAB director; Ellie Kidwell, Miss American Angus; Megan Pelan, NJAB director; and Kevin Reed, Wilks Ranch.

The Angus Foundation Heifer Package has raised more than \$2.6 million since the inception of the program. For more information, visit www.angusfoundation.org.

— by Karen Hiltbrand, communications specialist,
American Angus Association

Hamilton will provide administrative support to all aspects of Select Sires' beef program. She will be responsible for genetic contracts and royalty processing, while offering support and resources to Select Sires' customers and field staff.

Darcy Krick of Highmore, S.D., joins Select Sires' beef department



Darcy Krick

as a multimedia and beef sales representative engagement specialist.

Along with her roots in ag and the beef industry, Krick brings graphic design, photography and marketing knowledge to this role.

Since graduating from Northwest College with an associate degree in graphic design, Krick has worked in the ag field. Her experiences include ultrasound and veterinary assistant roles, as well as genetic sales and consultation. Krick's most recent work with the South Dakota Beef Industry Council included development and management of social media platforms and event coordination.

Krick will be responsible for managing Select Sires' beef-focused social media platforms and managing communications and engagement with beef sales representatives. She will produce and distribute promotional and informational e-newsletters for field staff and customers. Krick will work with the beef department to develop messaging for the various programs while strengthening the Select Sires brand and service to farmer-owners.

▶▶▶ **Perdue announces proposal to transfer ag animal biotechnology regulatory framework**

Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue on Dec. 21 announced a significant step in modernizing regulations of ag animals modified or produced by genetic engineering. The USDA will be moving forward with an Advanced

Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR) to solicit public input and feedback on a contemplated regulatory framework that would modernize the system into a scientifically sound, risk-based, and predictable process that facilitates the development and use of these technologies for U.S. farmers and ranchers under USDA's authorities.

This initiative follows President Donald Trump's Executive Order on ag biotechnology that called upon federal agencies to make regulatory improvements to rectify long-standing barriers to innovation for U.S. agriculture.

"Our livestock producers need all the tools in the toolbox to help protect against animal diseases and continue to meet the challenge of feeding everyone now and into the future. If we do not put these safe biotechnology advances to work here at home, our competitors in other nations will," said Perdue. "Science-based advances in biotechnology have great promise to continue to enhance rural prosperity and improve the quality of life across America's heartland and around the globe. With this effort, we are outlining a pragmatic, science-based and risk-based approach that focuses on potential risk to animal and livestock health, the environment, and food safety in order to provide our farmers and ranchers the tools they need to continue to feed, clothe and fuel the world."

Last year, President Trump directed federal agencies to modernize the regulatory framework for ag biotechnology products by establishing regulatory approaches proportionate to the product's risks, avoid unjustified distinctions across similar products, and promote future innovation and competitiveness. USDA will publish an ANPR on animal biotechnology as a keystone effort in fulfilling this Executive Order.

This ANPR will transition portions of FDA's preexisting animal biotechnology regulatory oversight to USDA. USDA will consult with FDA to ensure reviews

Continued on page 164

benefit from FDA's expertise, while providing developers with a one-stop shop for their products at USDA. USDA looks forward to FDA experts participating in the development of our review process.

▶▶▶ **USDA receives delivery of FMD vaccine bank**

Earlier in 2020 USDA announced the first significant purchase for its foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) vaccine bank. Worth \$27 million, the purchase was delivered to the bank in early December, reports the National Pork Producers Association (NPPC).

The USDA, which has prescribed vaccination for dealing with an FMD outbreak, does not have access to enough vaccine should an outbreak occur, NPPC observed.

FMD is an infectious viral disease that affects cloven-hooved animals, including cattle, pigs and sheep; it is not a food safety or human health threat. The disease is endemic in many parts of the world and would have widespread, long-term fallout for livestock and crop agriculture, including the immediate loss of export markets.

▶▶▶ **Challenge of California's Prop 12 supported by federal government, 20 states**

The North American Meat Institute's (NAMI) lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of California's Proposition 12 (Prop 12) received key support from the federal government and 20 states with the filing of two amicus briefs. The U.S. Department of Justice filed an amicus brief in support of the Meat Institute's petition for rehearing *en banc* in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

In addition, the states of Indiana, Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, West Virginia and Wyoming filed a separate amicus brief in support of the Meat Institute's petition.

"The support from the United States government and 20 states underscores the significance of our case against Prop 12," said Meat Institute President and CEO Julie Anna Potts. "Prop 12 is unconstitutional and not only hurts consumers with higher prices for pork, veal and eggs, it is costly for

the federal government's programs designed to help those facing hunger, including the Emergency Food Assistance Program and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). At a time when so many are turning to this critical assistance during the pandemic, Prop 12 hurts those most in need."

According to the State of California's own economic analysis, consumer prices are likely to increase because producers will have to spend to expand or construct new animal housing, which may cost more to operate in the long term. The state acknowledges it may take several years for farmers to comply, resulting in a shortfall of products and increased prices for consumers.

▶▶▶ **GRSB announces executive committee**

The Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (GRSB) has announced the results of the 2021 GRSB Executive Committee election. Assuming their roles Jan. 1, 2021, are:

- ▶ **President: Bob McCan, McFaddin Enterprises, USA.** McCan will be starting his second term as president of GRSB. He oversees the cattle operations and recreational hunting and wildlife operations for his family's company, McFaddin Enterprises Ltd. in Victoria, Refugio and Bee Counties, Texas. Using rotational grazing on native rangeland, the family strikes a balance that meets the needs of both livestock and wildlife, benefiting both.
- ▶ **Vice President: Ian McConnel, Tyson Foods, Australia.** McConnel serves as director of beef sustainability for Tyson Foods. Before his current

▶▶▶ **North Dakota Commercial Breeder of the Year**



Stearns Ranch, Oakes, N.D., won commercial breeder of the year at the 2020 North Dakota Angus Ass'n Annual Meeting and Banquet Nov. 14 in Bismarck, N.D. Pictured are (from left) Sutton, Meagan, Stetson and Dylan Stearns.

PHOTO BY ROD GEPPERT, AMERICAN ANGUS ASSOCIATION

position, he served as the global beef lead for the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), for which he led the global WWF network's approach to creating and communicating a more sustainable global beef industry. Facilitating global dialogue, collaborating across WWF offices, external stakeholders and industry partners, McConnel is successfully developing a cohesive and effective global effort to create a beef industry that is socially, economically and environmentally responsible and is able to communicate this message to consumers. McConnel has served as the GRSB secretary-treasurer for the past two years.

- ▶ **Secretary-treasurer: Justin Sherrard, Rabobank, Netherlands.** Sherrard is the global strategist for animal protein in Rabobank's Food & Agribusiness Research (FAR) group. He leads the bank's global research, client engagement and profiling in the animal protein sector. His work is directed at challenging current thinking and advising companies on risks and opportunities from strategic issues on today's and tomorrow's CEO agendas. Sherrard is currently completing his first term as a member-at-large on the GRSB Executive Committee.

Continued on page 166

▶▶▶ **FDA approves genomic alteration in line of pigs for human food, therapeutic uses**

Dec. 14, the FDA approved a first-of-its-kind intentional genomic alteration (IGA) in a line of domestic pigs, referred to as GalSafe pigs, which may be used for food or human therapeutics. This is the first IGA in an animal that the FDA has approved for both human food consumption and as a source for potential therapeutic uses.

The IGA in GalSafe pigs is intended to eliminate alpha-gal sugar on the surface of the pigs' cells. People with Alpha-gal syndrome (AGS) may have mild to severe allergic reactions to alpha-gal sugar found in red meat (e.g., beef, pork and lamb).

"Today's first-ever approval of an animal biotechnology product for both food and as a potential source for biomedical use represents a tremendous milestone for scientific innovation," said FDA Commissioner Stephen Hahn of the approval. "As part of our public health mission, the FDA strongly supports advancing innovative animal biotechnology products that are safe for animals, safe for people and achieve their intended results. Today's action underscores the success of the FDA in modernizing our scientific processes to optimize a risk-based approach that advances cutting-edge innovations in which consumers can have confidence."

► **Member-at-Large: Cherie Copithorne-Barnes, Canadian Cattlemen's Association,**

Canada. Copithorne-Barnes is a fifth-generation rancher operating in the foothills east of Calgary, Alberta. She was the founding chair of the Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef, where she led the establishment and development of the CRSB, including its Certified Sustainable Beef Framework.

► **Member-at-Large: Lucas McKelvie, McDonald's Corp.,**

USA. McKelvie serves as the global farmer program manager for McDonald's Corp. Prior to his current position, he spent eight years with the advertising and public relations firm of Osborn Barr, where he served as group director of the animal/livestock sector and then as a vice president. He has been an active member of the GRSB Communications Council.

► **Immediate Past President: Nicole Johnson-Hoffman, OSI Group, USA.**

Johnson-Hoffman has previously represented Cargill's seat on the GRSB board of directors. She is the senior vice president and chief sustainability officer for OSI Group, a food-processing company that provides food products and solutions for the food industry. It supplies beef, pork, bacon and sausage, poultry, and seafood, as well as vegetable, dough, fruit, and cheese-based products. Nicole served as the president of the U.S. Roundtable for Sustainable Beef for 2015-2016.

GRSB envisions a world where beef is a trusted part of a thriving food system in which the beef value chain is environmentally sound, socially responsible, and economically viable. Its mission is to advance, support, and communicate continuous improvement in sustainability of the global beef value chain through leadership, science, and multistakeholder engagement and collaboration.

For more information, visit <https://grsbeef.org/>.

►►► **Japan awards highest civilian order to Philip Seng**

The Government of Japan has announced that Philip Seng has been named a recipient of the 2020 Autumn Imperial Decorations. Seng is to receive "The Order of the Rising Sun," which is awarded to those who have made distinguished achievements in areas such as international relations and promotion of Japanese culture.

Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs recommended Seng, former president and CEO of the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF), for his contributions to "strengthening Japan-U.S. economic relations, particularly in the meat field, and promoting mutual understanding between Japan and the United States."

"I am honored and humbled to receive this prestigious award from the Japanese government," said Seng. "However, the recognition should primarily go to the many Japanese colleagues who mentored me along the way, and to the numerous Japanese individuals and companies who introduced and championed U.S. meat products in Japan."

Seng joined USMEF as its Asian director in 1982. He served in that capacity until 1988, when he became USMEF's vice president of international programs. Seng served as president and CEO from 1990 to 2018.

Seng is the only American to serve as president of the International Meat Secretariat, where he served four terms, and he also served on the President's Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee.

Seng is currently an affiliate professor in the Animal Science Department at Colorado State University. ■