

NEWS & NOTES

Industry tidbits from around the country

Compiled by Kasey Brown, associate editor

▶▶▶ **Veterinary debt solutions program**

The Farm Journal Foundation is partnering with the Zoetis Foundation to launch a new program for relieving student debt in the veterinary industry. Its long-term goal is addressing shortages of veterinarians to work with farmers in rural areas.

The new Veterinary Debt Solutions Program will convene leaders from across the livestock, academic, nonprofit, and veterinary sectors to address barriers that veterinarians face in building long-term careers in rural areas. High levels of student debt, combined with comparatively lower rural salaries and demanding workloads, discourage many young and diverse professionals from specializing in large-animal veterinary science and entering the workforce, particularly in underserved rural areas.

“The lack of veterinarians in many rural areas to support the livestock industry poses risks to farming

livelihoods and ultimately our food supply,” says Tricia Beal, CEO of Farm Journal Foundation. “We are grateful to the Zoetis Foundation for their vision and partnership to address this important issue.”

Read more at <https://bit.ly/EXTRANN1>.

▶▶▶ **Push for new packing facilities**

The National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA) supports the *Amplifying Processing of Livestock in the United States (A-PLUS) Act*, introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by Rep. Vicky Hartzler (R-MO) and Rep. Jimmy Panetta (D-CA). If enacted, the bill would clarify regulations under the *Packers and Stockyards Act* to allow livestock market owners to maintain an ownership interest in small meatpacking entities, and would secure another tool in the toolbox to boost processing capacity and alleviate key challenges in cattle marketing.

The *A-PLUS Act* amends the *Packers and Stockyards Act* to allow livestock markets to own, invest in, or manage small to medium-sized processing facilities with a slaughter capacity of less than 2,000 head per day or 700,000 head per year.

▶▶▶ **Bill seeks to increase market transparency**

On March 28, the *Cattle Price Discovery and Transparency Act of 2022* was publicly released, led by Sens. Jon Tester (D-MT), Chuck Grassley (R-IA), Deb Fischer (R-NE), and Ron Wyden (D-OR). The bill is a revised version of similar legislation introduced last year.

The act calls for:

- ▶ Establishing mandatory minimum purchase volumes for packers through “approved pricing mechanisms” based on five to seven geographic regions, to be determined by the USDA.
- ▶ Bringing more transparency by requiring reporting of cattle weights and slaughter deliveries two weeks in advance.
- ▶ Clarifying and implementing a cattle contract library.
- ▶ Increasing penalties for violations by packers.

Further details about the bill from the cosponsors are available at <https://bit.ly/FCMG22-News1>. The full text of the bill is available <https://bit.ly/FCMG22-News2>.

▶▶▶ Ranch group urges rejection of ‘compromised’ cattle market reforms

The Ranchers-Cattlemen Action Legal Fund, United Stockgrowers of America (R-CALF USA) urged rejection of the entire section of the bill that purports to reform the cattle market in *Cattle Market Price Discovery and Transparency Act of 2022* (S.4030).

The group cited two new economic studies that purport the alternative marketing arrangements (AMAs) that predominate the market, combined with packer concentration, are causing cattle prices to be low and beef prices to be high.

In its recommendation to Congress, the group suggests the cattle market reforms be substituted with the spot market protection bill (S.949), which the group stated was a better starting point for achieving more immediate and meaningful reforms.

Read more at <https://bit.ly/EXTRANN2>.

▶▶▶ NCBA, PLC welcome expansion of emergency assistance program

NCBA and the Public Lands Council (PLC) welcome the USDA’s decision to expand the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) to cover a portion of the costs incurred from the transportation of livestock to feed sources.

Across areas of the Western United States, unprecedented drought has made rangelands insufficient for proper grazing. ELAP originally covered the cost of moving feed to livestock, but hauling livestock to other feed sources that are not easily moved is often a more efficient and economical method.

USDA’s announcement follows a letter NCBA sent to the Farm Service Agency requesting the inclusion of coverage for moving livestock to feed during extreme drought, in addition to the provision already included for moving feed to livestock.

▶▶▶ U.S. farmers and ranchers lead on sustainability

U.S. farmers’ and ranchers’ world-leading sustainability efforts, including the U.S. beef community’s commitment to reach carbon neutrality by 2040, the U.S. pork community’s goal to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions 40% by 2030, and the U.S. dairy community’s commitment to achieve GHG neutrality by 2050, are among the significant contributions highlighted in the most recent edition of the *Animal Agriculture Alliance’s Sustainability Impact Report*.

Released in advance of Earth Day, the report provides

the latest data on the nutritional benefits of meat, milk, poultry and eggs, and details U.S. animal agriculture’s achievements in modern environmental stewardship, animal care, judicious antibiotic use and food safety.

U.S. farmers’ and ranchers’ world-leading modern practices allow them to produce more food today using fewer resources than at any time in the past, serving as a global benchmark for efficiency.

Report highlights include:

- ▶ Nutrient-dense animal proteins are low-calorie and critical sources of essential nutrients. One 3-ounce serving of lean beef takes up less than 10% of a healthy daily calorie allowance while delivering half the daily protein recommended for adults.
- ▶ The U.S. dairy community supplies the protein requirements of more than half the U.S. population and the calcium requirements of 77% of Americans.
- ▶ The U.S. pork community reduced land use by 76% and water use by 25% from 1960 to 2015, producing more pork today with a smaller carbon footprint per pound.

For more information, including resources and to read the full report, visit <https://bit.ly/EXTRANN3>. |