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Compiled by Shauna Hermel, editor

NCBA challenges WOTUS rule

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) filed a lawsuit Jan. 19 against the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), challenging the Biden administration's final *Waters of the United States* (WOTUS) rule.

"The Biden administration's WOTUS definition is an attack on farmers and ranchers and NCBA will be fighting back in court," said NCBA Chief Counsel Mary-Thomas Hart. "The rule removes longstanding, bipartisan exclusions for small and isolated

water features on farms and ranches and adds to the regulatory burden cattle producers are facing under this administration."

NCBA previously filed technical comments on this rule, highlighting the importance of maintaining ag exclusions for small, isolated and temporary water features, like ephemeral streams that only flow during limited periods of rainfall but remain dry the majority of the year. Regulating these features at the federal level under the *Clean Water Act* disrupts normal ag

operations and interferes with cattle producers' abilities to make improvements to their land.

"Farmers are stewards of the land and understand the importance of clean water. Unfortunately, this rule lacks common sense and makes our lives more complicated," said NCBA Policy Vice Chair Gene Copenhaver, a Virginia cattle producer. "My cattle operation in southwest Virginia has a creek that only carries water after large storms. Under this WOTUS rule, we could be subject to complex federal regulation. I'm proud of

NCBA's work fighting back against this rule, and I hope the uncertainty created by WOTUS will soon be a thing of the past."

Last year, more than 1,700 individual cattle producers sent messages to the EPA opposing the administration's overly broad definition of WOTUS. Producers once again shared their views with the EPA at an agency roundtable last June. EPA's own Farm, Ranch and Rural Communities Advisory Committee urged the EPA to consider a more limited rule. EPA failed to incorporate the cattle

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U.S. cattle on feed down 3%

Cattle and calves on feed for the slaughter market in the United States for feedlots with capacity of 1,000 head or more totaled 11.7 million head Jan. 1, 2023. Down 312,000 head, the inventory was 3% below Jan. 1, 2022.

The inventory included 7.03 million steers and steer calves, down 4% from the previous year. This group accounted for 60% of the total inventory.

Heifers and heifer calves accounted for 4.65 million head, down 1% from 2022. The fact heifers on feed accounted for 40% of the on-feed inventory suggests little to no herd retention is underway, according to analysis by the Livestock Marketing Information Center (LMIC; www.lmic.info).

Placements in feedlots during December totaled 1.80 million head, 8% below 2021, amounting to a drop of about 150,000 head. Net placements were 1.75 million head.

During December, placements of cattle and calves weighing less than 600 pounds (lb.) were 455,000 head; 600-699 lb. were 435,000 head; 700-799 lb. were 415,000 head; 800-899 lb. were 304,000 head; 900-999 lb. were 105,000 head; and 1,000 lb. and greater were 90,000 head. The largest decrease was realized in the lightest category (< 600 lb.), which was 55,000 head under 2021 placements, LMIC reported. Six- and seven-weights were each down 35,000 head compared to last year, while placements in the 800-899-lb. category were down 26,000.

Marketings of fed cattle during December totaled 1.74 million head, 6% below 2021. LMIC pointed out marketings were affected by a late-December snowstorm that affected hauling and slaughter facilities.

Table 1: Cattle-on-feed inventory, placements, marketings and other disappearance at U.S. feedlots with 1,000+ capacity, Jan. 1, 2022 and 2023

Item	2022 (1,000 head)	2023 (1,000 head)	% of previous year
On feed Dec. 1, 2022	11,985	11,673	97
Placed on feed during Dec.	1,960	1,804	92
Fed cattle marketed during Dec.	1,854	1,741	94
Other disappearance during Dec.	54	54	100
On feed Jan. 1, 2023	12,037	11,682	97

SOURCE: Released Jan. 20, 2023, by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), Agricultural Statistics Board, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

According to LMIC, declines in the number of cattle on feed are expected to continue for the next few months.

"Large placements over the last year may have left few cattle available from the 2022 calf crop to place after winter grazing," said the LMIC analysis. "This could cause a significant hole in supplies. During the last major drought season in 2011, cattle on feed dropped 1.2 million head over the summer compared to Jan. 1 levels, and in 2012, cattle-on-feed numbers dropped about 800,000 head. If cattle on feed this year drops similar to those years, that would put the summer low between 9.0-9.4 million head on feed."

Editor's note: This article was compiled with information from the *Cattle-on-Feed* report released Jan. 20, 2023, by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), Agricultural Statistics Board, USDA and the Jan. 20, 2023, analysis of that report provided by the Livestock Marketing Information Center, available at www.lmic.info.

industry's recommendations, and NCBA will be suing to stop this rule from harming cattle producers.

"NCBA is also concerned that the EPA charges headfirst on a controversial rulemaking while this very issue is currently before the Supreme Court. We look forward to a decision in *Sackett v. EPA*," said Hart.

The Supreme Court heard oral arguments Oct. 3, 2022, in the Sackett case and is expected to release a decision in early 2023.

Eying proposed traceability rule

NCBA President-Elect Todd Wilkinson, a South Dakota cattle producer and chairman of the NCBA Traceability Working Group, on Jan. 18 released the following statement regarding USDA's proposed rule on

electronic identification for cattle moving interstate:

"As USDA has worked toward a nationally significant animal disease traceability program, NCBA has remained engaged in the conversation with industry stakeholders and USDA to ensure the interests of cattle producers are represented and protected. It is critical that any program ultimately adopted by USDA allows for maximum flexibility and privacy. At the same time, USDA must also minimize the costs for producers and any business disruptions to the industry.

"Foot-and-mouth disease outbreaks across the globe continue to result in disruptions to commerce and depopulated livestock; the need for bold action is immediate and evident. However, NCBA is committed to

working with USDA to ensure workable solutions are identified and ultimately implemented. Cattle producers can be confident that any finished product will protect our national livestock herd. We will ensure it provides maximum producer privacy and flexibility with minimal costs, exactly what our stakeholders have told us they expect from USDA."

NCBA is reviewing the proposed rule in its entirety to determine whether it meets the criteria of NCBA's policy.

Dietary Guidelines committee announced

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Xavier Becerra and USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack Jan. 19 announced the

appointment of 20 nationally recognized scientists to serve on the 2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee.

The Committee will be tasked with reviewing the current body of science on key nutrition topics and developing a scientific report that includes its independent assessment of the evidence and recommendations for HHS and USDA as they develop the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. The Committee's review, public comments and input from other federal nutrition experts will help inform HHS and USDA as the departments develop the 10th edition of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.

The guidelines serve as the foundation for national nutrition programs, standards and education. In addition, they provide health professionals with

guidance and resources to assist the public in choosing an overall healthy diet that works for them.

“The recent White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health underscored the need to understand the science of nutrition and the role that social structures play when it comes to people eating healthy food,” said Becerra. “The advisory committee’s work will play an instrumental role in that effort, and in helping HHS and USDA improve the health and well-being of all Americans.”

The list of members appointed to the committee can be found at www.dietaryguidelines.gov.

A public comment period is open and will remain open throughout the duration of the committee’s work. The inaugural committee meeting is scheduled

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Angus Foundation celebrates 150 years of Angus

The Angus Foundation kicked off a year celebrating the 150-year anniversary of Angus’s arrival in the United States, hosting *150 Years of Angus* Jan. 6 in Oklahoma City during Cattlemen’s Congress. Nearly \$20,000 was raised to support the Angus Foundation’s mission.

In 1873, George Grant settled in Victoria, Kan., with four Angus bulls from Scotland. In the following 150 years, the breed has built a legacy in the beef industry. The Angus Foundation works to continue this legacy through its mission to support education, youth and research efforts for the breed.

In support of the Angus Foundation’s mission, the event featured several auction and door prizes. Past National Junior Angus Board Foundation Director Josh Jasper served as the auctioneer. Items sold included a Live Oak Plantation experience, an Angus history sketch, a custom Greeley hat and a two-night wine country getaway for six.

“We had a wonderful evening celebrating this huge milestone for our breed with the Angus family,” said Jaclyn

Boester, Angus Foundation executive director. “It’s through our donors’ generous support that we can ensure the legacy we’ve built for the last 150 years continues well into the future.”

The program concluded with the announcement of Jeff and Kathi Creamer of Lazy JB Angus, Colo., as the 2023 Angus Herdsmen of the Year. The Creamers’ longstanding dedication to Angus cattle is a testament to the breed’s influence on cattlemen and their operations.

The Angus Foundation supports a diverse set of efforts focused on ensuring the Angus legacy remains strong. For more information about the Angus Foundation and its mission, visit www.angusfoundation.org.

— by Peyton Schmitt, *Angus Communications*



for Feb. 9-10 and will be open for the public to view virtually via live webcast. Additional information, including meeting details and how to submit public comment, is available for viewing online at www.dietaryguidelines.gov.

Season 2 of podcast launched

Season 2 of *The Angus*

Conversation kicked off in January, with new episodes going live every two weeks through May.

Hear from breeders, researchers and industry experts on everything from marketing to tackling today's challenges. The podcast is available on all major podcast platforms, or by visiting www.theangusconversation.com.

Ralco moves headquarters

Ralco, an innovative leader in natural products for livestock and crop producers, announces its new global headquarters in downtown Marshall, Minn. For more than 50 years, Ralco has established a reputation of excellence in the ag industry with

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2023 Angus Foundation Heifer Package sells for \$130,000

Ingram Angus LLC of Pulaski, Tenn., purchased the 2023 Angus Foundation Heifer Package for \$130,000 to lead off the National Angus Bull Sale Jan. 6 at Cattlemen's Congress in Oklahoma City.

Since 1980 the Angus Foundation has annually sold a heifer package to generate unrestricted funds to further its mission.

Coleman Angus of Charlo, Mont., donated Coleman Chloe 173 to headline this year's heifer package. She was due to calve Jan. 20 to Coleman Full Deck 118.

The package included an Advanced Reproductive Technology Package from Trans Ova Genetics, trucking to the buyer donated by Lathrop Livestock Services and 30 days of mortality insurance donated by Liberty Specialty Markets.

"We couldn't be more thankful for the generosity of the Coleman, Haag and Ingram

families," said Jaclyn Boester, Angus Foundation executive director. "The Colemans brought us an outstanding female to offer, and coupled with the Ingrams'

generosity, the tradition of the [Angus] Foundation Heifer Package continues to pave a bright future for the Angus breed."

The Angus Foundation Heifer Package has raised more than \$2.7 million since the inception of the program. Funds raised benefit the Angus Fund, which provides unrestricted dollars to further the Angus Foundation's mission of education, youth and research. For more information visit www.angusfoundation.org.



The 2023 Angus Foundation Heifer Package, donated by Coleman Angus of Charlo, Mont., was purchased by Ingram Angus LLC of Pulaski, Tenn., for \$130,000.

Ranches support Angus Foundation through heifer pregnancies

The Angus Foundation raised \$61,000 through the sale of four heifer pregnancies at Cattlemen's Congress and the National Western Stock Show (NWSS). The pregnancies sold in Oklahoma City at the Bases Loaded, Denim and Diamonds, and Angus at the Congress sales and in Denver at the Foundation Angus Sale at the NWSS. Money raised benefits the Angus Fund, which provides unrestricted funding for Angus education, youth and research.

The pregnancies were donated by Brinkley Angus Ranch, Milan, Mo., and Lazy H Ranch, Hays, Kan.; Big Timber Cattle Co., Lithia, Fla.; Williams Angus, Gray, Tenn.; and Poss Angus, Scotia, Neb. Lathrop Livestock Services donated complimentary trucking of the females.

Buyers included Dixie Valley Ranch, Montague,

Calif.; Running J Ranch LLC, Wernersville, Penn.; Soaring Eagle Farms, Springfield, Mo.; and Heritage Farms, Shelbyville, Ky.

"Those who supported our heifer pregnancies weren't just investing in elite genetics — they were also investing in the future of our breed," said Jaclyn Boester, Angus Foundation executive director.

The Angus Fund sustains a variety of programs including academic scholarships, leadership conferences and cutting-edge research to enhance the future of the breed.



Levi Landers, American Angus Association regional manager, takes bids on a heifer pregnancy during the Angus Foundation Angus Sale in Denver, Colo.

trusted products that overcome producer challenges.

Brian Knochenmus, CEO and owner of Ralco, shared his enthusiasm saying, “Our new space is designed for innovation and solving customer problems in ways that weren’t possible before.”

Bob Galbraith, founder of Ralco, started the company out of his garage in 1971. Now, five decades later, Ralco employs 200 people with distribution in more than 40 countries worldwide.

Addressing wildfire crisis

Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack on Jan. 19 announced expanded efforts to reduce wildfire risk across the western United States. These investments, made possible through President Biden’s Bipartisan Infrastructure

Law (BIL) and the *Inflation Reduction Act* (IRA), are intended to protect at-risk communities and critical infrastructure.

“It is no longer a matter of if a wildfire will threaten many western communities in these landscapes, it is a matter of when,” said Vilsack. “The need to invest more and to move quickly is apparent. This is a crisis, and President Biden is treating it as one. Today’s announcement will bring more than \$490 million to 11 key landscapes across the western United States, and will be used to restore our national forests, including the restoration of resilient old-growth forest conditions.”

The Forest Service announced its original 10 landscape project areas last year as part of the agency’s broader strategy to

protect communities, critical infrastructure and forest resources from catastrophic wildfire. Combined with these initial landscape investments, the additional efforts being announced represent a total USDA investment of \$930 million across 45 million acres.

This work spans 134 of the 250 high-risk “firesheds” identified in the Wildfire Crisis Strategy and will mitigate wildfire risk to around 200 communities in the western United States. Firesheds are areas where wildfire is likely to pose the greatest risk to communities and resources.

The landscapes for these additional investments were selected based on the potential for wildfire to affect nearby communities and buildings, with a focus on protecting underserved communities, critical

infrastructure, public water sources and tribal lands. USDA also considered more than 3,000 comments from 11 roundtable meetings convened in the first half of 2022.

Vilsack is directing the Forest Service to use and prioritize a suite of provisions authorized in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to more quickly apply targeted treatments to the identified high-risk firesheds, while opening up additional opportunities to pursue science-based reforestation, restoration of old growth forests and recovery of other areas affected by wildfire. **ABB**

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