

News & Notes

Industry tidbits from around the country.

Compiled by Taylor Edwards, intern

Advocates unite behind 2023 Farm Bill

Twenty groups representing agriculture, environment, forestry, wildlife, nutrition and anti-hunger advocates have launched the “Farm Bill for America’s Families: Sustaining Our Future” campaign to urge passage of the 2023 Farm Bill this year.

The campaign brings together stakeholders who support the Farm Bill and recognize its effects on the well-being of all Americans. It seeks to engage consumers, leaders and lawmakers on the importance of the bill and highlights five core objectives: food security, job creation, conservation, risk management and addressing hunger.

Founding members include: American Farm Bureau Federation, Ducks Unlimited, Farm Credit Council, National Corn Growers Association, National Farmers Union, National Pork Producers Council and The Nature Conservancy. For more,

including the complete list of founders, visit <https://farmbillforamericafamilies.com>.

Commercial cattlemen scholarship program

To advance the mission of supporting education, youth and research, the Angus Foundation extends its scholarship program to young men and women using Angus sires or dams in a commercial operation. These youth and/or their parents/guardians must use Angus genetics in their breeding program.

Youth eligible are pursuing an undergraduate degree in animal science, agriculture, rangeland management or a technical trade, and are seeking financial support for the cost of their education at a university, community college or trade school.

Emphasis will be placed on an applicant’s knowledge of the cattle industry and their

perspective of the Angus breed.

This year’s scholarship winners are: Jacee Sumpter, Branson, Colo.; Addison Hillman, Brainerd, Minn.; Bryce Hoeltzel, Olsburg, Kan.; and Abigail Morse, Madison, S.D.

To read more about them, check out the July 2023 *Angus Beef Bulletin EXTRA* (<https://bit.ly/JulyNewsNotes>) or stay tuned for upcoming features in the *Angus Beef Bulletin*.

Association names new regional manager

The American Angus Association welcomes Shawn Gray of Samson, Ala., as regional manager for Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi. A University of Florida graduate, Gray has spent his career diversifying his skill set in seedstock production, commercial

backgrounding, nutrition, forage management and more. He spent nearly five years managing more than 10,000 head of stocker cattle at Crimson Cattle Co.

Gray’s experience and understanding of the industry, specifically in the southeastern region of the country, make him a great fit for this role, says Levi Landers, director of field services.

Gray will work with breeders to promote Angus cattle, consult on management practices, help locate Angus seedstock and inform cattlemen about Association programs and services. He will also advise producers on marketing opportunities available through the Association, including

advertising in the *Angus Journal*®, *Angus Beef Bulletin* and other avenues.

Contact Shawn Gray at sgray@angus.org or 352-425-9326.

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Shawn Gray

Angus breeders engage in premiere education

Twenty-one American Angus Association members attended the 2023 Beef Leaders Institute (BLI) June 13-17. The annual event is hosted by the American Angus Association and funded by the Angus Foundation and Certified Angus Beef (CAB). BLI provides Association members the opportunity to experience the beef value chain from pasture to plate.

Participants began the week at the American Angus Association in Saint Joseph, Mo., meeting with staff to learn about its many departments and programs before hitting the road to further explore the production and processing sectors of the beef industry.

Stops included Tyson Fresh Meats, Dakota City, Neb.; Weborg Feedyards, Pender, Neb.; Buckhead Toledo, Northwood, Ohio; and STgenetics, Tiffin, Ohio.

The tour wrapped up at The Culinary Center at CAB’s main

offices in Wooster, Ohio. From a “Taste the Difference,” steak tasting to a hands-on beef fabrication demonstration in the meat lab, participants explored the

specifications behind putting a CAB steak on the dinner table.

BLI is designed to equip members ages 25 to 45 with the resources to understand all segments of the beef industry. The 2024 application will be available in early November.



Mark McCully presenting to the BLI group at the American Angus Association.

PHOTO BY ELIZABETH ROSSON

National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility opens

The USDA and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) officials celebrated the dedication and ribbon-cutting of the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF). This facility, offering the highest level of biocontainment laboratories and safety protocols, is the first of its kind in the United States and will allow scientists to study and diagnose critical animal diseases.

With more than 400 employees, USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) will share operational responsibilities. ARS will focus on research to understand high-consequence and emerging animal diseases and develop countermeasures, such as vaccines and antivirals. APHIS will focus on prevention, surveillance, diagnosis and response to these diseases, including the expertise to manage two vaccine banks and train state and federal veterinarians to recognize livestock diseases.

Adjacent to Kansas State University (K-State) and on the western edge of the largest concentration of animal health companies in the nation, the 48-acre NBAF campus includes more than 700,000 square feet (sq. ft.) of total building space. The main building, at 500,000 sq. ft., includes containment laboratories, animal holding facilities, office spaces, facility support areas and required safety systems.

2023 YCC class marks 40 years of leadership growth

After a three-year hiatus, the

Young Cattlemen's Conference (YCC) program had a successful relaunch. This year's class included 71 leaders from across the nation and every segment of the beef industry. After nine days of intensive leadership training and a five-city tour that showcased every facet of the beef industry, these leaders completed their trip with a full day of representation in Washington, D.C.

The event is designed to expose participants to the full supply chain. YCC prepares participants to serve as leaders within their state cattlemen's associations and as advocates for NCBA and the beef community.

The 2023 class began its journey in Denver, Colo., with classroom sessions providing background knowledge about NCBA and the work it conducts on behalf of its members and the beef community. Participants took part in leadership development sessions, media training and hands-on demonstrations of the work NCBA does as a contractor to the Beef Checkoff. The group visited Greeley, Colo., to tour Five Rivers Cattle Feeding's Kuner Feedyard and enjoy an evening at Greeley Hat Works.

In Nebraska and Ohio, YCC participants had the opportunity to visit Tyson Foods' Dakota City beef processing plant, the main offices of Certified Angus Beef and Wendy's restaurants.

The class finished its itinerary in Washington, D.C., where participants learned how NCBA's policy work affects their operations and the broader industry. After an in-depth policy issue briefing from NCBA's lobbyists and staff experts, participants took to Capitol Hill, visiting more than 200

congressional offices to advocate for industry policy priorities.

Producers praise congressional resolution

Cattle industry leaders praised the introduction of a bipartisan congressional resolution recognizing the importance of commodity checkoff programs, including the Beef Checkoff.

"As a cattle producer who invests in the Beef Checkoff, I know how important this program is to the continued success of America's cattlemen and cattlemen," said NCBA President Todd Wilkinson, a South Dakota cattle producer. "The Beef Checkoff was created by cattle producers, is run by cattle producers, and provides immense benefit to cattle producers."

Wilkinson praised Rep. Barry Moore (R-AL) for leading the resolution, and called on more members of Congress to listen to farmers and ranchers and reject animal rights activist-led proposals like the *OFF Act* that undermine producer control of checkoffs.

When cattle are sold in the United States, \$1 from the sale goes to support the Beef Checkoff. These investments are collected by the Cattlemen's Beef Board (CBB), a producer-led organization overseen by the USDA.

Each year, industry organizations, research institutions and land-grant universities develop proposals focused on strengthening beef demand through research, consumer education, marketing and promotion efforts. The cattlemen and cattlemen who volunteer their time to serve on the Beef Board, as appointed by

the secretary of agriculture, determine which proposals to fund.

The organizations that receive funding become contractors to the Beef Checkoff and undergo regular audits to ensure the judicious use of producer dollars and compliance to the program.

"The Beef Checkoff might be most well-known for the *Beef. It's What's for Dinner.* campaign, but the Checkoff's benefits go far beyond advertising," says NCBA Policy Division Chairman Gene Copenhaver. "Checkoff-funded programs have led to the development of new cuts of beef and strengthened consumer trust in the cattle industry's animal welfare and sustainability."

Cost of cookout down slightly from 10-year high

Celebrating the 4th of July with a cookout cost significantly more than two years ago, although prices have fallen slightly from record highs in 2022. Families paid \$67.73 to host an Independence Day cookout with 10 family members or friends, based on the 2023 American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) marketbasket survey.

The \$67.73 grocery bill is down 3% from 2022, but still approximately 14% higher than prices were just two years ago. Last year set a record high since AFBF began the survey in 2013, and 2023 comes in at the second-highest cost. The cookout favorites included cheeseburgers, chicken breasts, pork chops, homemade potato



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salad, strawberries and ice cream, among other products.

The survey shows a year-to-year increase in the cost of hamburger buns, beef and potato salad; and decreases in the cost of chicken breasts, lemonade and cookies. The retail price for a package of eight hamburger buns increased 17% to \$2.26. Homemade potato salad cost \$3.44, up 5% from 2022. The cost of 2 pounds (lb.) of ground beef rose 4% to \$11.54.

Several factors influenced the increases. Drought conditions increased the cost of feed and reduced the number of available cattle for the summer grilling season, driving up beef prices. Higher potato prices can be attributed to poor weather leading to a drop in production, and general inflation is driving up the price of processed foods like bread.

This survey found one exception to the increased price of processed foods. A package of cookies cost 10% less than 2022.

The price of chicken breasts and eggs, which had reached record-high prices in 2022, are both lower. This is good news as the number of avian influenza cases has fallen, which has allowed chicken populations to recover. Lemonade is 16% less expensive, at \$3.73, due to a drop in the cost of lemons.

Although historically high, the cost of the cookout breaks down to less than \$7 per person. When put in a global context, Americans spend a smaller percentage of their income on food than any other country.

The federal government's broader Consumer Price Index report for food at home shows an overall increase of 5.8% compared to a year ago. Farm

Bureau's informal marketbasket survey examines only those foods commonly associated with summer cookouts.

EATS Act would abrogate Prop 12

The National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) reported on the *Exposing Agricultural Trade Suppression (EATS) Act* in one of its Friday recaps, sharing that Reps. Ashley Hinson (R-IA) and Zach Nunn (R-IA) introduced the Act to prohibit state and local governments from imposing laws and regulations that have the effect of dictating ag production practices outside their borders.

Companion legislation in the Senate, titled the *Ending Agriculture Trade Suppression (EATS) Act*, is sponsored by Sen. Roger Marshall (R-KS) with support from several senators, including Joni Ernst (R-IA) and Chuck Grassley (R-IA).

The *EATS Act* was prompted by California's Proposition 12 and Massachusetts' Question 3, both of which ban the sale of pork from hogs whose mothers (sows) were raised in housing that fails to meet the states' standards. It would prevent states like California or Massachusetts from passing laws that seek to regulate ag production practices on farms outside of the state.

The *U.S. Constitution's* Commerce Clause grants Congress the exclusive power to regulate trade between and among the states and restricts states from regulating commerce outside their borders. **ABB**

Editor's note: For additional news and notes about the beef industry, visit www.angusbeefbulletin.com/extra.