

# Industry Link

## National Angus Conference & Tour will be in New York

Angus enthusiasts can mark Aug. 28-30, 2013, on their calendars as the date for the 2013 National Angus Conference & Tour (NAC&T). Albany, N.Y., will serve as the headquarters for the annual event, which will again be sponsored with the support of Land O' Lakes Purina Feed LLC. New York Angus breeders will provide a tour featuring the state's Angus operations and New York agriculture.

## Missouri house passes right-to-farm legislation — 110 yes, 41 no

The Missouri House of Representatives passed a joint resolution Feb. 28 in support of a constitutional amendment ensuring Missouri farmers and ranchers the "Right to Farm." The resolution will now go to the Missouri State Senate for further consideration. If approved by the state Senate, Missouri citizens could soon have the opportunity to send a strong message to radical animal rights groups at the ballot box, choosing to stand with Missouri's No. 1 industry — agriculture.

Missouri State Representatives Jason Smith and Bill Reiboldt were original sponsors of House Joint Resolution (HJR) 7 & 11 Right to Farm amendment, respectively.

"The amendment will protect Missouri's \$11-billion-a-year agriculture industry, the lifeblood of our state's economy, from attacks made by out-of-state special-interest groups that want nothing less than the end of our agricultural way of life," said Smith.

— *Adapted from a release by Protect the Harvest.*

## PLC and NCBA ask Supreme Court to settle Hage case

The Public Lands Council (PLC) and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) are asking the U.S. Supreme Court to take up and settle a decades-long property-rights case, Hage v. United States. The high court would determine whether the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) violated the Takings Clause of the U.S. Constitution when it interfered with Nevada ranchers Wayne and Jean Hage's stock-water rights.

The Nevada Cattlemen's Association, the Oregon Cattlemen's Association and Washington Cattlemen's Association joined PLC and NCBA in their brief of *amicus curiae*, filed by Western Resources Legal Center (WRLC).

The USFS had denied the Hage family access to ditches supplying their stock and several meadows with water. The agency demanded that the family file for a permit in order to maintain and

use the water. Although a federal claims court decided the Hages were owed compensation by the agency for the water taking, the Federal Circuit Court of Appeals reversed this determination in part.

"This case threatens the ability to carry out livestock activities both on and off federal land," said WRLC Executive Director and representing counsel Caroline Lobdell. "The federal agency, in effect, would be armed with the authority to unilaterally determine what constitutes reasonable or routine maintenance, and therefore empowered to subjugate vested 1866 Mining Act rights-of-way in favor of whatever policy rules the day."

According to NCBA President and Wyoming rancher Scott George, if the agency is allowed to demand a permit for Hage's ditch right-of-way, county road rights-of-way established under the Mining Act (known as "R.S. 2477 roads") would also be in jeopardy.

— *Adapted from a release by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association.*

## Veterans complete training for jobs in Michigan's meat-processing industry

Eleven unemployed U.S. veterans in Michigan are the latest to complete Vets to Ag, a training program developed in

partnership between the Michigan State University (MSU) Institute of Agricultural Technology (IAT) and the Veterans Services Division of the Michigan Workforce Development Agency. The program is supported by local *Michigan Works!* agencies, state and local veteran's services organizations, and shelters that serve homeless veterans.

The veterans, many of whom were homeless, completed a six-week training program on meat processing and cutting. They spent four weeks at the Kellogg Biological Station in Hickory Corners, Mich., learning some of the basics of agriculture, meat production, résumé writing and leadership training.

JBS, a Brazilian-owned meat-processing company with eight plants across the country and an operation in Plainwell, Mich., has agreed to hire them, though Tom Smith, assistant director of IAT, believes that other companies will be interested in their skills, too.

"Every one of these vets will have more than one job offer in Michigan," Smith said. "We literally cannot fill the need for workers in this industry in the state."

The training was coordinated by IAT, which is housed in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources

(CANR) at MSU. Program instructors included CANR faculty and staff members in the departments of Animal Science and Community, Agriculture, Recreation and Resource Studies.

“To date the Vets to Ag program has enrolled dozens of veterans into training for available jobs in Michigan’s agricultural industry, providing a pathway to independence and self-sufficiency for vets with significant barriers to employment,” said Michael West, operations manager of the Veterans Services Division of the Michigan Workforce Development Agency and a Navy veteran.

— Adapted from a release by MSU.

### **USDA to simplify guaranteed farm loans by setting thresholds on interest rates**

The USDA March 1 announced an interim rule that sets thresholds on the interest rates charged by lenders on guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans. The changes will amend guidelines for interest rates and establish new policies that clearly set the maximum interest rate lenders may charge to borrowers.

“By providing clear thresholds on interest rates for federally guaranteed farm loans, USDA is ensuring greater certainty to producers, making compliance easier for our lenders and ensuring greater benefits for all farmers and ranchers,” said Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack.

USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) guaranteed loans reduce the risk of loss to lenders (banks, farm credit institutions and credit unions) by guaranteeing up to 95% of the loss of principal and interest on a loan. By reducing a lender’s risk, borrowers benefit from a lower rate.

The interim rule on maximum interest rates for FSA-guaranteed loans will benefit lenders and producers alike. Lenders have expressed a desire to see greater clarity in FSA’s interest rate policy. At the same time, FSA seeks greater consistency with industry standards and other government agencies that administer similar programs. The improvements in the new rule will make credit pricing procedures easier to follow and improve compliance for lenders.

At this time, FSA is also requesting additional comments on the interim policies in the rule, aiming to assure that the benchmark rates required of lenders do not prevent farmers and ranchers from obtaining guaranteed loans. USDA is seeking comments through June 3, 2013.

This interim rule is part of USDA’s work to expand credit opportunities for America’s farmers and ranchers. In January, USDA announced a new microloan program to help small and family operations, and beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers secure loans under \$35,000. The new microloan program is aimed at

bolstering the progress of producers through their start-up years by providing needed resources and helping to increase equity so that farmers may eventually graduate to commercial credit and expand their operations. The interest rate for microloans changes monthly and is currently 1.25%.

Since 2009 USDA has made a record amount of farm loans — more than

134,000 loans totaling nearly \$18 billion. USDA has increased the number of loans to beginning farmers and ranchers from 11,000 loans in 2008 to 15,000 loans in 2011. More than 40% of USDA’s farm loans now go to beginning farmers. USDA has increased its lending to socially-disadvantaged producers by nearly 50% since 2008.

— Adapted from release by USDA.

### **Zoetis announces the second winner of HD 50K and GeneMax™ Sweepstakes**

Kirk McKinney of Autauga Farming Company in Autaugaville, Ala., is the second grand-prize winner of the HD 50K and GeneMax Sweepstakes from Zoetis, formerly Pfizer Animal Health. McKinney, who is looking to buy two new Angus

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bulls for this central Alabama diversified family farm, says the grand prize came at a good time.

“The grand prize will go a long way to help us purchase an HD 50K-tested bull,” McKinney says. “And, anything we can do to help improve the genetics in our herd is something we want to try to do —

especially because we keep 20% of our heifers into the next year.”

As part of this sweepstakes, McKinney is the second of five cattlemen who will receive \$1,000 toward the purchase of a registered-Angus animal with genomic-enhanced expected progeny differences (GE-EPDs) powered by High-Density 50K

(HD 50K) or toward testing their own commercial Angus animals with GeneMax.

GE-EPDs powered by HD 50K provide the most dependable option for selecting young Angus bulls, says Michael Amos, associate director, marketing, Zoetis.

To enter the sweepstakes, visit [www.genomeXchange.com/sweepstakes](http://www.genomeXchange.com/sweepstakes).

There is no purchase necessary to enter the promotion. The official rules, complete list of prizes and entry instructions are available on the website.

To learn more about GE-EPDs powered by HD 50K, visit [www.zoetis.com/genetics](http://www.zoetis.com/genetics). For more information about GeneMax, visit [www.cabpartners.com/genemax](http://www.cabpartners.com/genemax). To better understand how both technologies can help you make more-profitable decisions, contact your Zoetis or American Angus Association representative.

— Adapted from a release by Zoetis.

**2013 GrillMaster Experience BBQ Tour Kicks Off**

The National Beef Checkoff Program, in partnership with the American GrillMaster Experience, announced the kick-off of a nationwide grilling tour taking place at Sam’s Club® National BBQ Tour events. Using beef grilling demonstrations, product samples, recipes and other checkoff-funded resources, the American GrillMaster Experience educates and informs consumers about the value and benefits of cooking with beef and grilling techniques.

A total of 30 events covering 25 states are slated for the 2013 March-November tour. Events will take place at Sam’s Club locations as part of the Sam’s Club National BBQ Tour, which is the largest Kansas City Barbeque Society (KCBS) sanctioned competition series. The Grill Master’s samples are sourced from premium-quality Sam’s Club beef, which has a 200% freshness guarantee.

In 2010, Sam’s Club launched a pilot competitive barbecue program and became the first major retailer to sponsor KCBS. From that pilot program, the Sam’s Club National BBQ Tour was born. During 2011, the inaugural tour became the largest competitive barbecue series in America, and in 2013, the competition series will award \$500,000 in prize money.

“These events provide the beef checkoff with an opportunity to encourage interaction between the grillers and consumers,” said Brett Morris, producer from Ninnekah, Okla., and vice-chair of the Beef Image Committee. “The Grill Master showcases the different ways to prepare premium-quality beef and to bring out the full flavor and taste each product provides. He speaks about unique pairings for beef products and educates consumers with information they can take home and apply on their own grills.”

Visit <http://bit.ly/YfXNyZ> to download the GrillMaster events schedule or visit [www.facebook.com/AmericanGrillMasterExperience](http://www.facebook.com/AmericanGrillMasterExperience).

— Adapted from a release by Cattlemen’s Beef Promotion and Research Board (CBB).