

Industry Link

Compiled by

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Statement on Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee meeting

At the Dec. 15 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee meeting to discuss the *2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, the committee made clear its intention to remove lean beef and reduce red meat consumption from healthful dietary patterns. Texas medical doctor and cattle producer Richard Thorpe subsequently offered the following statement:

“Despite a large body of strong and consistent evidence supporting lean beef’s role in healthy diets, the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee appears to be out-of-touch with today’s lean meat supply in the retail counter and the 30+ years of nutrition advice showcasing benefits of lean beef. I am deeply disappointed that the committee missed this opportunity to positively influence the American diet by blatantly disregarding sound science and removing lean beef from a healthful dietary pattern.

“Today, for the second time, the committee presented and agreed to evidence showing that there are healthy dietary patterns with red-meat intake above current U.S. consumption levels. Against their own review of the science, the committee is recommending healthy diets should be lower in red meat than they are today.

“The committee has turned a blind eye to their own evidence-library criteria, arbitrarily excluding peer-reviewed, sound science on the health

benefits of lean beef. To recommend that Americans eat less of a heart-healthy protein, the only area of the existing guidelines currently consumed within the recommended amounts, demonstrates that this committee has its own agenda, and it is not guided by the evidence. This flawed process and committee bias is preventing a fair and reasonable discussion of the true science. I encourage the secretaries to take a step back and look closely at the inconsistency and absurdity of the committee’s recommendation.”

Source: NCBA

Genex launches PregCheck™ fertility ranking

Genex Cooperative Inc. is first in the industry to launch sire fertility rankings on beef sires.

“We are excited to launch a beef sire fertility ranking model,” states Keith Heikes, Genex COO. “This fertility ranking, called PregCheck, evaluates an individual sire’s frozen semen conception rate.”

The PregCheck evaluation, available only through Genex, shows the expected difference in a sire’s conception rate. PregCheck uses a 100-base system, meaning a value of 100 is average. Every one-point difference is equivalent to a 1% difference in conception rate. For example, if Sire A has a PregCheck of 102 and Sire B has a PregCheck of 98, sire A is predicted to average a 4% higher conception rate compared to sire B when bred to females with similar reproductive ability.

“Genex members and customers can expect increased conception rates when

breeding females to higher-PregCheck sires. An increase in conception rate adds up to more artificial insemination (AI) pregnancies and pounds of calf per year,” explains Heikes.

The statistical analysis for PregCheck was developed by Genex geneticists, who also assisted the cooperative in being the first to the marketplace with an internal dairy sire fertility evaluation. Genex dairy sire fertility research has led to industry-wide fertility domination for the past decade. The beef PregCheck model is identical to the dairy sire fertility evaluation system; however, it is set to a beef base where sires are only compared to other beef sires.

PregCheck rankings will be published in the *2015 Beef Genetic Management Guide*. As additional sires achieve reliability, their PregCheck rankings will be updated on the Genex website. Visit the Genex website at <http://bit.ly/BeefPregCheck> for a current listing.

Source: Genex Cooperative Inc.

Joint statement by NCBA and PLC on Senate passage of funding bill

The \$1.1 trillion omnibus package passed by the Senate Dec. 13 had several strong wins for the cattle industry. National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA) President Bob McCan and Public Lands Council (PLC) President Brenda Richards remarked on Senate Passage of 2015 Funding Legislation.

“We greatly appreciate Congress’ passage of this important legislation, which contained a number of critical provisions that will support the viability of our industry for the year to come. The bill made a major step in addressing over-burdensome regulation from the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) by withdrawing the Interpretative Rule as part of the Waters of the United States (WOTUS) proposed regulation. The rule, which attempts to clarify farming and ranching provisions under the *Clean Water Act*, adds uncertainty rather than explanation for landowners and threatens fines of up to \$37,500 per day. While not a complete fix, this is a critical step in addressing the strong concerns farmers and ranchers have with this regulation.

“Viable public lands and the ranchers who lease those acres are critical not only to the cattle industry, but to the preservation of those lands for multiple use, wildlife habitat, and wildfire prevention and suppression. The bill kept ranchers in the West on the land, holding budgets for the BLM (Bureau of Land Management) and Forest Service level, despite the president’s request to cut funding for federal grazing and range programs.

“There is language included that prevents the Interior Department from listing the sage grouse under the *Endangered Species Act* for the fiscal

year and the additional funding to continue sage-grouse conservation efforts is important to prevent a future listing of the bird. Listing the sage grouse would take the most successful natural resource stewards — ranchers — off the land.

“The bill also contained continued assurance on a number of environmental regulations. Specifically, the bill prevents funding for the EPA to require cattle producers to obtain greenhouse-gas permits for livestock and to prevent mandatory reporting of greenhouse-gas emissions from manure-management systems.

“The passage by both the House and Senate is a clear message that Congress supports our industry and is willing to put a stop [to] the overzealous administration and their attempt to take production agriculture off the land.”

Source: NCBA, PLC

USCA issues statement on spending bill passage

The United States Cattlemen’s Association (USCA) responded Dec. 15 to the Senate passage of the fiscal year 2015 spending bill. The bill, which funds the government through Sept. 30, 2015, was passed on a vote of 56-40 late in the evening Dec. 13, and is now on track to be sent to the president’s desk for final signature. USCA commends the bipartisan passage of this bill, but remains disappointed that multiple riders remain within the final piece of legislation.

In addition to providing \$1.1 trillion in funding for the coming year across government programs, the bill also includes more than 100 riders concerning a variety of issues. Checkoff, country-of-origin labeling (COOL), horse processing and Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA)-based riders all remain in the bill being sent to the president’s desk. USCA voiced its opposition to each of these issues being included in the bill and looks forward to addressing them in the coming year.

USCA President Danni Beer commented, “USCA remains opposed to the inherent intent behind each of these riders. The COOL and checkoff provisions in the bill do not implement any changes or weaken any of the programs; rather they are written as directives to USDA. Each issue should be allowed to play out through its respective ongoing process, which will allow producer input; instead, these riders will now demand additional and unnecessary government oversight and intervention.”

“We are disappointed that once again it seems a vocal minority is attempting to speak for producers at large, and in doing so, has taken a position that

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Cattle on feed in the United States up slightly

Cattle and calves on feed for slaughter market in the United States for feedlots with capacity of 1,000 or more head totaled 10.6 million head on Nov. 1, 2014. The inventory was slightly higher than Nov. 1, 2013 (see accompanying table).

Placements in feedlots during October totaled 2.36 million, 1% below 2013. Net placements were 2.26 million head. During October, placements of cattle and calves weighing less than 600 lb. were 690,000; 600-699 lb. were 570,000; 700-799 lb. were 462,000; and 800 lb. and greater were 635,000. For the month of October, placements were the second lowest since the series began in 1996.

Marketings of fed cattle during October totaled 1.69 million, 8% below 2013. October marketings are the lowest since the series began in 1996.

Other disappearance totaled 97,000 during October 2014, 28% above 2013.

Item	2013	2014	% previous year
	----- 1,000 head -----	-----	
On feed Oct. 1	10,110	10,058	99
Placed on feed during Oct.	2,378	2,357	99
Fed cattle marketed during Oct.	1,827	1,685	92
Other disappearance during Oct.	76	97	128
On feed Nov. 1	10,585	10,633	100

Learn more by viewing the Nov. 24, 2014, *Angus Journal Daily* archived at www.api-virtuallibrary.com/eList-archive/.

Source: USDA-NASS.

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is completely at odds with the best interests of cattle producers across the country. This effort is aimed at derailing country-of-origin labeling, a program that ensures U.S. cattle producers can differentiate their product in a positive way. It also curtails current work being done to increase checkoff dollars through the implementation of an updated and modern checkoff that will meet the needs of today's producers. When it comes to the beef checkoff, USCA urges all invested stakeholders to seek solutions that reflect the needs of the entire industry and not just the primary contractor."

Beer concluded, "COOL, checkoff, horse processing and GIPSA reform are all issues of concern to U.S. cattle producers. USCA will continue to lead as the producer's voice on each of these issues, and we are committed to ensuring that producer input and consideration is at the heart of any action taken."

Source: USCA

Congress passes key provisions that benefit western communities

On Dec. 12, Congress showed its support of productive western rangelands by passing necessary provisions of the *Grazing Improvement Act*, amending the grazing section of the *Federal Land Policy and Management Act* for the first time in many years. Championed by Sen. Barrasso (R-Wyo.) and Rep. Labrador (R-Idaho), the provisions were passed as part of the *National Defense Authorization Act* (NDAA) with a strong bipartisan majority vote, 89 to 11.

Brenda Richards, PLC president and Idaho family rancher said the passage of these provisions is critical to providing a stable business environment for ranchers that utilize public lands. A key provision passed was the grazing rider, which allows for land to remain in use while the land-management agencies conduct environmental analyses for permit reissuing.

"One of the original intents for introducing the *Grazing Improvement Act* was to codify the grazing rider that has been in place for over a decade," said Richards. "Ranches in the West, like my family's operation, need permanent authority for the federal land-management agencies to maintain existing grazing permits in spite of the seemingly endless backlog of environmental analysis faced by the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service."

The provisions passed also allow for the application of environmental analysis to allotments rather than the permits, which will extend, in some cases, to multiple-allotment analysis. Richards said grouping these analyses helps to streamline and increase efficiency of this review process for the BLM and Forest Service. Additionally, this language provides for both grazing-permit decisions and trailing and crossing decisions to be categorically excluded

from the *National Environmental Policy Act* (NEPA) allowing agency resources to be focused where most needed.

There are currently more than 22,000 ranchers that hold grazing permits. NCBA President Bob McCan said the continued success of these ranchers means the continued success of rural communities and the western landscape.

"Ranching was one of the first uses for public land across the West and has proven to be beneficial for the land and wildlife," said McCan. "Yet, ranching families are continually threatened by radical environmental groups pushing their agenda through process-based lawsuits against the land-management agencies. We applaud the House and Senate resources committees for including the grazing provisions in the lands package as part of NDAA and negotiating the removal of the detrimental language regarding grazing permit retirement that was included during markup in the Senate."

The *Grazing Improvement Act* has been a priority for the livestock industry for years; Congress' action confirms its support for a continued strong presence of ranchers on federal lands.

Source: PLC

Allflex acquires global livestock-monitoring leader, SCR Engineers Ltd.

Allflex, the global leader in livestock identification, announced Dec. 12 its acquisition of SCR Engineers Ltd., a company headquartered in Netanya, Israel, that is known throughout the world for cutting-edge livestock-monitoring and intelligent milking solutions. SCR will operate independently, as part of the Allflex Group, helping producers use equipment and predictive analytics to improve productivity. Company leaders view the acquisition as an important step to facilitate the adoption of effective and proven monitoring systems by North American producers.

"Through the years, Allflex has grown by developing individual animal identification tools and by acquiring organizations that provide producers with useful solutions," said Brian Bolton, president and CEO of Allflex USA. "Adding SCR to Allflex is perhaps the most significant step we've taken to prepare for the future demands on producers as they strive to meet the needs of feeding a growing world population with limited resources and greater demands for accountability. As a world leader, we have a responsibility to help meet this global challenge and plan to tap into the products and people from both organizations to provide practical, on-farm systems to better manage their animals and their businesses."

Source: Allflex

Avian Influenza confirmed in Washington State

Two highly pathogenic strains of avian influenza (AI) — one in a captive falcon facility and one in a wild duck — have been detected in Washington State. While some AI viruses affect humans,

these particular strains are not a threat to people.

While no AI has been detected in Texas, the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) is encouraging poultry owners “to remain vigilant in examining the health of their birds.” Report unusual death loss or signs of illness in a flock, or large-scale sickness and mortality of wild birds, to your veterinarian or the TAHC. More information about the AI outbreak in Washington State is available at www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_health/2014/SA_WA_avian_influenza.pdf.

Source: TAHC

Livestock slaughter: red-meat production down 4% from last year

According to the *Livestock Slaughter* report released by USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) Agricultural Statistics Board Nov. 20, 2014, commercial red meat production for the United States totaled 4.32 billion pounds (lb.) in October, down 4% from the 4.51 billion lb. produced in October 2013.

Beef production, at 2.17 billion lb., was 6% below the previous year. Cattle slaughter totaled 2.64 million head, down 9% from October 2013. The average live weight, at 1,355 lb., was up 28 lb. from the previous year.

Veal production totaled 7.7 million lb., 22% below October a year ago. Calf slaughter totaled 43,300 head, down 38% from October 2013. The average live weight was up 59 lb. from last year, at 304 lb.

Pork production totaled 2.13 billion lb., down 2% from the previous year. Hog slaughter totaled 9.95 million head, down 4% from October 2013. The average live weight was up 8 lb. from the previous year, at 286 lb.

Lamb and mutton production, at 13.4 million lb., was up 2% from October 2013. Sheep slaughter totaled 207,700 head, slightly below last year. The average live weight was 129 lb., up 3 lb. from October a year ago.

January to October 2014 commercial red-meat production was 39.5 billion lb., down 4% from 2013. Accumulated beef production was down 6% from last year.

Learn more by viewing the Nov. 21, 2014, *Angus Journal Daily* archive at www.api-virtuallibrary.com/eList-archive/.

Source: USDA-NASS.

More than 200 groups urge Congress to continue supporting COOL

On Dec. 2, 207 groups representing farm, ranch, consumer and manufacturing groups joined in a letter that urges U.S. Senate leaders to continue supporting the U.S. country-of-origin labeling (COOL) law that is currently under attack by the governments of Canada and Mexico at the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The group’s letter specifically urges Congress not to weaken, suspend or

rescind COOL in the upcoming legislation to provide funding for the federal government in FY 2015.

The group’s letter follows on the heels of a bipartisan letter sent by 32 Senators that likewise urged Senate leaders not to weaken or suspend COOL in the FY 2015 appropriations process.

Canada and Mexico challenged the U.S. COOL law at the WTO, alleging that

livestock from their respective countries were being treated less favorably than domestic livestock under the new requirement that muscle cuts of meat be labeled so consumers will know where the animal from which the meat was derived was born, where it was raised and where it was harvested.

In October, the WTO agreed with Canada and Mexico and concluded that

some U.S. meatpackers were either opting not to purchase foreign livestock or they were discounting foreign livestock.

The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) appealed the WTO ruling. A decision on the appeal is not expected until well into 2015.

Source: R-CALF USA.

