

Industry Link

Compiled by
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MSCA urges Secretary Jewell to file appeal to wolf ruling

On behalf of the cattlemen and cattlemen of Minnesota, the Minnesota State Cattlemen's Association

(MSCA) is urging Secretary of Interior Sally Jewell to immediately appeal the decision of U.S. District Judge Beryl A. Howell on Dec. 19, 2014, that vacated the U.S. Department of Interior's action that

delisted the wolves in Minnesota, Michigan and Wisconsin.

MSCA further requests the appeal include a petition for immediate stay of the order and full reinstatement of the final rule revising the Listing of the Gray Wolf (*Canis lupus*) in the Western Great Lakes (the "Final Rule"), 76 Fed. Reg. 81,666 (Dec. 28, 2011), pending completion of the appeal process. MSCA has also requested the assistance of Governor Dayton, Sen. Al Franken, Sen. Amy Klobuchar, Rep. Collin Peterson and the rest of the Minnesota Federal Legislators in urging Jewell to file this appeal.

MSCA President Tim Nolte stated in his letter, "The ruling that reclassified wolves as threatened places Minnesota farm and ranch families in a concerning situation of committing a federal felony under the *Endangered Species Act* should they injure or kill a wolf while attempting to protect a family pet or their domestic livestock."

He added, "The ruling leaves the citizens of Minnesota without any immediate option to deal with wolves that are in the act of stalking or killing their livestock, family pets or frequenting their front yards and creating a serious danger to their children and grandchildren."

The State of Minnesota, through the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and Department of Agriculture, has developed and implemented a comprehensive and time-proven wolf-management plan. This successful plan has been the basis for previous delisting and the means of ensuring Minnesota's wolves never again become threatened or endangered. MSCA plans to continue its support of Minnesota's state agencies in controlling Minnesota's wolf population.

Source: Minnesota State Cattlemen's Association.

K-State survey provides outlook for lending in the farm sector

Ag lender sentiment for the end of 2014 shows that lenders have decreased expectations for the short- and long-term outlook. Respondents of a Kansas State University (K-State) Agricultural Lender Survey expect farmland prices to decline and nonperforming loans to increase.

The five areas surveyed include farm loan interest rates, spread over cost of funds, farm loan volumes, nonperforming loans and farmland values. Brady Brewer, ag economics doctoral candidate, outlined the major themes and implications for the agricultural sector that were found.

"One of these themes is the continued expectations that farmland values will decrease; growing sentiment that farmland values will decrease in

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the short- and long-term,” Brewer said. “Additionally, only 2% more respondents indicated that land values in their service territory increased during the last quarter, indicating that values have already stagnated.”

Brewer pointed out that lenders expect interest rates to increase in the short- and

long-term. Rising loan interest rates were expected on all loan types considered — operating, intermediate and farm real estate.

“However, more lenders felt these increases would occur in two to five years instead of the coming year,” added Brian Briggeman, associate professor and

director of the Arthur Capper Cooperative Center.

Another theme Brewer discovered is that while the long-term expectation for nonperforming loans saw little change from the spring 2014 survey to the fall 2014 survey, more lenders expect nonperforming loans to rise in the short

term. Potentially, lenders are expecting tighter profit margins to strain loan repayment rates sooner than previously expected. However, it is important to recognize that nonperforming loans are currently at a historically low level.

“The financial health of the livestock and crop sectors appears to be headed in different directions,” said Brewer. With lower commodity prices and higher farmland values, lenders expect nonperforming loans to increase in the short- and long-term for crop sectors, while the livestock sectors, bolstered by high market prices and lower feed costs, are expected to see a decrease in nonperforming loans.

Source: Amanda Erichsen, K-State Research and Extension News.

Select Sires to celebrate golden anniversary in 2015

Select Sires Inc. was formed 50 years ago when four farmer-owned cooperatives joined forces to offer a wider variety of genetic options to their members and improve efficiencies. Since then, Select Sires has grown into the largest artificial insemination (AI) organization in North America, providing industry-leading products, services and programs to beef and dairy producers around the world.

“Select Sires’ success is the result of 50 years of cooperation, farmer-directed leadership and a passionate group of employees who love the cattle breeding business,” says David Thorbahn, Select Sires president and CEO. “We are excited to celebrate the rich history of Select Sires this year.”

In 1965, Central Ohio Breeding Association, Kentucky Artificial Breeding Association, Northern Illinois Breeding Cooperative and Southern Illinois Breeding Association formally incorporated Select Sires and consolidated their production facilities in Columbus, Ohio. Four years earlier they had met and established a semen exchange program to benefit their customer-owners.

Today, Select Sires consists of nine cooperatives that serve the United States. As the cooperative grew, so did the foundation, and in 1972 Select Sires began constructing the current facilities outside of Plain City, Ohio, northwest of Columbus. It is now the world’s largest bull-housing facility.

International demand for U.S. genetics has grown, and Select Sires markets semen worldwide to more than 95 countries. In 2000, Select Sires purchased half of World Wide Sires, which now sells semen in Europe, Africa, Asia and Oceania. That same year, Select Sires Canada was established to market semen in eastern Canada, and in 2014, after the purchase of GenerVations Inc., Select Sires GenerVations Inc. was formed to serve dairy and beef producers across all of Canada. Select Sires do Brasil was founded in 2011 as a wholly-owned subsidiary in Brazil, and distributors in

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Latin America have been established through the years.

Select Sires has consistently developed and provided high-quality programs and services for its customer-owners during the past 50 years. Select's gold-standard progeny test program, the Program for Genetic

Advancement™ (PGA™), involves more than 2,500 cooperator herds across the country. Select Mating Service™ (SMS™) and StrataGEN® are two of the best inbreeding solutions, and SMS has helped dairy producers throughout the world improve the type in their herds. One of Select's oldest programs, SMS,

has grown to annually provide more than 2 million new cows and heifers added to the program. The Program for Fertility Advancement™ (PFA™) field tests new semen-processing technologies and is the only research network of its kind. Select Reproductive Solutions™ (SRS™) specialists and technicians are highly

trained to provide a variety of reproductive services, including herd management systems and technologies like CowManager®.

For more information, please visit www.selectsires.com.

Source: Select Sires Inc.

Reaction to State of the Union address

American Farm Bureau Federation President Bob Stallman issued the following statement following President Obama's *State of the Union* address Jan. 20.

"The president this evening held out a glimmer of hope that he and the Republican Congress might still work together. His words were reassuring, yet recent history has been anything but. So many good things can be accomplished, so once again, we ask leaders of both parties: Please work together.

"We strongly support President Obama's efforts to normalize trade and other relations with Cuba. Cuba remains off-limits to almost all American trade — a self-imposed tactic that has repeatedly failed to secure reforms. American agriculture needs the same access to Cuban markets that so many other countries have. Easing trade-financing restrictions is a strong beginning to U.S. food and fiber being accessible to Cuba's 11 million consumers. It's also something most Americans know is right.

"Farm Bureau is also encouraged by the president's strong support for Trade Promotion Authority (TPA), which would give Congress the responsibility to vote yes or no on foreign-trade treaties without deal-killing amendments. Congress must pass bi-partisan TPA legislation to strengthen U.S. negotiating positions in future trade agreements.

"We remain resolute that tax laws must protect the family farm. Our members grow America's food and fiber for rates of return that are already miniscule compared to almost any other investment they could make. We need to continue to have tax policies that do not punish capital-intensive businesses like farms and ranches and that do not hinder sons and daughters from following the agricultural legacy of their parents.

"America needs to move forward. We can do that only when both parties do what our founders did when they wrote the Constitution: compromise."

Source: American Farm Bureau Federation.

Beef checkoff launches MBA 2.0

The beef checkoff's Masters of Beef Advocacy (MBA) program has launched MBA 2.0, an opportunity for beef and dairy producers to step up and be true leaders — "Advocates," if you will — for the industry and all of agriculture. Building on the success of

the original MBA courses, with nearly 6,000 graduates to date, the program hinges on the importance for consumers to hear directly from those growing and delivering their food to them.

Each course, which has all-new content based on consumer research about questions regarding the beef industry and end product, takes about an hour to complete and follows the beef life cycle:

1. The Beef Community — all about the people involved in producing beef, from pasture to plate;
2. Raising Cattle on Grass — covering the cow-calf and stocker/backgrounder stages of production;
3. Life in the Feedyard — what goes into ensuring cattle receive proper care and a healthy diet in the finishing phase;
4. From Cattle to Beef — how cattle are humanely slaughtered and processed into beef products; and
5. Beef. It's What's for Dinner. — consumer information about how to properly store, handle and cook beef to ensure a safe and enjoyable eating experience.

“When I found out about the MBA program, I jumped at the chance to complete the courses. For me, it turned out to be a great teaching tool to help me become an informed advocate — not just for my own family's benefit, but for the good of the entire industry,” says Joan Ruskamp, Cattlemen's Beef Board (CBB) member from Dodge, Neb.

Those individuals who completed the original MBA courses will remain enrolled in the program and can take the 2.0 classes to update their certificate. MBA grads then have the opportunity to join the private Facebook group where they can have interaction and dialogue about emerging industry issues.

For more information, please view the full release in the Jan. 21, 2014, *Angus Journal Daily*.

Source: The Beef Checkoff.

Record-high pork production in December

Commercial red meat production for the United States totaled 4.14 billion pounds (lb.) in December, up slightly from the 4.14 billion lb. produced in December 2013.

Beef production, at 2.00 billion lb., was 2% below the previous year. Cattle slaughter totaled 2.44 million head, down 5% from December 2013. The average live weight was up 29 lb. from the previous year, at 1,363 lb.

Veal production totaled 7.6 million lb., 22% below December a year ago. Calf slaughter totaled 43,000 head, down 35% from December 2013. The average live weight was up 51 lb. from last year, at 302 lb.

Pork production totaled 2.11 billion

lb., up 2% from the previous year. Hog slaughter totaled 9.85 million head, up 1% from December 2013. The average live weight was up 3 lb. from the previous year, at 286 lb.

Lamb and mutton production, at 13.4 million lb., was up 3% from December 2013. Sheep slaughter totaled 200,000

head, slightly above last year. The average live weight was 134 lb., up 3 lb. from a year ago December.

January to December 2014 commercial red meat production was 47.3 billion lb., down 4% from 2013. Accumulated beef production was down 6% from last year, veal was down 16%,

pork was down 1% from last year, and lamb and mutton production was down slightly.

Source: USDA NASS.

