

Moving Livestock Interstate

Livestock Marketing Council discusses proposed changes to government regulations pertaining to livestock moved in interstate commerce.

by **TROY SMITH**, *field editor*

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) Livestock Marketing Council met Feb. 5 during the 2015 Cattle Industry Convention & NCBA Trade Show in San Antonio, Texas. Composed of livestock-marketing professionals, including marketing firm operators, brokers and order buyers, the Council focuses on issues directly impacting the marketing segment of the beef industry. Among items on the San Antonio meeting's agenda were proposed changes to government regulations pertaining to livestock moved in interstate commerce.

NCBA staff veterinarian Kathy Simmons explained how USDA's Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) announced in January of this year proposed changes to regulations adopted in 2013 to facilitate animal disease traceability. According to Simmons, changes to rules for official identification of livestock moving through auction markets, buying stations and stockyards could affect business procedures at these facilities.

Among the proposed changes are modifications to language that make the APHIS rules apply specifically to "livestock-marketing facilities" and differentiate them from farms, ranches, feedlots, dairies and slaughter facilities. The regulations require all livestock-marketing facilities to allow APHIS to conduct operations necessary to detect, control and eradicate animal disease. Livestock-marketing facilities maintain records of the receipt, distribution and application of all official animal identification devices and USDA-approved back tags.

If adopted, rule changes would allow cattle and bison to be moved from a farm, feedlot or ranch of origin without "official" identification if the animals have been at the operation of origin for at least four months. Such animals must be going directly to no more than one approved livestock-marketing facility.

Simmons said proposed rule changes also remove the requirement that an accredited veterinarian be physically present at all times on auction market sale days, and allow for a veterinarian to be on-call.

Noting that the APHIS proposal was subject to public comment until March 3, Simmons said NCBA had no current policy on the matter. Livestock Marketing Council members took no immediate action to recommend adoption of NCBA policy. According to Council Chairman John Rose, a Montana rancher and order buyer, Council members were to meet with representatives of the Livestock Marketing Association (LMA), a trade

association for auction markets. Together the groups were to tease out details from the proposed regulatory changes and take

a position most advantageous to livestock-marketing firms and the beef industry.



Editor's Note: *This article is part of the online coverage of the 2015 Cattle Industry Convention and NCBA Trade Show available at www.4cattlemen.com.*