

# The Cattlemen's Newsletter

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## Our Mission

R-CALF USA's mission is to represent the U.S. cattle industry in trade and marketing issues to ensure the continued profitability and viability of independent U.S. cattle producers.

## A message from the President *By R. M. Thornsberry, D.V.M.*

The founders of R-CALF-USA chose, in their collective wisdom, to form an organization where membership established and set policy for the group. These founders also chose to have the organization's governing body be a membership-elected Board of Directors. R-CALF-USA is actually a non-profit corporation, and operates under a set of Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation. The Directors are elected by the membership, and the officers of the Board are elected to office by the Board of Directors.

While this form of organizational government may be foreign to producers accustomed to membership-elected officers, it was placed into effect by cattle industry leaders who had many years of experience in organizations that were administered from a head office. R-CALF-USA is truly a membership-run organization. If membership is not satisfied with the direction R-CALF USA is headed, they have the full right and authority to change their elected directors, and to form and implement new policy, giving the present directors clear and concise orders. The Directors have full authority, placed in the Bylaws by R-CALF USA's founders, to change the officer slate at any time and for any cause. That is how our founders chose to operate R-CALF USA.

As president, I am going to take the focus off the officers of the Board, and place it where it belongs – on the individuals elected to be members of the Board of Directors, and on our loyal and devoted staff. From this point on, I have asked each Regional Director to contribute a written account of his or her actions, plans, and ideas for his or her specific region to be included in the R-CALF USA newsletter and, eventually, to our *Cattlemen's Journal-USA*. The Board of Directors has voted unanimously to make a statement of support to the membership to follow membership policy explicitly.

I would advise all of R-CALF USA's many thousands of members to obtain a copy of policies approved by members of R-CALF USA over the years, as well as a separate list of proposed resolutions from this year's convention, which members will vote on this spring. These items can be found at: [www.r-calfusa.com](http://www.r-calfusa.com). Members who do not have access to the Internet should simply telephone their Regional Director, and he or she will obtain a copy for the member. R-CALF USA's Board of Directors is going to address this organization's membership policies, and its policies only.

## A message from the CEO *By Bill Bullard*

Five years ago, almost to the day, I was in exactly the same place as I am right now and for exactly the same reason. Call it irony or call it luck but five years ago I went to Washington, D.C. to help R-CALF USA win country of origin labeling and a ban on packer ownership of cattle.

Because you helped generate thousands of e-mails, faxes, and phone calls to your Senators and Representatives while I was bending their ears in the hallways, and because R-CALF USA worked cooperatively with a broad range of consumer groups and other farm organizations that, like us, understood the importance of COOL, we won.

We won COOL but we lost the ban on packer ownership of cattle. A key U.S. Senator told me why. And he told me why before the ban on packer ownership was even lost. He said that Congress couldn't overcome the meatpacking industry's opposition to the ban unless we could demonstrate the same broad-based support for it as we did for COOL. At that time, we couldn't. Unlike COOL, the ban on packer ownership did not enjoy the support of U.S. consumer groups and

many of the other organizations that supported COOL.

Now, five years later, I'm back in Washington, D.C. to help R-CALF USA win the implementation of COOL and a competition title in the Farm Bill, which includes a ban on packer ownership of cattle. Will we win? The answer is yes, he have to.

This means we must all commit to doing everything we can to deliver the cattle industry's message to each and every U.S. Senator and U.S. Representative. And that message needs to be focused, clear, and sincere. We have a distinct advantage today that we didn't have five years ago – we now have well over twice the number of cattle-producing members than we did then, which means that today we are more than twice as influential. And, while our coalition in support of COOL already consists of over 200 different organizations, our coalition in support of the competition title is growing in size as well.

From now until we win the vote to implement COOL by September 30, 2007, and until we win a competition title that bans packer ownership of

cattle, the responsibility to get this job done rests with each and every R-CALF USA member. Every one of us can pick up the phone and begin calling our Senators and Representatives to encourage them to support the early implementation of COOL and the ban on packer ownership. Every one of us can write a letter to the Chairman and Ranking Member of the U.S. Senate and House Agriculture Committees. Every one of us can go to other organizations we belong to and urge them to support our efforts. Every one of us can talk to a Main Street business owner and ask them to make a call or write a letter. Every one of us can talk to our neighbors and ask them to do the same. And, some among us are excellent writers who can begin writing letters to the editors of their local and regional papers. So, when should every one of us decide how we will contribute to this important effort? And when should we actually get to work?

**RIGHT NOW!**

To call your U.S. Senators and Representative, call the Capitol Switchboard at 202-224-3121

*(Continued on page 6)*

## The Marketing Committee is Still Busy *By Randy Stevenson, Region II Director and Marketing Committee Chair*

R-CALF USA's marketing committee has continued to be busy for quite some time. With help from Elizabeth Drake of Stewart and Stewart it has submitted a complaint on behalf of R-CALF USA to the Department of Justice (DOJ) and Grain Inspection Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) regarding the incident in February of 2006 when several packers stayed out of the cash market for several weeks. In October when three packers announced on the same day that they were cutting back on their kill numbers, then the next week with the cash market down \$4/cwt, they actually increased their kill. The marketing committee reported this incident to DOJ and GIPSA as well.

The committee is also addressing issues concerning commodity futures as well. With committee chair Randy Stevenson having a seat on the ag advisory board of the Commodity Futures Trad-

ing Commission, R-CALF USA has a voice in establishing operating principles for the commodity futures markets. The futures markets can be a valuable tool provided they can maintain their original purpose.

Some members of the committee have also taken on the task of analyzing the recently released report from GIPSA concerning Alternative Marketing Agreements (AMAs), better known as captive supply arrangements. The study does not support some of the conclusions drawn from it. For example, the study concludes that packers use AMAs to guarantee a consistent supply of cattle. But neither data, nor any analysis of data is presented to prove the statement. Like other documents before it this study used interviews to support this conclusion instead of data.

The committee has also done some work to

help promote the inclusion of a Competition Title in this year's Farm Bill. It has been helping with information and other resources to gain passage of Senator Harkin's Competitive and Fair Agricultural Markets Act. The committee is also pushing for the Captive Supply Reform Act and immediate implementation of Country of Origin Labeling to be included in the Competition Title.

The next four months are critical as far as influencing the Farm Bill.

Region VII Director Eric Nelson will be in Washington D.C. on March 19th and 20th to work with Senators Harkin and Grassley, specifically targeting the Competition Title. Other marketing committee members are maintaining continuous contact with Congressional staff to help steer the Farm Bill in the right direction.

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## R-CALF USA launches new radio program, calls for local station contacts

*By Shae Dodson, Communications Coordinator*

R-CALF USA will soon be revamping the Communications Department somewhat so that we will be better able to reach out to rural radio stations across the country with a new weekly radio program titled "The Weekly Roundup from R-CALF USA."

This means I need your help.

Everyone who already is a member of the National Association of Farm Broadcasting (NAFB) receives our news releases and has access to the weekly interviews R-CALF USA provides to that organization. We also have standing weekly and/or monthly interviews with several of these journalists.

Because of the expense involved, I have not ordered broadcast directories from each state where we have members, and that means I spend a lot of time online researching contact information station by station – a slow process indeed.

However, I know there are many, many other small radio stations out in Rural America, and many of these stations serve communities where the cattle industry plays an important part in the economic viability of those towns. Many also run a morning news segment, and I want these news directors to have access to sound bites and other news from R-CALF USA. So, with your help, we're going to expand our media outreach.

Please contact me with information about the news/talk radio stations in your area: the call letters, any names of news staff that you may have, if the station has a website, whether it airs a regular, local news segment, whether you have a personal relationship with any of the key staff, and whether the station runs local talk shows that we might be able to book a spot on so we can talk in-depth about our issues. You can e-mail me at:

[sdodson@r-calfusa.com](mailto:sdodson@r-calfusa.com); or contact me on my cell phone at: 406-672-8969.

Also, with so many of our issues coming before Congress this year, I'd also like to enlist your assistance in sending in letters-to-the-editor or op-ed pieces to your area newspapers. Please contact me if you're willing to help out in this endeavor.

Additionally, please look forward to upgrades on our website regarding media coverage of R-CALF USA. Log onto our website at: [www.r-calfusa.com](http://www.r-calfusa.com) and go to the "In the News" link on the left-hand side of the page. Currently, there primarily are items from print publications, but soon we will be posting audio as well. Please keep in mind that if your Internet service is dial-up, downloading audio may take a *long, long* time.

Recently, R-CALF USA President/Region VI Director Max Thornsberry, DVM, was a guest on the national Derry Brownfield Show to discuss animal identification and other issues important to our organization. R-CALF USA Vice President/Region II Director Randy Stevenson was featured in CattleNetwork.com's "Five Minutes with..." segment – highly recommended reading for anyone who's concerned about transparency in the marketplace. R-CALF USE Region VII Director Eric Nelson was a guest on The Food Chain, another national radio program hosted by Michael Olson, to discuss the 2007 Farm Bill and how various animal welfare groups are hoping to influence that legislation. R-CALF USA CEO Bill Bullard was a featured guest on KBHB radio in Sturgis, S.D., after the recent R-CALF USA regional meeting in Rapid City, S.D. We also enjoyed some media coverage in Minnesota recently when R-CALF USA Minnesota Membership Co-Chair Mike Kasten presented awards of appreciation to sale barn owners Joe Varner and Mitch Barthel for hosting several fund-

raisers for this organization.

There have been many other interviews as well – too many to list in this column – but we continue to strive to get our messages out to independent cattle producers across this great country. I look forward to working with you to make that happen.

R-CALF USA uses e-mail to communicate with our members – news releases, Member Alerts, etc. – so please call the office with your e-mail address if you'd like to receive this valuable information.

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## Media contacts needed

Communications Coordinator Shae Dodson is looking for some help from members in securing information on media in your area, and she hopes you'll call or e-mail her with the following for media outlets in your area:

- Names, addresses and phone numbers of publications, frequency of publication, and circulation numbers, if available.
- Names, addresses and phone numbers for area radio and TV stations, especially those that have ag programming.
- Contact names, including editor, ag reporter, medical writer, consumer advocate, etc. and their e-mail addresses, if possible.
- Website addresses, if possible.

If you can only supply part of this information to Shae, that's okay. She can use what you do provide to get started on improving and expanding her media contact list.

So make the call—406-252-2516—and help put R-CALF USA on the front page!

## USDA Should Withdraw OTM Rule; Canada Confirms BSE-Positive Bull Born in 2000

**BILLINGS, MONT. (March 7, 2007)** The Canadian government has confirmed that its latest case of BSE was in an Alberta bull born in 2000 – well beyond the 1997 implementation of Canada's feed ban – and well beyond March 1, 1999, the date after which the Canadian feed ban was previously hoped to have become effective. As a result of this and other recent evidence showing that the 1999 feed ban was not effective in preventing subsequent cases of BSE, R-CALF USA is again calling upon the USDA to immediately withdraw its plans to reopen the Canadian border to cattle over 30 months (OTM) of age.

"Half of Canada's detected BSE cases so far have been born after its feed ban was established, clearly demonstrating that the feed ban has not prevented subsequent cases of BSE in Canada and proving that USDA's OTM rule will increase the risk of introducing BSE-infected cattle into the United States," said R-CALF USA CEO Bill Bullard. "Canada's newest improved feed ban is scheduled to take effect on July 12, and the Canadian government says the result will be that BSE is eliminated from its cattle herd in approximately 10 years, and that its level of BSE 'continues to decline.'

"It appears Canada now believes that a truly effective feed ban may finally commence in July of this year – whether this one succeeds remains to be seen," he continued. "And the statement by Canada that its BSE level 'continues to decline' is not supported by data, which show a steady continued flow of new BSE cases. The U.S. should not be depending on such wishful thinking and optimistic predictions to protect its cattle herd.

"Common sense says you only need to take into account Canada's November 2006 investigation of tainted cattle feed in Ontario and Quebec, and its most recent investigation regarding nine Saskatchewan farms that remain quarantined for contaminated feed, to realize that Canada's got some serious compliance problems with its feed ban," Bullard said. "USDA did not expect to discover BSE cases in animals born after Canada's 1997 feed ban, and this fact is well documented in R-CALF USA's ongoing court challenge."

USDA argues that in order to qualify as a minimal-risk region, a country must have "a ruminant-to-ruminant feed ban that is in place and is effectively enforced..." and that "cases of BSE found in animals born after the feed ban was implemented would suggest either that the feed ban was ineffective or that there were noncompliance issues..." and, "This factor distinguishes between regions with effective feed bans and those without them. In a region in which BSE has been detected, if an animal with BSE was born after a feed ban was implemented, it is a sign that the feed ban may not be effectively enforced."

The underlying assumption is that if cattle born after a feed ban was instituted are found with BSE, then this is evidence that contaminated tissues are still entering the Canadian feed system. Yet, USDA's original rule says there should be no evidence of significant noncompliance.

"With the discovery in Canada of several cattle testing positive for BSE that were born years after the implementation of Canada's feed ban, there is plenty of evidence of noncompliance," said R-CALF USA Vice President and Region II Director Randy Stevenson. "The confirmation of this bull, born in 2000 – three years after the feed ban was implemented – literally shouts noncompliance.

"The phrase 'sound science' is seldom heard anymore," he continued. "That is the case because those who want to continue importing cattle and beef from Canada know that sound science won't support their arguments. There has been no scientific evidence to suggest that the standards for determining feed-ban compliance should be changed."

Stevenson said it is important to note that most of the recent discussion on the Canadian border issue has focused on the economic aspects. Bullard agreed.

"It is clear that USDA is now putting its desire to create a North American cattle herd above its duty to make certain this disease is prevented from infecting the U.S. cattle herd," Bullard said. "It's also important to note that when Canada confirmed this latest case last month, Mexico immediately halted its plans to reopen its borders to dairy cattle imports from Canada. Mexican animal health officials also said that one more case of BSE in Canada would be enough to shut off Canadian cattle and beef once again.

"Mexico's action shows that the U.S. is going to additionally risk lost export markets if USDA does not withdraw its proposed OTM rule," Bullard emphasized. "USDA continues to ignore the health and safety concerns surrounding Canada's BSE problem, and instead is focusing on how reopening the Canadian border will financially benefit multinational packers."

"Isn't it time USDA started representing U.S. cattle producers," Stevenson asked. "Wouldn't it be great if the agency followed its own mission statement – 'to protect the health and value of American agriculture and natural resources.'"

R-CALF USA's membership policy states that R-CALF USA should take appropriate action to challenge and stop USDA from allowing the importation of beef products from cattle older than 30 months of age, as well as the importation of live cattle over 30 months of age, from Japan or any other BSE-affected country.

## ACOL Coalition Reactivated; USDA Can Implement COOL with 7 Simple Steps

**BILLINGS, MONT. (February 28, 2007)** Today, a joint letter that reactivates the Americans for Country of Origin Labeling (ACOL) coalition was sent to the leadership of both the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives to request that Mandatory Country-of-Origin Labeling (COOL) be implemented by September 2007 and to encourage Congress to affirm its support of implementing M-COOL since this law has been on the books since the passage of the 2002 Farm Bill.

The letter – signed by 213 organizations, including R-CALF USA and 25 of its Affiliates – represents millions of U.S. producers and U.S. consumers.

ACOL is asking Congress to pass Senate Bill 404, bipartisan legislation introduced by Sen. Craig Thomas, R-Wyo., which would change the implementation date for COOL to Sept. 30, 2007. This bill is co-sponsored by: Sen. Max Baucus, D-Mont., Sen. John Thune, R-S.D.; Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa; Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont.; Sen. Jeff Bingaman, D-N.M.; Sen. Byron Dorgan, D-N.D.; Sen. Michael Enzi, R-Wyo.; and, Sen. Kent Conrad, D-N.D.

ACOL also asks Congress to pass H.R. 357, introduced by Rep. Dennis Rehberg, R-Mont., that also would change the COOL implementation date to Sept. 30, 2007. Co-sponsors of this bill include Rep. Stephanie Herseth, D-S.D., and Rep. Barbara Cubin, R-Wyo.

"...opponents of mandatory COOL are trying to convince Congress that a change in statute is needed in order to reduce the expense and burden of the program," the letter states in part. "We do not support changing a statute that has not been given a chance to prove itself. USDA implemented mandatory COOL on farm-raised and wild-caught seafood effective April 4, 2005 with the existing statute; the experience gained from seafood implementation should be utilized by USDA to write a final rule on the remaining covered commodities that is not burdensome or expensive and meets the goal and intent of Congress."

R-CALF USA has filed comments with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) this week that provide steps the agency can take to immediately implement Mandatory COOL immediately.

"R-CALF is recommending seven specific improvements USDA can use to simplify the implementation of COOL rules for beef, based on some of the agency's own actions when, in 2005, it implemented COOL rules for fish and seafood," said R-CALF USA CEO Bill Bullard.

USDA can immediately implement COOL for

*(Continued on page 4)*

# USDA Should Withdraw Proposed Rule on Meat Imports from Argentina's Patagonia South Region

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (March 6, 2007)** Today, R-CALF USA submitted comments to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that request the agency to withdraw – for several reasons – its proposed rule on meat imports from Argentina's Patagonia South region. The proposed rule was published in the Federal Register on Jan. 5, 2007, and would – for the first time – recognize the disease status of a subregion of a country and allow fresh and frozen meat from the region to be exported to the United States. This pending change would declare that particular portion of Argentina as free of rinderpest and foot-and-mouth disease (FMD).

"First, the introduction of FMD to the United States would impose enormous costs totaling tens of billions of dollars on the U.S. livestock and meat industries, so any changes at all to import standards regarding FMD must be undertaken with the greatest caution," said R-CALF USA President/Region VI Director Max Thornsberry, a Missouri veterinarian who also chairs the organization's Animal Health Committee.

"Second, even if FMD is not introduced into the U.S. as a result of recognizing sub-national regions, the practice may create conflicts with trading partners and impede U.S. exports of livestock and meat products," he continued.

"Third, the risk assessment upon which this proposed rule is based is outdated and fails to take into account the fact that Argentina had its first outbreak of FMD since 2003 in February 2006," Thornsberry noted. "The outbreak occurred only 25 kilometers from the Paraguayan border, and the Argentine government believes the most likely cause of the outbreak was the introduction of the FMD virus from abroad.

"Fourth, U.S. import safeguards for FMD have not been tested with respect to a sub-national zone within a country, and the proposed safeguards fail to account for the fact that the World Organization for Animal Health's (OIE's) eligibility criteria for FMD-free zones are more lax than the criteria for FMD-free countries," he emphasized. "The proposed regulatory safeguards do not appear to

compensate for this discrepancy.

"In this case, given the recent FMD outbreak in Argentina and the failure of the risk analysis to take this outbreak into account – as well as the lack of compensating safeguards in proposed regulations to account for the differences in OIE rules regarding FMD-free zones – R-CALF USA urges that the proposed rule be withdrawn because of our concern that the recognition of sub-national regions as FMD-free poses unacceptable risks to the U.S. cattle herd and U.S. farmers and ranchers," Thornsberry concluded.

Note: To view USDA's risk assessment – completed in June 2005 – please visit the "Animal Health" link at [www.r-calfusa.com](http://www.r-calfusa.com), where R-CALF USA's formal comments also will be posted, as well as the January 5, 2007, Federal Register Notice filed by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). To view the R-CALF USA news release on this topic dated Jan. 10, 2006, visit the "News Releases" link at [www.r-calfusa.com](http://www.r-calfusa.com).

**ACOL Reactivated...** (Continued from page 3)

beef by:

- Allowing packers to indicate beef has come from imported animals without having to specify each further production step that may have occurred in the United States.;
- Allowing packers to label blended products with a list of the countries of origin that may be contained in the product, rather than a definitive list of each country;
- Allowing retailers to rely on pre-labeled products for origin claims;
- Allowing meat packers to rely on country markings that already are applied to cattle imports in order to determine origin;
- Eliminating unnecessary and duplicative record-keeping requirements regarding chain of custody and separate tracking during the production process to allow packers and retailers to rely on documents they already keep in the ordinary course of business;
- Reducing the record retention requirement from two years to one year; and
- Specifying that producers and retailers do not need to demand affidavits or third party verification audits of suppliers in order to adequately substantiate origin claims.

During an afternoon conference call, Thomas told participants he was very proud to have been a

sponsor of this "very reasonable" bill and that he was optimistic it would pass.

There's just no reason why, when a consumer purchases their meat just like they purchase a T-shirt, you have a right to know where it comes from," Thomas said. "As we have more and more foreign trade – and there's going to be more foreign trade as time goes on – I think it makes it even more important and more of an opportunity for people to choose.

Baucus told participants that consumers want to know where their food is coming from.

"COOL is not so expensive that it can't be included – even under budget resolutions that we'll be passing in Congress later this year, bottom line, it's just not that expensive," Baucus said during a conference call this afternoon. "The big thing is to get this legislation passed so it's implemented, that's the goal here. USDA has been dragging its feet. The goal is to get it implemented sooner rather than later."

Note: To contact appropriate Senators or Representatives, call 202-224-3121 and ask for them by name. To view the ACOL letter, as well as R-CALF USA's comments, please visit the "Country-of-Origin Labeling" link at [www.r-calfusa.com](http://www.r-calfusa.com).



## More than 100 Agricultural Groups, Sale Barns Sign Joint Letter Opposing USDA's OTM Rule

**BILLINGS, MONT. (March 13, 2007)** Monday, more than 100 agricultural organizations and livestock auction yards from around the country sent a letter to U.S. Senate leaders to seek help to prevent the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) from implementing its proposed rule to allow Canadian cattle over 30 months (OTM) of age into the United States.

"Canada's ongoing struggle with its bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) epidemic continues to disrupt international beef trade and continues to create hardships for the U.S. cattle industry when Canadian cattle and beef are mixed with U.S. cattle and beef," the letter states in part. "USDA's proposal is premature and will cause additional and potentially severe consequences for U.S. independent cattle producers...The following reasons justify congressional action against USDA's proposed rule and demonstrate that Congress should intercede to protect the health and safety of the U.S. cattle herd, the safety of the U.S. beef supply, and the viability of the U.S. cattle industry:

1. Allowing older Canadian cattle into the United States will further harm the United States' ability to fully restore lost export markets.
2. The full magnitude of Canada's BSE epi-

(Continued on page 8)

# Serious Flaws in GIPSA's Latest Livestock and Meat Marketing Study

**BILLINGS, MONT. (March 3, 2007)** The Grain Inspection Packers Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) recently issued its latest Livestock and Meat Marketing Study, which is seriously flawed. The study continues a tradition of stating as fact the simple declarations of packers or large formula feeders, and it concludes that Alternative Marketing Agreements (AMAs), among other benefits, provide for a reliable and consistent supply of quality cattle.

This same declaration was made in the March 2002 report titled "Potential Impacts of the Proposed Ban on Packer Ownership and Feeding of Livestock," conducted by the Sparks Companies, which also was unsupported by any real data analyses.

Before any data was analyzed, the contractors for the current study, upon releasing an interim report in August 2005, declared that AMAs were used "to assure high and consistent quality."

"In contrast to these statements, publicly available data indicate that the exact opposite situation is true – that the supply of AMA cattle is more variable than the cash market," said Auburn University's Robert Taylor, Alfa Eminent Scholar and Professor, Agricultural Economics.

For example, according to Taylor:

- Variability of U.S. beef production has not changed appreciably in many decades, even though captive supply has increased to near half of total supply;
- Captive supply was 2.2 times more variable than supply from the cash market based on GIPSA monthly data for the 15 largest packers, 1988-98;
- Captive supply was 1.5 times more variable than supply from the cash market based on AMS "additional movement" weekly data, 1994-1998;
- Tyson/IBP's captive supply was 1.5 times

more variable than their acquisitions from the cash market based on weekly data made public in *Pickett v. Tyson/IBP, 1994-2002*;

- Captive supply was 3.5 times more variable than supply from the cash market based on GIPSA monthly data for the four largest packers, 1990-2002;
- Captive supply was 2.4 times more variable than supply from the cash market based on GIPSA "revised" monthly data for the four largest packers, 1999-2002;
- Captive supply was 1.4 times more variable than supply from the cash market based on MPR weekly data, April 2004 through January 2007.

"In spite of these examples that point to AMA supply variability, GIPSA's Livestock and Meat Marketing Study did not offer a single data set, or a single analysis, that supported the industry-wide declaration that AMAs provide a consistent supply of cattle," pointed out R-CALF USA Vice President/Region II Director Randy Stevenson. "Even though the study contractors collected millions of bits of data, they did not use them to prove – or disprove – the variability of captive supply. They relied, instead, on the opinions of market participants. That seems to suggest that the study contractors worked toward a predetermined conclusion concerning a reliable supply of cattle.

"There is also within the study absolutely no consideration given to other possible methods of attaining a reliable supply," he continued. "Either the cash market or other contracting methods might accomplish that better than AMAs, but the study did not offer any other possibilities.

"Congress ordered GIPSA to conduct the study, and Congress needs to hold them accountable for these serious flaws," Stevenson said.

"Without supporting data, the conclusion that AMAs are used to provide a reliable and consistent supply of cattle should be soundly rejected.

"We fully recognize GIPSA Administrator James Link was not in charge during GIPSA's lengthy history of turmoil, and we thank him for speaking to our members during the recent R-CALF convention and for his acknowledgement of the errors made in the past and his vow to correct those situations," Stevenson emphasized. "But as he considers appropriate actions for improving the agency, he should reject this study as a basis for those decisions. Instead, he should continue to rely on the recommendations made by the agency's Office of Inspector General (OIG) more than a year ago. R-CALF looks forward to working with Link and with Congress to see to it that honesty and competition is returned to the marketplace."

R-CALF USA membership policies support a ban on packer ownership of cattle, with the exception of plants that slaughter less than 100 head per day. Membership policy also defines captive supplies to include any livestock owned by, committed to, or otherwise under the control of, the packer before seven days of slaughter, including non-negotiated transactions and imported cattle and beef.

Notes: Please look forward to future analyses of this study from R-CALF USA during the coming weeks.

Also, to view additional comments from Stevenson regarding GIPSA and captive supply, see CattleNetwork.com's news feature titled "Five Minutes with Randy Stevenson" at: <http://www.cattlenetwork.com/Content.asp?ContentID=110476>, or at the "In the News" link at [www.r-calfusa.com](http://www.r-calfusa.com).

To view or download the study itself, visit:

<http://www.gipsa.usda.gov:80/GIPSA/webapp?area=home&subject=imp&topic=ir-mms>.

This item and related materials also are available under the "Competition Issues" link at: [www.r-calfusa.com](http://www.r-calfusa.com).

## Two directorship seats open; R-CALF USA calls for written nominations from members

Having resigned their positions, Region V Director Chuck Kiker and Region IV Director Jon Wooster are no longer board members and thus, these two seats are vacant. Whether by death, resignation, or removal, vacancies on the Board of Directors shall be filled by a person elected or appointed by the affirmative vote of the majority of the remaining directors of the Board. R-CALF USA asks the membership of these regions to submit nominations to the Board. Appointees shall serve the remainder of the present term, then be eligible for re-election by the membership in the regions' next election. Nominations to these seats will be taken until May 1, 2007 and must be submitted by U.S. mail.

- Directors must be members in good standing of the Association and reside in the region that they represent.
- Each director shall have one (1) vote within the confines of board meetings. Voting by proxy WILL NOT be allowed.

Districts open for nomination are:

- Region V shall consist of Texas.
- Region IV shall consist of Nevada, California, Arizona, and Hawaii.

Keep in mind that a directorship in R-CALF USA is a very active volunteer position that includes frequent travel, speaking engagements,

fundraising, membership recruitment, legislative work, research, media interaction, and direct communication with our membership.

If you would like to nominate a member for directorship in the above regions, please mail your nominations to:

R-CALF USA  
PO Box 30715  
Billings, MT 59107

**Check out  
[www.r-calfusa.com](http://www.r-calfusa.com)**

## Grassroots lobbying: A guide to working the Hill, Part I

By Jennifer Ries, Membership Services Coordinator

With the Farm Bill on the horizon, as well as pending competition legislation and a renewed fight for COOL, now's the time to hone your lobbying skills. Every letter you write, call you place, and visit you make, that's what it is—lobbying. Grassroots lobbying can be especially effective, as we know well from our work on COOL.

In the first part of this series, we'll discuss in-person meetings. If you can, visit Washington D.C. for a once-in-a-lifetime experience. If you can't get away from the ranch, meet with your legislators when they come home during breaks, to campaign, or even with the staff at their state offices. Here are some pointers that will help you effectively navigate the halls of Congress.

### You'll catch more flies with honey...

Always be polite and respectful. Your representative is a public servant and is working for you. Most work long hours, as do their staff, and deserve to be treated with courtesy. Remember that your positive communication can pave the way for other producers and other issues. Negative experiences can shut doors for years. It's okay to politely disagree; it's never acceptable to be rude.

### Make an appointment

If you wish to visit in person, always call to make an appointment. Respect your representative's schedule and know that there may be times when he cannot meet with you in person. Sometimes you'll meet with a staffer instead. That's not a bad thing—staffers are the ground troops researching and writing the legislation you want your representative to introduce or support. Staffers are also the gate keepers of scheduling books, yet-to-be filed legislation, and voice-vote counts. Cultivating a good relationship with your representative and their staff is equally important.

### Be prepared

Before meeting with your representative, make written notes about what you intend to cover. Respect your legislator's time by keeping your visit short. Broach only a few of your most important issues and stay on topic—this is not the time to lay out a laundry list of concerns and complaints.

### Ask for what you want

Meetings with legislators should be a specific purpose. Therefore never leave a meeting without a specific response to the issue you met to discuss. Never be afraid or hesitate to ask for a commitment, specific action, or to have your legislator obtain and send you information.

### Leave a lasting impression

Legislators are not all knowing. It's your job to shore up their knowledge with well researched facts and figures. Research not only the information that supports your position, but also opposing information and develop responses to those concerns. A good legislator will want to be educated and will ask tough questions, possibly planted by your opposition. Leave behind fact sheets explaining and supporting your position. You can let your legislator know you mean business by being an expert on your issue.

### Realistic expectations

It is not reasonable to expect your legislator to always agree with you. Nor is it reasonable to assume your legislator will never agree with your position. Approach every issue with a positive attitude.

Know that legislation can move at a snail's pace. Your bill may go through many votes—committee, House, Senate, and back again—before it makes its way to the President's desk. This process can be convoluted and confusing, making it hard to know when you've had a definitive victory. Until your law is enacted, expect to

fight many battles in a long war. You may have to lobby similar legislation over the course of several sessions to get it passed or enacted in a meaningful fashion.

### Follow-up

You met with your legislator, gave them your information, and it seems everything went great. Is your job done? Not yet. Don't assume your legislator will support your position. Verify you have support. If they tell you the votes are there, count the votes yourself. If they say your concerns are in the legislation, read the bill yourself to make sure. If you do not understand the language or you think it means something other than what you've been told, demand it be re-written. The methods used to derail legislation can be very subtle. Think very carefully before you compromise on any point. Once something has been traded away, it can be difficult, even impossible to get it back. Ask how your legislation will be paid for.

As your issue progresses through Congress, be sure to research how your representatives vote in committee, on amendments, and on full bills. Visit [www.thomas.loc.gov](http://www.thomas.loc.gov) for full text of filed bills and for voting records. Need help deciphering the vote? Call your national office at 406-252-2515 and we'll walk you through it.

And last but not least, say thank you and keep in touch. There is no substitute for continuous communication. Letters and calls can build a foundation for your in-person visit. Follow-up letters and calls keep your legislator informed of any changes in your bill or industry, and keeps you and your issue present in his mind. We must hold our officials accountable if we expect our issues to receive the attention they deserve.

In the next part of our series we'll discuss lobbying by letter—U.S. postal service, e-mail, and fax.

### CEO Message... (Continued from page 1)

and ask for your Senators or Representative by name. If your Senators or Representative tells you that he/she will definitely support the September 30, 2007 implementation of COOL and the ban on packer ownership of livestock, then you probably won't have to call them back. However, if you perceive uncertainty, you will want to check in with them each week until we win.

Here are the addresses to key Members of Congress that every R-CALF USA member in every state should begin sending their letters to:

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
528 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
361A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chairman  
U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee  
328A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Saxby Chambliss  
Ranking Member  
U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee  
416 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

We will win these important changes by pulling together. R-CALF USA will keep you informed

of important developments by e-mail, if you have it, and by mail when time allows. If you have an e-mail address but are not on our R-CALF USA Member Alert list, send us an e-mail at [r-calfusa@r-calfusa.com](mailto:r-calfusa@r-calfusa.com) and we'll add you on.

Good luck with your calls and letters and have a productive calving season!

### *Food for Thought...*

"Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power." ~ Abraham Lincoln (1809 - 1865)



## Mark Your Calendar

Upcoming Meetings and Events in Your Area

### March 24, 2007

**Kansas City, Mo.** - At the recommendation by several R-CALF USA affiliate organizations, R-CALF USA will host four regional meetings over the next few months to discuss and examine R-CALF USA member policies and the overall direction of the organization.

The third event is scheduled in Kansas City, Mo., at 2 p.m. on Saturday, March 24, at the Embassy Suites Hotel Kansas City International Airport, located at 7640 NW Tiffany Springs Pkwy., off Exit 10 on Interstate 29.

For reservations, call Embassy Suites at 1-800-362-2779. R-CALF USA President/Region VI Director Max Thornsberry, DVM, will make a presentation on the organization's strategy to work with the board of directors to aggressively implement membership policies.

### March 31, 2007

**Woodward, Okla.** - R-CALF USA President/Region VI Director Max Thornsberry, a Missouri veterinarian, will speak about issues that affect independent U. S. cattle producers at 4 p.m. on Saturday, March 31, at the High Plains Technology Center, located at 3921 34th St., in Woodward, Okla.

Currently, there are several issues likely to come before Congress that will impact live cattle producers, including: the 2007 Farm Bill and related competition concerns, such as transparency in the marketplace, packer ownership of livestock and enforcement of the Packers and Stockyards Act; country-of-origin labeling; animal health concerns such as USDA's proposal to allow imports of Canadian cattle older than 30 months of age; Beef Checkoff reform; animal identification; and, international trade agreements.

For more information, please contact R-CALF USA Volunteer Sue Karber 405-375-3595.

### April 7, 2007

**Columbia, Tenn.** - At the recommendation by several R-CALF USA affiliate organizations, R-CALF USA will host four regional meetings over the next few months to discuss and examine R-CALF USA member policies and the overall direction of the organization.

The fourth meeting and a barbecue will be in Columbia, Tenn., at 2 p.m. on Saturday, April 7, at the Destiny Angus Farm, located at 904 Cranford Hollow Rd., in Columbia, Tenn., which is 40 minutes south of Nashville off Interstate 65 on Exit 46 and 3.5 miles west on U.S. Hwy. 412. Please R.S.V.P. to Brian or Laura Hutchins at 931-540-0001, or [destinyangusfarm@yahoo.com](mailto:destinyangusfarm@yahoo.com). For overnight accommodations in the area, call Comfort Inn at 931-388-2500, where rooms are \$69.99 plus tax; or, the Holiday Inn Express at 931-380-1227, where rooms start at \$79 plus tax; or, the Hampton Inn at 931-540-1222, which has a room rate of \$86 plus tax.

R-CALF USA President/Region VI Director Max Thornsberry, DVM, will make a presentation on the organization's strategy to work with the board of directors to aggressively implement membership policies.

## Websites worth a look

Let the web do the work for you! Check out:

- [www.r-calfusa.com](http://www.r-calfusa.com) – Still the best for testimony, comments, press releases, and even speaker presentations.
- [www.americansforlabeling.org](http://www.americansforlabeling.org) – Learn more about the ACOL coalition.
- <http://thomas.loc.gov/> - THOMAS was launched in January of 1995, at the inception of the 104th Congress. The leadership of the 104th Congress directed the Library of Congress to make federal legislative information freely available to the public. Since that time THOMAS has expanded the scope of its offerings to include the features and content to include: Bills, Resolutions; Activity in Congress; Congressional Record; Schedules, Calendars; Committee Information; Presidential Nominations; Treaties; Government Resources; For Teachers; and Help and Contact .

*Become a member or recruit a friend!*

Do you own cattle?      Yes                      No

R-CALF USA Membership  
1 year                      \$ 50.00/member \_\_\_\_\_

3 years                      \$140.00/member \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Company \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Visa \_\_\_\_\_ MC \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

- Voting members must own cattle. Annual voting dues are \$50.00 per year per member (one member/one vote).
- Associate members do not own cattle and do not have voting rights.

***Please mail application and dues (check, money order, or credit card information) to the address below. Contributions or gifts to R-CALF USA are not tax deductible as charitable contributions. However, they may be tax deductible as ordinary and necessary business expenses.***

Recruited by \_\_\_\_\_

**R-CALF United Stockgrowers of America**  
P.O. Box 30715, Billings, MT 59107  
Phone: 406-252-2516, Fax: 406-252-3176



*The Cattlemen's Newsletter*

R-CALF USA National Office  
P.O. Box 30715  
Billings, MT 59107  
Phone: 406-252-2516  
Fax: 406-252-3176

E-mail: [r-calfusa@r-calfusa.com](mailto:r-calfusa@r-calfusa.com)  
Website: [www.r-calfusa.com](http://www.r-calfusa.com)

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## USA FREE Presents

### ***The Leo and Sam McDonnell Scholarship Foundation***

This scholarship has been named in tribute to Leo and Sam McDonnell, and their legendary leadership in R-CALF United Stockgrowers of America (R-CALF USA). It is our hope future generations of cattle producers will follow in the footsteps of R-CALF USA's great leaders. With our sights set on the future, we would like to encourage and assist our future leaders achieve their educational goals. Purchase your 22.5"x 30" edition of "Guardians of the Next Generation," a pencil sketch print by Don Greytak.

<b>Artist Proofs (will feature your brand)</b>	<b>\$1,000.00</b>
<b>Limited Edition Prints</b>	<b>\$150.00</b>

All print proceeds benefit The Leo and Sam McDonnell Scholarship Foundation. Make your check payable to USA FREE and send to: R-CALF USA, Attn: Scholarship Print Fund, PO Box 30715, Billings, MT 59107.

#### ***Groups oppose OTM Rule... (Continued from page 4)***

demic is still unfolding, but it is already much greater than what USDA has asserted and assumed.

3. Cattle over 30 months of age that originate in a BSE-affected country have an inherently higher risk for transmitting BSE.

4. As previously recognized by the Food and Drug Administration, and as recognized by international BSE experts, current BSE mitigation measures, principally the U.S. and Canadian feed bans, are inadequate to address the increased risk associated with older Canadian cattle.

5. Allowing older Canadian cattle into the United States will immediately harm the United States' international disease risk profile.

The financial losses to U.S. cattle producers will likely be severe if the United States allows higher-risk Canadian cattle into the U.S. market.

Given the importance of the U.S. cattle industry to the economic well-being of Rural America, we trust that you will consider our request favorably," the letter concludes. "Please contact any of the undersigned organizations should you have any questions regarding our position. We look forward to working with you on this important issue."

A copy of the letter was submitted yesterday into the official record for USDA's rulemaking proceeding on the OTM rule. The public comment period for those proceedings ended yesterday. The R-CALF USA CEO will hand-deliver the joint letter to U.S. Senate leaders while in Washington, D.C., this week.

Note: To view the letter, visit the "BSE-Litigation" link at [www.r-calfusa.com](http://www.r-calfusa.com).