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US LIFTS BAN ON BRAZILIAN BEEF

In June 2017, a ban was placed on imported meat from Brazil after several Brazilian meatpackers had bribed health inspectors to ship unsafe meat around the world. Those meat products had contained *salmonella*, among other things, and any rotten meat was doused in carcinogenic acids to hide the smell/taste.

On Friday, February 20, 2020, the USDA-Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) announced that it would be lifting the ban on imported raw beef from Brazil. Before any meat can be imported, however, Brazilian authorities will need to produce a list of packing plants in Brazil that are eligible to ship meat to the US. Many organizations, individuals and elected officials are concerned that, given Brazil's track-record, health and safety standards which must be met in order to be able to import meat into the US, will not be met in the long run.

Even now, JBS and several other meatpackers are still under investigation by the Justice Department for colluding with US Poultry processors to raise the price of chicken, and for violating the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act.

The USDA's economic analysis impact study of this decision shows that US cattle producers could lose \$143 million to these imports. And the average consumer still has no idea that they could be buying Brazilian beef, because the law still allows foreign meat to be repackaged in the US with a Product of USA Label.

After looking at the USDA's webpage that lists the different trade deals the US has entered into, there is not one listed for Brazil. However, a statement was issued by Western Hemisphere Ag Leaders on May 12, 2019 following a meeting in Niigata, Japan, saying that these western hemisphere countries will "support regulatory approaches that are risk-and science-based, predictable, consistent, and transparent." Western Hemisphere leaders included Argentine Secretary of Agroindustry Luis Miguel Etchevehere; Brazilian Minister of Agriculture, Livestock, and Food Supply Tereza Cristina Dias; Canadian Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Marie-Claude Bibeau; Mexican Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Development Victor Villalobos; and U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue.

Whether or not these leaders actually follow through and continue to implement regulations that are predictable, consistent and transparent, remains to be seen.

-By Andee Leininger. Sources: Food & Power, The Cattle Site, United States Senator Deb Fischer - NE, USDA - Foreign Agricultural Service.

MISBRANDING MEAT BILL HAS SECOND READING ON MARCH 16

The Misbranding Meat bill, HB20-1117, will have its second reading in the Colorado House on Monday, March 16. Representatives Patrick Neville (Rep.) and Edie Hooten (Dem.) are co-sponsoring the bill. If you would like to see the current bills and read them in their entirety, please go to leg.colorado.gov and click on the Bills tab at the top of the page. You can also search for legislators and see which bills they are sponsoring/co-sponsoring/in favor of.

\$34,000 RAISED FOR CAMPAIGN AGAINST WOLF INTRODUCTION

The Rio Blanco Stockgrowers, Rio Blanco Farm Bureau and Rio Blanco Woolgrowers hosted a dinner and dance to raise funds for the fight against wolf introduction in Colorado. The event was titled "Dance Without Wolves".

The fundraiser was held at the Fairfield Center in Meeker, where more than 300 people gathered to support the campaign against wolf introduction.

The Colorado Farm Bureau, Colorado Cattleman's and Colorado Woolgrowers have set up a special issue committee called Coloradans Protecting Wildlife. This committee has been tasked with running the campaign to oppose wolf introduction. The \$34,000 raised will go to this committee to help fund the campaign.

The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and Safari Club International have joined Coloradans Protecting Wildlife in its efforts to stop the wolf introduction. In fact, more than \$140,000 was raised by Safari Club International at their recent convention in Reno.

Another fundraiser is being planned by Mesa County Farm Bureau on April 25th in Palisade, CO. For more information, please visit rethinkwolves.com.

FARMERS FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE IS LAUNCHED

Twenty-one national agriculture groups have joined forces to create a Farmers for a Sustainable Future organization. Among its members are the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), American Farm Bureau Federation, USA Rice, American Sugar Alliance, National Corn Growers Association and the National Pork Producers Council (Tri-State Livestock News).

The NCBA is also a founding member of the U.S. Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (USRSB).

In a press release, NCBA Vice President, Government Affairs, Ethan Lane was quoted as saying, "Today's launch of the Farmers for a Sustainable Future (FSF) is a defining moment. Twenty-one agricultural groups - which represent the vast majority of the agricultural industry in our country - are standing side-by-side in unity to correct a false narrative that has haunted us as far as I can remember. We're here because we support incentivizing innovation, science-based research, resilient infrastructure, and focusing on outcomes."

Where has Mr. Lane been for the last 100 years? Science-based research regarding sustainable use of resources, resilient infrastructure and favorable outcomes has been the main focus of agricultural research for a long time. There are documents dating back to the late 1800s that tell us what outcomes settlers simply observed from different agricultural practices on rangeland.

I would certainly agree with Mr. Lane that there has been a false narrative, especially in mainstream media, about the sustainability of agricultural practices. However, much of this comes from a general lack of knowledge about what sustainability really is.

If you look at the dictionary, the word sustainable has this definition: pertaining to a system that maintains its own viability by using techniques that allow for continual reuse.

There is another definition: able to be supported as with the basic necessities or sufficient funds.

And yet another definition: able to be maintained or kept going, as an action or process.

The word sustainable is very a complex one. To be fully understood, it must be studied in all of its forms.

For people to think that sustainability is simply about preserving nature is utter nonsense. First of all, nature can't be "preserved". It's one of the first things I learned in school while studying to be a Rangeland Ecologist. Ecosystems are always changing, whether they have human interference or not because they are always responding to current climatic conditions. Yes, ecosystems can be "conserved" and be kept in a stable, steady state as they change and adapt, but that's not the same thing as "preserved", which means static, never changing. Second, as demonstrated by the dictionary definitions above, sustainability does not just deal with natural resources. It has to include the human element as well, because without human intervention, we wouldn't be able to produce as much food as we need to feed the entire US population.

So for an agricultural operation to be considered sustainable, not only must it conserve natural resources for future use, but it must also make money, money which can be put back into the operation to keep it going. I know that's a hard concept for some people to understand, especially in a society that seems to undervalue people who have the wherewithal to increase their wealth using the same resources that are available to everybody, but it's absolutely possible.

So instead of jumping on the roundtable for sustainability bandwagon (of which the anti-livestock ownership World Wildlife Fund is also a founding member), why doesn't NCBA celebrate those of us in agriculture who truly are the definition of sustainability? Why don't they hold us up as examples to educate the public and other organizations? Oh wait, it's because they've already kowtowed to the people and groups which know nothing about true sustainability, and, quite frankly, have no desire to be educated about true sustainability. NCBA, in my opinion, just wants a bit of the spotlight to attract more members, and pretend that they are in it for the greater good.

-By Andee Leininger

CICA BOARD HIRES KATHLEEN CURRY TO HELP LOBBY FOR THE MISBRANDING MEAT BILL

At their most recent board meeting, the CICA BOD voted to hire Kathleen Curry to lobby for CICA in support of the Misbranding Meat Bill while the Legislature is in session.

Curry is a CICA member and active lobbyist at the Colorado Capitol.

She had offered her services to the organization at our Legislative Day in early February.

CICA appreciates the effort undertaken by Curry on our behalf to try and get the Misbranding Meat bill (HB20-1117) passed.

Calendar and Events Page

- The CICA Annual Convention will be held at the Wauneta Fire hall about 15 miles north of Wray, CO on July 17 and 18.

- July 17: There will be a tour of Mike Callicrate's operation in St. Francis, KS. Mike owns Ranch Foods Direct, and we will get a peak at his Mobile Slaughter Unit. We will also have our evening meal there.
- July 18: All activities on this day will be held at the Wauneta Fire hall, stay tuned for more information that will be coming in the June newsletter.

- CICA Internship application is now up on the website, please encourage upcoming high school graduates and college students to apply. The application deadline is April 20th. The winner will help the convention planning committee wrap up the details of the convention and will need to attend the convention itself.

Monthly Board Meetings

-Board meetings are held the 3rd Tuesday of every month. If any of our members have issues or concerns that they want to be addressed, they should contact their District Representative. The DR will be more than happy to discuss these concerns at the next board meeting.

In an effort to keep in touch with our members as well as educate the public and our policymakers, we recently renovated and expanded our web site. The address is the same: www.coloica.com . CICA is also on Facebook at www.facebook.com/coloica . AND we are excited about a totally new and improved email system which we just implemented. If you would like to receive our email communications and they aren't currently making it to your inbox, contact Sarah at sarahbledsoe@gmail.com. If you are not getting a hard copy of the newsletter and would like one, just call or text Andee at 719-469-1552. Having just listed our latest communication efforts all involving technology, just know that we still prefer sitting down over a cup of coffee with our members, discussing issues, proposing solutions and just getting to know one another.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Fellow CICA Members

It is hard to estimate the amount of lost equity in the cattle industry over the last eight months. Neither the fire in the Kansas packing plant last August nor the panic over a virus actually have much to do with the fundamentals of the beef industry. There were actually more cattle slaughtered the week after the fire and people don't simply quit eating because of a virus. What is most concerning is what would happen if there really was an event (such as BSE) that made the consumption of beef drop suddenly.

As I write this on March 8, 2020 the fate of HB-1117 is still unknown. There is one thing that is for sure. Whatever the outcome, the opposition to this legislation will know they have been in a fight. The battle lines are very clearly drawn. Either you believe that it is fine to purposely mislead consumers and in so doing also devalue domestic beef production, or you believe consumers have the right to know if the beef they are purchasing was imported, giving them the option to support American beef producers. This is an issue that won't go away. Perhaps our best hope for MCOOL at a national level will be President Trump in a second term doing what is right for Americans rather than the multinational corporations that hold so much influence over national politics.

I hope you all have a good calving season and spring moisture would certainly lift producer spirits if not the cattle market.

Sincerely,

Curt Werner

CO Conservation Easement Program Manager Accused of Fraud

Conservation Easement Program Manager Deborah Van Wyke has been accused of fraud for the retroactive rejection of tax credits for more than 800 conservation easements in the state of Colorado. The accusation was made by an A. Blair Dunn, attorney for Landowners United Advocacy Foundation(LUAF). Dunn also accused the Department of Revenue, Division of Real Estate and the Conservation Easement Oversight Commission of colluding to reject hundreds of appraisals in order to collect taxes that had originally been forgiven when landowners placed an easement on their property. LUAF has sued the state in Federal District Court and it is now before the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals. Senator Sonnenberg is sponsoring SB20-135, which would re-assign the denied tax credits to landowners. The bill has passed out of the Senate Finance Committee and gone on to the Senate Appropriations Committee, where Sonnenberg fears it may die, due to the cost of staff it would require to meet the terms of the bill if passed.
-Andee Leininger - Source: Journal-Advocate

USDA PROPOSES ENFORCEMENTS OF PACKERS & STOCKYARDS ACT

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) is proposing four different criteria to determine whether or not a deal made to a livestock seller/grower is an unreasonable preference or advantage.

"The P&S Act states that it is unlawful for a packer, swine contractor or live poultry dealer to make or give any undue or unreasonable preference or advantage to a seller or grower of livestock or poultry"(High Plains Journal).

The four proposed criteria are as follows:

- Cannot be justified on the basis of a cost savings related to dealing with different producers, sellers, or growers;
- Cannot be justified on the basis of meeting a competitor's prices;
- Cannot be justified on the basis of meeting other terms offered by a competitor;
- Cannot be justified as a reasonable business decision that would be customary in the industry.

The USDA is taking comments on these proposed criteria until March 13, at www.regulations.gov.

-Andee Leininger

If any of our members have suggestions for article topics, or suggestions about the newsletter as a whole, please contact the Newsletter Editor. Thank you!

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