



National Cattlemen's Beef Association

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Beltway Beef is a weekly report from Washington, D.C., giving an up-to-date summary of top policy initiatives concerning the cattle industry; direct from the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA). Please feel free to reprint in full or in part. If you would like to include NCBA's logo, contact us at 303-694-0305.



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Beltway Beef

Cattlemen's Capitol Concerns

NCBA: Pre-Convention Tour to Highlight Florida's Rich Agricultural History

Participants registered for the 2013 Cattle Industry Convention and [National Cattlemen's Beef Association](#) (NCBA) Trade Show can count themselves in for an exciting, jam-packed week. In addition to participating in policy committee meetings, educational events and networking with thousands of cattlemen and women, convention participants will also have the opportunity to learn about Florida's rich culture and history during a pre-convention agricultural tour on Feb. 4-5, 2013.

"This year's pre-convention tour will give cattlemen and women the opportunity to see Florida's vibrant

agricultural economy and explore the state's unique history," said NCBA President J.D. Alexander. "From a visit to a central Florida cattle operation to a stop at a vineyard, tour participants are going to have a fun and educational experience during this tour."

The tour kicks off with a Monday night dinner at the Florida Cattlemen's museum exhibit and Cracker Country, a rural Florida living history museum recreating rural pioneer Florida history and folk life during 1870-1912. On Tuesday, the first stop on the tour will be Barthle Brothers Ranch, a diversified agricultural operation in central Florida. The Barthle family

breeds purebred American Brahman cattle, raises American quarter horses, produces crossbred calves and offers guided quail and turkey hunts at the ranch.

Crystal Springs Preserve, a 525-acre sanctuary devoted to environmental education, is the next stop. Tour attendees can bring back some fresh picked strawberries from the tour's next stop, Wishnatski Farms Strawberry Farms. The tour concludes with a visit to Keel and Curley Winery.

Participants must pre-register to take part in this tour. For more information on how to pre-register, visit NCBA's website at www.beefusa.org.

NCBA and PLC Support Private Property Rights Lawsuit in Supreme Court

The [National Cattlemen's Beef Association](#) (NCBA) joined the [Public Lands Council](#) (PLC) today in filing a brief with the U.S. Supreme Court supporting a challenge by a landowner who is suing Florida's St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) to protect his private property rights.

Coy A. Koontz applied for a dredge and fill permit from SJRWMD to develop three acres of his property in Orange County, Fla. The agency agreed to grant the permit on the condition that he place a conservation easement over his remaining 11 acres of land and perform mitigation off-site on 50 acres of government-owned land miles away from the property being developed. When Koontz refused to perform the off-site mitigation, SJRWMD denied the

permit. Koontz filed suit in circuit court, arguing that the off-site mitigation requirement bore no connection to the project's alleged impacts on his property and that denying the permit was a taking by the government under the Constitution's fifth amendment. The lower court awarded Koontz compensation for a temporary taking, but Florida's Supreme Court reversed the decision. The U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear the case.

NCBA Deputy Environmental Counsel Ashley McDonald stated that the Supreme Court's decision could have a significant impact on all landowners.

"Cattle producers own an enormous swath of land across the United States," McDonald said. "If the U.S. Supreme Court were to uphold this

draconian permitting scheme, ranchers would not be able to bear permitting costs, and planned improvements or expansions would be abandoned," she said. "If the government is allowed to hold land hostage, it should be required to adequately compensate the landowner for the loss."

McDonald added that land values can be affected if the government effectively condemns the property by withholding permits.

"Cattle producers own an enormous swath of land across the United States," McDonald said. "We hope the Court recognizes the overreach these government entities have embarked upon and will issue a decision protecting private property rights."

NCBA and PLC: Something Fishy About Senate Sportsmen's Bill

This week, the [National Cattlemen's Beef Association](#) (NCBA), [Public Lands Council](#) (PLC) and [American Farm Bureau Federation](#) (AFBF) sent a letter to the Senate expressing concern regarding Title II, "National Fish Habitat," of the Sportsmen's Heritage Act (S. 3525), a section of the bill that addresses provisions on aquatic habitat. According to PLC Executive Director and NCBA Director of Federal Lands Dustin Van Liew, Title II would harm private property rights and mandate new spending that the federal government "cannot afford."

"While aspects of the Sportsmen's Heritage Act are good, including public lands access measures and language limiting EPA's regulatory authority, Title II would implement duplicative and possibly unworkable new regulations on vast amounts of land and water, both public and private," said Van Liew. According to Van Liew, the legislation would allow non-federal entities to buy private property and water rights for purposes of "conservation" of aquatic habitat—using, he added, "federal dollars, with approval by a federally-designated board and under federally defined conservation standards."

He added that "the term 'aquatic habitat' that qualifies projects for funding is defined very broadly in this legislation, even including areas adjacent to an aquatic environment. This is effectively a

regulatory blank check on private and federal lands. The ability of ranchers to utilize federal lands and their own private land would be greatly diminished because of the legislation's conservation standard and the far reach of its aquatic habitat definition."

Although the legislation proposes safeguards for property owners, NCBA, PLC and AFBF noted in their letter that those safeguards are not adequate in protecting against inappropriate regulation or acquisition of land. They said pressure can easily be put on these landowners, many of whom are farmers and ranchers, to sell their land when they otherwise would not. Van Liew added that the House-passed version of the bill, H.R. 4089, contains positive multiple-use aspects, such as local oversight of designated national monuments.

"We urge Senate passage of a sportsmen's bill that reflects aspects found in the House-passed version of this bill, H.R. 4089," said Van Liew. "By requiring states' approval and preventing any use restrictions or closures on monuments without a review period and public input, this provision in H.R. 4089 promotes democratic and federalist principles that keep governance as close to the governed as possible. This will help prevent damaging restrictions on lands that ranching families and other multiple-use industries have relied on and stewarded for generations."

Legislative Watch

H.R. 1259 / S. 2242 – Death Tax Repeal Permanency Act

To fully and permanently repeal the estate tax. NCBA urges a **YES** vote on the Death Tax Repeal Permanency Act. Key Sponsors: Rep. Kevin Brady (R-Texas), Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.)

S. 1129 – Grazing Improvement Act

To make improvements to the efficiency and stability of the federal lands grazing permit process. NCBA urges a **YES** vote on S. 1129. Key Sponsor: Sen. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.)

H.R. 6083 – Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act

The House version of the 2012 Farm Bill. NCBA urges a **YES** vote on H.R. 6083. Key Sponsor: Frank Lucas (R-Okla.)

H.R. 3098 — Renewable Fuel Standard Elimination Act

To amend the Clean Air Act to repeal the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) renewable fuel program. NCBA urges a **YES** vote on H.R. 3098. Key Sponsor: Rep. Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.)

For a full list of legislation NCBA is monitoring [click here](#).

New on the Web

Check out the [Beltway Beef blog](#) for inside perspectives on issues affecting U.S. cattlemen and women. You will find updates on border security and a comprehensive rule for BSE. You can sign up on the blog to receive an email when new information is posted. You can also follow us on [Twitter](#), be a fan of us on [Facebook](#), check out our

latest photos on [Flickr](#) or watch video updates on our [YouTube](#) page. For audio, visit and subscribe to the Beltway Beef [Podcast](#). You can also subscribe to our [podcast](#) on iTunes.

Study's Anti-Grazing Myths Debunked

By J.D. Alexander, NCBA President, and Brice Lee, Public Lands Council President

A recent study published by a journal called *Environmental Management* has called for the end of grazing on public lands due to climate change. With funding from the Wyss Foundation, a radical environmentalist, foreign-based organization, researchers produced "[Adapting to Climate Change on Western Public Lands: Addressing the Ecological Effects of Domestic, Wild, and Feral Ungulates](#)," which proclaims that global warming necessitates the end of livestock grazing—in fact, any grazing—on public lands. The study makes a series of claims and citations, each of which can be countered by credible studies. As elected officers of organizations dedicated to representing cattle producers and public lands ranchers, we feel it is important to dispel some of the many myths put forth in this agenda-driven research study, and focus on the facts regarding the benefits of public lands grazing to the environment, to communities across the West and to the country.

The authors of the study, led by Oregon State University professor emeritus Robert Beschta, claim that livestock grazing is a leading stressor on rangelands already suffering from climate change; that livestock are contributing to greenhouse gases; and that the removal of public lands livestock grazing would have only minimal effects on Western communities. The authors add that greater populations of large predators such as wolves would improve ecosystem health; anything that will put producers out of business, it seems, will do.

Before going any further, let's take a look at who funded this propaganda passed off as research. The founder of the Wyss Foundation, Swiss multi-billionaire Hansjorg Wyss, has donated millions to organizations like Defenders of Wildlife, Greenpeace and Center for American Progress. The foundation had a hand in creating five million acres' worth of national monuments under the Clinton administration. According to *RANGE Magazine*, the Wyss Foundation has also pushed for federal ownership of private land across the West. If the organization's goal of federal land acquisition and "protection" is better management of Western rangelands, they're in for quite a disappointment. Private lands are consistently better managed than federal lands. The Wyss Foundation has done its part to bring economic suffering to Western rural communities that have relied on public lands resources for generations. Its role in funding this "study" comes as no surprise.

The study claims that for most rural economies and the West in general, "the economic impacts of managing public lands to emphasize environmental amenities would be relatively minor to modestly positive." This line alone portrays ignorance of what it takes for "environmental amenities" to even exist. Range

scientists have written volumes on the benefits of grazing and what happens in its absence, including devastating wildfire and a decline in plant growth and wildlife. The study's authors claim that a "minor to modestly positive" effect would be seen if grazing were eliminated from federal lands. The 22,000 public lands ranchers who actually care for and live off of that land would disagree. Public lands supply about 20 percent of the forage in the Western states, where approximately half of the land is federally owned. The Department of the Interior reported this year that in 2011 grazing on Bureau of Land Management lands alone contributed \$1.41 billion in economic impact and added 16,954 direct jobs to the economy. The tax base for our rural communities and schools depends on the jobs and commerce created by federal lands grazing. Without it, the historic and heralded American West would be forever transformed. Without grazing, open spaces would be lost. Public land ranchers own nearly 120 million acres private lands that are intermingled, often unfenced, with the 259 million acres of public rangelands where they graze their livestock during part of the year. Losing public lands grazing would render many ranchers incapable of continuing their operations, thereby taking their private base properties out of production and forcing them to sell them for uses more profitable than ranching, such as farming or industrial and residential development.

Even on undeveloped rangelands, the loss of grazing would hurt plant systems, wildlife, air quality and water quality, which impacts non-federal lands as well. Well managed grazing is proven to be linked to wildlife diversity and habitat. Grazing also stimulates plant and root growth, enriches and aerates the soil, and helps seeds germinate and grow. Benefits from grazing are reaped by wildlife, watersheds and the overall environment. On the other hand, un-grazed grass increases the risk of wildfires. One small fire of 3,000 acres is estimated to emit as much carbon dioxide as would driving more than 100,000 cars for one year, according to the Evergreen Institute. This year alone, wildfires have decimated over 7.2 million acres of grasslands and forests, along with homes lying in the path of destruction. Grazing as a means of fuel reduction is one of the only tools the federal land management agencies have at their disposal to reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfires. Meanwhile, the study's authors rely on previously debunked research inaccurately naming livestock as responsible for 18 percent of the nation's manmade greenhouse gas emissions—but, the EPA estimates that number to be closer to three percent.

It's disappointing that in this day and age of advancing range science and continually improving grazing practices, *Environmental Management* would give this misleading study such a platform. Those of us who know better have an obligation to spread the truth about grazing.

CattleFax Update

On Wed., Nov. 28, commodity markets traded uneven on the day. Equities started the day sharply lower, but rallied higher into the close. Live cattle and feeder cattle futures closed a few cents lower. The CME reported the Feeder Index at \$145.18, down \$0.55/cwt. Boxed beef values were up a few cents, and the Choice-Select spread narrowed to \$20.00/cwt. Grains traded uneven. Corn futures closed flat. Soybean futures closed down roughly \$0.02/bu. Chicago and Kansas City Wheat futures traded more than \$0.02/bu. higher.

For recent market news and analysis, visit www.CattleFax.com.

Don't Miss Out on NCBA's Cattlemen to Cattlemen!

Don't miss a special live edition of NCBA's *Cattlemen to Cattlemen* airing live from Washington, D.C., on Tues., Dec. 4, at 8:30 p.m. EST. Join host Kevin Ochsner for a celebration of the 300th episode of NCBA's *Cattlemen to Cattlemen*! Learn about the history of the show, as well as how the folks behind the scenes put the show together each week. Plus, learn about the legacy of Jo Ann Smith as she reflects on her experience as the first female president of the [National Cattlemen's Beef Association](#) back in 1985.

NCBA's *Cattlemen to Cattlemen* debuts each Tuesday at 8:30 p.m. The show also airs Wednesday at 10:30 a.m. and on Saturday at 9 a.m. (all times are Eastern). Don't forget that you can also [watch NCBA's Cattlemen to Cattlemen online](#) anytime by visiting our website. Follow us on [Twitter](#) and become a fan on [Facebook](#).



Your NCBA

Register Today for the 2013 Cattle Industry Convention: Did you know that your registration for the 2013 Cattle Industry Convention in Tampa, Fla., includes a ticket to the hottest show in town? The Cattlemen's Beach Bash! Wrap up convention with a night filled with great music from the legendary Beach Boys followed by an after party with the Bellamy Brothers. For more information or to register click [here](#) or call 303-694-0305.

National Conference on Grazing Lands: The Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI) is hosting its 5th National Conference on Grazing Lands on Dec. 9-12, 2012, in Orlando, Fla. The conference will provide a forum for discussion and exchange of information and technology, an opportunity to identify research and program needs and a chance to see new products and services. For more information, click [here](#).



National Cattlemen's Beef Association

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) has represented America's cattle producers since 1898, preserving the heritage and strength of the industry through education and public policy. As the largest association of cattle producers, NCBA works to create new markets and increase demand for beef. Efforts are made possible through membership contributions. To join, contact NCBA at 1-866-BEEF-USA or membership@beef.org.