



**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.*



# Beltway Beef

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## Cattlemen's Capitol Concerns

### **NCBA's Cattlemen to Cattlemen Celebrates 300th Show Live from Capitol Hill**

In celebration of its 300th show, *NCBA's Cattlemen to Cattlemen* went live from the nation's capital on Tuesday. The special live show featured interviews with past and present leaders of the [National Cattlemen's Beef Association](#) (NCBA), as well as interviews with members of Congress. Viewers also learned about the show's history and got an inside look at the hard work it takes to execute the program each week.

During the show, host Kevin Ochsner facilitated discussions with Rep. Kristi Noem (R-S.D.) and Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.), both members of the House Agriculture Committee. Both Noem and Costa talked about the chances of

having a 2012 Farm Bill passed before the end of the year, along with other issues important to cattlemen and women such as the estate tax, the drought and the ethanol mandate.

NCBA President J.D. Alexander talked about his time serving as a volunteer leader, and NCBA Vice President of Government Affairs Colin Woodall shared what NCBA is doing to make sure the voices of cattlemen and women are heard loud and clear in Washington, D.C.

"The decisions made in Washington are crucial to the success of cattle operations across the country, and I can't think of a better place to

celebrate our 300th episode than our nation's capital," said Ochsner. "We had successful discussions with members of Congress about the political climate in Washington, D.C., and we were sure to give viewers a unique look at what really goes on behind the scenes of *NCBA's Cattlemen to Cattlemen*."

The show will broadcast again on Sat., Dec. 8, 2012, at 9 a.m. EST. All episodes of *NCBA's Cattlemen to Cattlemen* are available on the program's [website](#). The program is also on [Facebook](#) and can be followed on [Twitter](#). The program has provided information on the U.S. beef cattle industry since February 2007.

### **EPA Signs Off on Final Florida Numeric Nutrient Criteria**

A long, drawn out battle over Florida's Numeric Nutrient Criteria (NNC) standards has come closer to completion as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) last week approved the state's own water quality criteria for springs, lakes and streams. The action marks an important step in the agency's continued push to force states to adopt NNC under the Clean Water Act (CWA).

Under the CWA, states develop their own water quality standards in order to protect water quality. Most states utilize narrative standards, such as "fishable or swimmable," as opposed to numeric, which is a specific number per segment of water. These NNC standards have less flexibility for state permitting authorities and increase the legal liability for riparian landowners. Despite the fact that the state of

Florida was already on its way to developing new water quality standards for its flowing waters, EPA came down with federal NNC standards for the state in 2010, which drew widespread opposition. After significant political pushback and public opposition, agency officials then encouraged Florida to continue to draft their own standards, which led to this most recent action by EPA. For Florida farmers and ranchers, this means good news. The state of Florida has committed to working with agriculture to exempt agricultural ditches, stock ponds and other agricultural waters. For EPA, the agency has possibly recognized that numeric criteria are not always the best option for protecting water quality, potentially setting a precedent for the rest of the country.

According to [National Cattlemen's Beef Association](#) (NCBA) Deputy Environmental Counsel Ashley McDonald, the agency's approval of Florida's NNC standards is a positive step forward in the agriculture industry's battle against overreaching environmental regulations.

"This is an important milestone in the long-standing battle between overreaching federal regulations and the ability for states to set their own nutrient criteria," said McDonald. "Cattle producers in Florida care about water quality. Their families drink that water, and their cattle's health depends upon it. It is the state of Florida who has the best knowledge and expertise to set scientifically defensible standards for the state's waters."

## NCBA's Cattlemen's College® Lineup Set for Feb. 5-6 in Tampa

Now in its 20th year, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association's (NCBA) Cattlemen's College® has established a reputation as one of the most thorough cattle producer education programs in the nation. Sponsored by Pfizer Animal Health, the 2013 edition of Cattlemen's College® offers a wide range of informative, one of a kind hands-on educational workshops designed for cattle operations of every size and sector. The program will be held Feb. 5-6, 2013, in Tampa, Fla., headlining the first day of activities at the 2013 Cattle Industry Convention and NCBA Trade Show.

Cattlemen's College® workshops include an outstanding lineup of industry experts presenting during the course of two jam-packed days. On Tues., Feb. 5, attendees will be able to participate in classes about reproductive technologies and low stress cattle handling principles. Learn how to put reproductive technologies to work in your cow-calf operations to enhance the performance and profitability of your herd, as well as learn about appropriate methods of moving cattle as a herd, penning techniques and pressure points in moving animals. Later that evening, Cattlemen's College® participants will be treated to great Florida hospitality and enjoy an exciting night of ranch horse competition as the American Quarter Horse Association brings ranch horses to the Tampa bay. Class begins bright and early on Wed., Feb. 6, with a keynote address by

internationally respected futurist Dr. Lowell Catlett, who will educate the audience with his predictions for the long range outlook for the agricultural industry and factors that influence profitability and sustainability of beef cattle production. Sessions will go from 8:45 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., and include a cattle market update presented by CattleFax, preserving family relations on the ranch, weather predictions for 2013 and beyond, consumer attitudes toward beef and beef production, how to cope with drought and high feed prices and how to identify risk factors that affect your business' bottom line.

"During Cattlemen's College® producers not only have an opportunity to hear from some of the leading experts in topics that impact their cattle operations every day, but they also have the chance to interact with those experts and ask questions," said NCBA Executive Director of Producer Education John Paterson. "Many of the presenters are legends in the beef industry, and the wide variety of classes offers something for every producer. We highly encourage cattlemen and women to take advantage of this informative and educational program."

Registration for Cattlemen's College® includes all classes along with a two-hour lunch program on Feb. 6. A complete schedule for the 2013 Cattle Industry Convention and NCBA Trade Show is available at [www.beefusa.org](http://www.beefusa.org).

### 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.

## Overreaching Regulations Continue to be a Burden on Cattlemen



By Ashley McDonald,  
NCBA Deputy  
Environmental Counsel

If you haven't heard by now, the fiscal cliff is looming. Congress and the White House remain locked in tough negotiations over the "cliff" which is a set of tax hikes and spending cuts that will go into effect in

January if Washington doesn't get its act together. Inaction by the government will undoubtedly affect farmers and ranchers. However, another looming issue that may not be receiving as much attention during this critical time in our government is the "environmental cliff," the overreaching environmental regulations which continue to plague cattle producers. The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) continues to lead the charge in defending cattlemen and women from an extreme environmental agenda which not only hurts producers, but economy as a whole.

The particulate matter (PM) standard, commonly known as the dust standard, remains one of the most important environmental issues facing cattle producers. Every five years, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is required to review scientific studies associated with criteria pollutants regulated under the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), many times setting the levels without regard to the costs of implementing such a stricter standard. PM, or dust, is one of these criteria pollutants. Agricultural operations in arid parts of the country can have a difficult time attaining compliance with the dust standard at its current level. Mother Nature in that part of the country makes compliance virtually impossible when you consider the amount of naturally occurring windblown dust. If you add to that the dust kicked up by cattle moving around in feedlots, you end up in what's called a "nonattainment" area, meaning farmers and ranchers often have to implement costly practices in order to mitigate dust.

In April 2011 EPA staff recommended to Administrator Jackson that she should double the stringency of the current dust standard. After NCBA commissioned a study to find out what kind of impact that kind of change would cause across cattle country, it was apparent the entire Midwest, West and Southwest would be in nonattainment, or at the brink of it; 15 miles per hour speed limits on dirt roads, paving dirt and gravel roads, wind breaks along country roads and a prohibition on harvesting or tilling during the day could now become real regulatory requirements in our country's breadbasket. NCBA went on the defensive, inciting what became a rural America political backlash, the likes of which EPA has never seen. In the end, Administrator Jackson was forced to say she would not propose to lower the standard. Holding true to her promise, in June of this year EPA proposed retaining the current dust standard. NCBA, our state

affiliates and members submitted comments encouraging EPA to make the proposal final. EPA is scheduled to publish the final standard by Dec. 14.

The Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) rule is back in the environmental news circuit. EPA announced in October another round of comments on the Clean Water Act (CWA) regulation for CAFOs. The request for comments is in response to requirements of the Regulatory Flexibility Act, which requires that a review of the impacts of a regulation that's been certified to have a substantial effect on small businesses be conducted by the issuing agency within ten years of the regulation's publication. The agency may use the review to determine whether the regulation should be continued without change, or should be amended or rescinded. It's estimated that 40 percent of all CAFO facilities fall under the small entity provision, according to EPA. Even though in its announcement the agency said that it is looking for comments on "whether there is a 'continued need' for regulations on CAFOs," and "the extent to which the rule overlaps, duplicates, or conflicts with other federal, state, or local government regulations," it is unlikely that EPA will ease the burden of the CAFO rule on farmers and ranchers. Originally set to close on Dec. 31, the comment period is likely to be extended until Mar. 1, 2013. NCBA will submit comments to EPA on behalf of the cattle industry.

In this issue of *Beltway Beef* we cover the topic of Florida's battle with EPA on the state's Numeric Nutrient Criteria (NNC). Even though the final ruling on the state-created standards is a win for the agriculture industry in Florida there is still a long way to go. Other states are being pressured by EPA to develop numeric criteria, and environmental extremist groups are rushing to sue over provisions they say significantly deters efforts to regulate discharges. These groups continue to tie things up in the court system, wasting valuable time and financial resources, and all too often EPA sides with their agenda, creating more problems for cattle producers. We hope that the decision by the agency to uphold Florida's own NNC standards sets a precedent for other states that are currently fighting to maintain their position as an equal partner in implementation of the CWA. Cattlemen and women should encourage their state officials to stand up for their own rights under the CWA and not to let EPA commandeer the entire system.

Though EPA continues to attempt to expand its regulatory authority beyond what Congress intended and implement overreaching, nonsensical rules, NCBA continues to be a strong opposing force to these regulations in Washington and across the country. From dust regulation, numeric nutrient criteria and greenhouse gas regulations, to protection from intrusive government fly-overs, NCBA will work hard during the next year to advance our environmental issues and prevent regulatory overreach from stifling productivity and growth in the cattle industry.



## CattleFax Update

On Wed., Dec. 5, commodity markets traded mixed to higher, while equities traded uneven to lower. Live cattle futures had a volatile day and closed a few cents higher. Feeder cattle futures closed about \$1/cwt. higher. The CME reported the seven-day average Feeder Index at \$145.80, up \$0.19/cwt. Boxed beef values fell a few cents, but the Choice-Select spread widened to \$20.06 on mostly weaker Select values. Grains traded mostly higher. Corn futures closed up roughly \$0.06/bu. Soybean futures closed about \$0.23/bu. higher. Chicago and Kansas City wheat futures each closed up about \$0.04/bu.

For recent market news and analysis, visit [www.CattleFax.com](http://www.CattleFax.com).

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

Don't miss this special edition of NCBA's *Cattlemen to Cattlemen* Dec. 11-15. Learn about two USDA-funded research grants that are focusing on increasing feed efficiency in cattle. Plus, see how a new project is helping producers fight Bovine Respiratory Disease in their herds.

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.

**Beltway Beef Policy Video Update:** NCBA Vice President of Government Affairs Colin Woodall gives an update on policy issues affecting cattlemen and women nationwide during NCBA's Beltway Beef monthly policy update. Our government affairs office works on all policy issues affecting cattle producers and the beef industry including: international trade, tax and credit issues, animal health, property rights, environment, federal lands issues, marketing and much more. See the update [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](mailto:membership@beef.org).*