



**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 Supports USDA Proposed Comprehensive BSE Rule

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) published in the Federal Register a comprehensive rule for *Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy* (BSE) on March 16, 2012. The [National Cattlemen's Beef Association](#) (NCBA) voiced support for the rule in comments submitted late Tuesday. NCBA Vice President Bob McCan said the organization has been pushing for this rule since the first case of BSE was detected in the United States in December 2003.

"This has been a long time coming and we certainly welcome this rule. Quite simply, this proposed rule will show the United States is willing to talk the talk and walk the walk with regard to following international standards developed by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE)," said McCan.

"We cannot demand our trading partners follow OIE standards when we are not here at home."

As noted in the comments submitted by NCBA, the comprehensive BSE rule will solidify the United States' commitment to basing trade relationships on internationally-recognized, science-based standards. McCan said maintaining a healthy cattle herd is a top priority for NCBA and USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) should be commended for putting forth a comprehensive BSE rule that allows the United States to meet demand with little, if any, market disruption.

"The U.S. beef industry has worked closely with USDA-APHIS for many years to make sure we have the highest quality controls in place to

maintain a healthy cattle population" said McCan. "We must have an objective comprehensive rule in place for beef and cattle imports as soon as possible in order for our nation's trade negotiators to have credibility in opening markets for U.S. beef. Non-tariff trade barriers hinder our ability to expand U.S. beef exports with many of our global trading partners. Cattlemen need our trade negotiators to eliminate these barriers by requiring our global trading partners to make objective, science-based decisions regarding U.S. beef."

Comments on the proposed rule were due to the Federal Register May 15, 2012. McCan said NCBA is ready to work with members of Congress and the administration to finalize the rule.

### US, Colombia FTA Took Effect May 15

#### — Cattlemen Welcome Colombia's Elimination of 80 Percent Tariff

The Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement (CTPA) was implemented May 15, 2012, eliminating the 80 percent tariff on high quality cuts of U.S. beef. Remaining tariffs on U.S. beef and beef products will be phased out over the next 15 years. National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) President J.D. Alexander said the official implementation provides cattlemen the opportunity to access a market that has essentially been closed as a result of the 80 percent tariff.

"NCBA worked with members of Congress and beyond to implement trade pacts with Colombia, Panama and South Korea that were pending from the previous administration. It was a long, drawn out process but what

really matters is that implementation of these agreements is happening relatively quickly," said Alexander. "The agreement with Colombia provides new opportunities for cattlemen and women to put wholesome U.S. beef in the hands of Colombian consumers. The enormous tariff prevented much access in this market and we are thrilled this duty free access will give us a chance to truly introduce U.S. beef into the Colombian marketplace."

In addition to providing U.S. beef with an important foothold in the South American market, Alexander said CTPA provides assurance for a stable export market through plant inspection equivalency and also assures that Colombia adheres to the World

Organization for Animal Health (OIE) guidelines related to *bovine spongiform encephalopathy*.

Of the three free trade agreements that were passed by Congress on Oct. 12, 2011, and signed into law by President Barack Obama on Oct. 21, 2011, the pact with Panama is the only one not yet implemented. The agreement with South Korea was officially implemented on March 15 of this year, exactly two months prior to the implementation of CTPA. Alexander expects news from Panama in the coming months.

## Legislation Introduced to Mitigate Catastrophic Wildfire Risk — Bill Would Allow Forest Fire Fuel Loads to be Responsibly Managed

Congressman Paul Gosar (R-Ariz.) was joined by 27 of his colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives to introduce the bipartisan Catastrophic Wildfire Prevention Act of 2012 (H.R. 5744). According to Public Lands Council President John Falen, H.R. 5744 will allow forest lands to be responsibly managed to prevent catastrophic wildfires that put human and animal health and safety at risk while costing economies severely.

“Decades of mismanagement and convoluted environmental regulation have left our nation’s vast forest lands one spark away from a catastrophic wildfire. In many parts of the nation, these forests, which have historically provided grazing land for livestock and habitat to wildlife, are nothing more than kindling for the next big fire,” Falen said. “Forest lands must be responsibly managed but that is not happening today because environmental extremists have abused regulations currently on the books to tie the hands of land management agencies. The Catastrophic Wildfire Prevention Act will restore some common sense to forest management, improve public safety and restore the environment.”

H.R. 5744 will allow the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture and the U.S. Secretary of the Interior to streamline projects to reduce hazardous fuel loads, thus reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire and protecting endangered species on lands managed by the U.S.

Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. Authorized projects include timber thinning and livestock grazing. Joe Guild, chairman of the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association’s Federal Lands Committee, urged Congress to consider H.R. 5744 and commended Congressman Gosar for stepping up and working to restore the ability of the federal government to work with farmers and ranchers to prevent catastrophic wildfires.

“Catastrophic wildfires cost taxpayers millions of dollars in immediate response and subsequent restoration projects. Managing the land and reducing hazardous fuel loads to prevent wildfires is the right thing to do,” Guild said. “Environmental extremists should not be allowed to continue obstructing our ability to responsibly manage the land and its resources. Congressman Gosar’s legislation is a crucial step in the right direction of stopping the abuse of well-intended environmental laws. We urge members of Congress to support this legislation and help prevent future devastating catastrophic wildfires.”

### 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 / H.R. 4234 – 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 / H.R. 4234. Key Sponsors: Sen. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.), Rep. Raul Labrador (R-Idaho)

#### S. 2245 / H.R. 4965 – Preserve the Waters of the United States Act

To prevent the Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corp of Engineers (Corps) from using their “guidance” document to expand their jurisdiction of waters under the Clean Water Act.

NCBA urges a **Yes** vote on S. 2245. Key Sponsors: Sens. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.), Dean Heller (R-Nev.), Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.) and Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.) and Reps. John Mica (R-Fla.), Nick Rahall (D-W.V.), Frank Lucas (R-Okla.) and Collin Peterson (D-Minn.)

#### H.R. 5381 – Commonsense Legislative Exceptional Events Reforms Act of 2012 (CLEER Act)

To amend the Clean Air Act to exempt exceptional event demonstrations, like dust storms, and for other purposes.

NCBA urges a **YES** vote on the CLEER Act

Key Sponsor: Rep. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.)

*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 legislation to amend the Clean Air Act and more. 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.

## Ranchers' Rights are Being Trampled —The Grazing Improvement Act of 2012



*By U.S. Representative Raúl Labrador (R-Idaho)*

Livestock grazing is an important part of the rich ranching tradition in America. One need to look no farther than the iconic images of cowboys driving huge herds of cattle across open land to realize how big a part ranching has played in American history. Today, my home state of Idaho produces some of the world's finest tasting lamb and beef, which makes its way to dinner tables across America and as far away as Korea. Food production is a major part of Idaho's history

and is an integral part of our cultural fabric and our economic security. These traditions are under attack and we must preserve them for future generations.

Ranchers are proud stewards of the land; their reputations and financial security depend on this basic fact. Yet, the process to review the very permits that allow them to produce food has become severely backlogged due to lawsuits aimed at eliminating livestock from public lands. The local federal land managing offices, staffed by fine men and women, cannot keep up with the pace of litigation and the endless environmental analysis. This diverts the already-limited resources from these offices and leaves ranchers at risk of losing their grazing permits and jeopardizing their livelihoods.

Agriculture is a difficult way to make a living, but producers choose this path because it is their livelihood, their passion, their way of life. Several ranchers in my state of Idaho have said that if they were to lose their grazing permit they would have to subdivide their land. I cannot allow this to happen. My bill, the Grazing Improvement Act of 2012, would provide relief to these ranchers and to ranchers throughout the country.

When my constituent, Owyhee County rancher Brenda Richards, testified on H.R. 4234 in March she talked not just about the efficiencies the bill would bring to the overall system - providing cost savings to taxpayers - but she passionately expressed the unstable situation facing ranchers like her.

Seventy-eight percent of Owyhee County is public land, making local ranchers (and the county economy) dependent on reliable, yet responsible access to public land forage.

According to Richards, ranchers not only face uncertainty each year about whether permits will be renewed, they are also being threatened with new bureaucratic red tape when it comes to crossing and trailing their animals across public lands - a longstanding necessity in the livestock industry.

Radical special interest litigants have driven the agencies to consider this low-impact activity a "major agency action" that requires full environmental analysis under the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA). My bill would prevent such wasteful, unnecessary and damaging overregulation.

The Grazing Improvement Act of 2012 would accomplish three important goals. First, it extends livestock grazing permits from 10 to 20 years in order to give producers adequate stability. This twenty-year window not only allows ranchers to make long term economic plans, it also reduces the workload on overburdened federal land managers on the local level and allows them to get out into the field where they belong.

In addition, the legislation included bipartisan language to encourage land managers to use existing tools in order to expedite permit processing. This commonsense provision streamlines the review process - allowing agencies more ways to eliminate red tape without compromising environmental safeguards. Finally, the bill modifies the broken and lengthy administrative appeals procedure. It changes the process from a costly, confrontational and bureaucratic nightmare for both ranchers and land managers into a system that ensures environmental protection while allowing grazing to continue where appropriate.

We can be good stewards of our land and resources without hurting American ranchers. We must alleviate the problems caused by a tedious bureaucratic process created only to respond to the litigious environmental agenda. We can no longer allow the federal government to maintain an enormous backlog in processing grazing permits. My legislation aims to ensure grazing certainty and stability for America's livestock producers. Our ranchers depend upon it.

## CattleFax Update

On Wed., May 16, markets traded relatively mixed with oil, equities and metals all moved lower, while agricultural commodities ended the day higher. Live cattle futures contracts traded more than \$0.20/cwt. higher. Actively traded feeder cattle futures traded more than \$0.50/cwt. The CME reported the Feeder Index at \$147.41/cwt., down \$0.10. Wholesale beef volumes in the spot market have improved as the industry nears the Memorial Day weekend. However, boxed beef cutout values dropped \$1/cwt. as 50 percent lean trimming prices continue to fall. Prices for 50s have declined \$0.30/cwt. in the last eight days. Grains traded mixed to higher. Corn futures added about \$0.22/bu. on new crop and old crop traded about \$0.11/bu. higher. Soybean futures traded mixed. Chicago and Kansas City wheat futures traded more than \$0.28/bu. higher.

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 NCBA's *Cattlemen to Cattlemen* May 22-26, 2012. Viewers will get a look at some of the most memorable stories since the show's debut in 2007.

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

**NCBA-PAC In Action:** Congressman Kevin Brady, who serves as chairman of the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Trade, met with NCBA staff in Washington, D.C., to discuss his priorities and efforts to expand trade opportunities for U.S. products, including beef. Rep. Brady is also a leader in efforts to repeal the estate tax. His legislation, the Death Tax Repeal Permanency Act, has more than 200 bipartisan cosponsors.

**Registration Open for 2012 Cattle Industry Summer Conference:** Register today to attend the 2012 Cattle Industry Summer Conference July 25-28 in Denver, Colo. At this meeting, cattlemen and women discuss policy priorities and lay the framework for policy decisions at the annual convention. [Click here](#) to register to attend the 2012 Cattle Industry Convention.



Above: NCBA Vice President of Government Affairs Colin Woodall, Congressman Kevin Brady (R-Texas) and NCBA Associate Director of Legislative Affairs Kent Bacus



## 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).