



**National Cattlemen's  
Beef Association**



# Beltway Beef

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## In this Issue

[Greenhouse Gases](#)

[GIPSA Rule](#)

[Wild Lands](#)

[Legislative Watch](#)

[New on the Web](#)

[Beware of the Wrath of  
the EPA](#)

[Cattlemen to Cattlemen](#)

[Cattle Fax Update](#)

[Your NCBA](#)

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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.*

## Cattlemen's Capitol Concerns

### NCBA Backs Legislation to Stop EPA Overreach

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) commended U.S. Representative Fred Upton (R-Mich.), chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce; U.S. Representative Ed Whitfield (R-Ky.), chairman of the Energy and Power Subcommittee; and U.S. Senator James Inhofe (R-Okla.), ranking member of the Environment and Public Works Committee, for introducing the Energy Tax Prevention Act of 2011. The legislation, if passed, would strip the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) authority to regulate greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act. According to NCBA Chief Environmental Counsel Tamara Thies, the legislation, in a nutshell, would protect rural America from EPA's "vast overreach" into the regulation of greenhouse gases.

"When EPA issued these regulations, its actions were based on activist agendas instead of sound science. It is business as usual for EPA," said Thies. "This legislation will serve as a reality check for the EPA by reminding the agency that it is not the legislative arm of our federal government. We have to protect jobs and our economy by using commonsense and peer reviewed science."

Montana cattle rancher and NCBA President Bill Donald said the American public resoundingly rejected a cap-and-trade program. He said it's still unclear to what extent man-made effects actually contribute to any notion of climate change.

"These debates should take place, but they should take place in Congress," Donald said. "Extremist agendas should not be the basis for promulgating regulations that will touch every sector of our economy and may be felt the hardest in rural America. This piece of legislation is important to remind the EPA of Congress's intent under the Clean Air Act. It was never intended to be the vehicle on which to regulate carbon dioxide or the other greenhouse gases, nor is it designed to do so. At a time when the federal government should be fostering job creation, these regulations will halt any recovery of the American economy and jobs will be lost."

### Vilsack Pressured on GIPSA Rule

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack was questioned at a House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee hearing held on March 1, 2011. The hearing focused on how the proposed budget cuts will affect the rest of the fiscal year for USDA programs. An issue of particular interest was USDA's Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration's (GIPSA) proposed rule on livestock marketing. U.S. Representative Tom Latham (R-IA) expressed concern during the hearing that the proposed rule will harshly impact producers. Latham questioned whether an economic analysis was currently being conducted and what the current condition of the proposed

rule was. Vilsack informed the committee that more than 60,000 comments were received.

"They (the comments) are being categorized and classified and put into categories. When that process is completed (USDA Chief Economist) Joe Glauber will use that as a basis of putting together an appropriate team and an analysis will be done," Vilsack said.

The proposed rule also suggests there will be major changes in the way cattlemen and women would be able to market their cattle, which



some fear could ultimately hurt smaller scale cattle producers.

"I am more concerned about the little guy out there because I think he is going to be put at a real disadvantage in the long term," Latham said.

## Administration Admits No Authority to Prioritize Wild Lands over Grazing

On March 1, 2011, during a Natural Resources Committee hearing on the Administration's "Wild Lands" order, Chairman Doc Hastings (R-Wash.) questioned Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Director Bob Abbey on the administration's legal authority to prioritize "wild lands" above other multiple-uses of BLM lands. Under the Secretarial Order No. 3310, Department of Interior Secretary Salazar directed BLM to re-review its land inventories to further identify lands with wilderness characteristics. Under the Secretary's order, these lands would be designated as wild lands and the agency's Resource Management Plans would be adapted to reflect this new category.



Except in wilderness areas and wilderness study areas, most BLM land is managed for multiple-uses in order to obtain both economic and conservation benefits as required by law. According to Rep. Hastings, by focusing solely on wilderness values in the Secretary's

directive, the administration is elevating wilderness areas above other multiple-purpose uses.

Director Abbey admitted that the administration does not have statutory authority to elevate "wild lands" above other uses.

When questioned, Abbey states, "I'm not sure it exists statutorily."

National Cattlemen's Beef Association Director of Federal and Lands and Executive Director of the Public Lands Council Dustin Van Liew said subsequent to the hearing it became increasingly apparent that the administration is once again ignoring the agricultural community.

"In almost every agency under this administration that has any authority

regarding agriculture, it seems apparent that they do not understand or value the importance of this country's farmers and ranchers," said Van Liew. "This industry, which is responsible for providing food and fiber for the world, is constantly ignored when important decisions are made."

### Legislative Watch

#### S. 228 / H.R. 750 – Defending America's Affordable Energy and Jobs Act

Prevents the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from regulating greenhouse gases (GHGs) without first obtaining specific congressional authorization; precludes legal action against sources of GHGs based only on the possibility of contributing to climate change; and doesn't preempt states from enacting GHG emission regulations.

NCBA urges a **YES** vote on S. 228.

Key Sponsors: Sen. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.), Rep. Tim Walberg (R-Mich.)

#### U.S.-South Korea Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA)

Passage of the KORUS FTA would phase out South Korea's 40 percent tariff on beef imports, one of the highest in the world, with \$15 million in tariff benefits for beef in the first year of the agreement alone and about \$325 million in tariff reductions annually once fully implemented.

NCBA urges a **YES** vote on the KORUS FTA.

#### S. 407 / H.R. 758 – National Monument Designation Transparency and Accountability Act

Requires the administration to seek congressional approval before designating future national monuments. This oversight is intended to ensure that the impacts on the local economy, ranching, national energy security, and other uses associated with the land, are taken into consideration before a designation takes effect.

NCBA urges a **YES** vote on S. 407 / H.R. 758

Key Sponsors: Sen. Mike Crapo (R-Idaho), Devin Nunes (R-Calif.)

### New on the Web

Check out the [Beltway Beef blog](#) for inside perspectives on issues affecting U.S. cattlemen and women. This week's features include information on trade; perceptions of agriculture in the past and the present; and more. 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.

## Beware the Wrath of the EPA



Ted Poe represents Texas' 2nd Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives

"Houses were shut tight, and cloth wedged around doors and windows, but the dust came in so thinly that it could not be seen in the air, and it settled like pollen on the chairs and tables, on the dishes." I have ripped this line from the pages of John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* to demonstrate the severity, and ridiculousness, of a modern-day dust storm farmers and ranchers are facing today—the Wrath of the EPA. And like Ma and Pa Joad who did everything they could to save their farm from slipping away into the Dust Bowl, but ultimately lost to a force far greater than the any effort they could muster, this latest smite from Washington might just put our agricultural businesses under.

Just when you think you have heard it all, bureaucrats in Washington, D.C., come up with some hair-brained idea that leaves you scratching your head in wonderment. The Environmental Protection Agency has apparently run out of things to regulate and tax, so it has come up with new guidelines for regulating "particulate matter emissions"—more commonly known to you and me as "dust." Now, I know what you are thinking, this just can't be true. What kind of cockamamy scheme is this?

The EPA "Dust Police" would specifically regulate farm dust. Farmers could be required to have dust collectors on their harvesters, planters, and haying equipment. But my personal favorite is the crackdown on dust created from driving your pickup truck down a dirt or gravel road. I could not make this stuff up. The federal government wants to regulate farm dust caused by driving.

So I thought, well maybe this is just some backdoor attempt to rid America of our majestic 4-wheel-drive pickup trucks that the liberals loathe so much, and find some way to force their battery-operated toy cars on all of us. But the new proposals don't just apply to dust created by driving. No, they are fair and balanced in their overreaching grab for authority. Farmers and ranchers are going to have to somehow limit the dust created by livestock on their property too. So, say Bessie the cow kicks up too much dust running up to your truck at feeding time—the EPA is going to fine you. You need to move your cattle to higher ground? Well, don't do it on a dry day.

The Dust Police's solution would be to manage dusty dirt roads with water or, get this: pave them with asphalt. This is another can of worms. Every farmer and rancher would have the "Water Police" raining down on them by the time the first drop hits the dirt. I would think the EPA is aware of the already-strained water resources facing farmers across our country. And making them pave them their roads with asphalt? Really? Aside from the sheer magnitude of this undertaking, the idea is completely unfeasible and cost-prohibitive.

The absurdity of these types of federal regulations is what makes normal, common-sense folks all across our country so frustrated with Washington. I will say that there is some good news on the horizon. We are not all out of touch with reality in Congress. My colleague, Republican Rep. Kristi Noem of South Dakota, has filed an amendment to the Continuing Resolution to eliminate funding to the EPA for enforcing the dust regulations. I am proud to say that it passed the House of Representatives—with my overwhelming support. My hope now is that the Senate does the same.

This type of federal meddling is exactly what causes businesses to cut back, lay off workers, and in many cases, fail. These types of nonsensical, expensive regulations will finally shut the barn door on the American farmer for good. I understand that dust may seem like a serious threat to someone who has never been outside of the EPA's marble Potomac palace. But let's use some logic. Farmers and ranchers are the best environmentalists our country has to offer. No one respects the land and animals more than those who actually live on it, and depend on it for a living.

Instead of burying us in ridiculous regulations that do nothing to improve the quality of life or the environment, the government should look for incentives to encourage farmers to produce more, not less. We don't need an EPA-inflicted Dust Bowl to devastate the American heartland. The EPA should head on down the road and leave this regulation in the dust. And that's just the way it is.

*This column originally appeared on [www.humanevents.com](http://www.humanevents.com) on March 2, 2011. [Click here](#) to read his column online.*

## CattleFax Update

The fed cattle market continued its higher trend this week finishing mostly at \$111 to \$112 live and \$178 to \$180 dressed. Trade was active from Kansas down through the Panhandle with prices \$1 higher. Prices were \$1 to \$2 higher in Colorado and Nebraska on moderate trade.

Boxed beef prices were steady to \$2 higher as sale activity picked up for strips, short loins and ribs late in the week and end meat inventories tightened as sales reach the end of the month.

Feeder cattle prices remained steady to \$3 higher, while the feeder cattle index reported an all-time record price of \$128.84. Calves were steady to \$5 higher, and slaughter cows were steady to \$2 lower.

Corn prices started the week lower on concerns about Middle East stability, but ended even for the week. 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* March 8-12. We'll talk with the experts at Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica, Inc. for tips on preventing Trichomoniasis. Plus, we will take a look at how the Young Producers' Council is playing a vital role in the future of the beef industry. [Click here](#) for a preview.

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 Hosts Congressman Cory Gardner for Ag Industry Meet and Greet

On March 2, 2011, NCBA hosted Congressmen Cory Gardner (R-Colo.) in its Washington, D.C., office for a meet and greet with NCBA staff as well as representatives of other agricultural organizations. Gardner was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives last November when beating incumbent Betsy Markey in Colorado's 4th District. NCBA Vice President of Government Affairs Colin Woodall said Rep. Gardner brings much needed commonsense and agricultural competency to Washington. Gardner grew up working in his family's farm implement dealership where he did everything from sweep the floors to manage the books and order inventory.

### Beef Quality Assurance Launches Social Media Campaign

BQA has launched a new social media campaign in an effort to provide a deeper level of education for producers. The goal of the launch is to create valuable content and engage producers with each other as well as with industry experts. BQA will split their content into bite-sized tidbits containing daily tips; biographies about state coordinators; or entire blog posts and distribute them via [Facebook](#) or [Twitter @NationalBQA](#). For more information, please contact Lauren Dever at [ldever@beef.org](mailto:ldever@beef.org).



## 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).*