

# Cow Country Reporter

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## NEWS FROM YOUR CEO

Hello Members,

I want to thank you for joining this new, innovative cattlemen's association. CPL believes that with your help and direction we will be "The Voice of the Cattle Industry in Louisiana". Our concepts are based on our member's needs and their resources. Together we can assist one another in becoming a vibrant commodity group that will be a leader in Louisiana agriculture.

Times are difficult now and present many challenges, but together we can meet those challenges and be better off than we were before. The cattle industry has enjoyed some good times: feeder cattle prices that are well above breakeven, market cow prices that have stayed high for a longer duration than normal and replacement prices that have allowed operations to expand. Now, calf prices have fallen 15.00-20.00 cwt from mid September to mid October with slaughter cow prices 5.00-10.00 cwt lower. Prices will get better, maybe sooner than you think.

What does our future hold for the Cattle Producers of Louisiana? First and foremost we need to encourage more people to join CPL. Our strength is in members. Remember, we do not have the luxury of spending check off dollars, but are limited to working from our membership dues. So sign up your friends and neighbors and together we can make a difference. There is plenty of education that can take place at our local and regional meetings and we have plenty of people that want to assist us.

I have traveled over the state since May meeting with people who want to "hear our story". After each membership meeting over half of the group tells me they want to join and will send me their dues. I wish we had all those people as members. Their intentions are good but they get busy and the application sits on their desk, truck seat or gets lost. This is where you our member comes in. When you signed up remember who was there at the meeting and ask them if they are a CPL member, if they say they forgot or lost the application offer to sign them up. If you need for me to come for another meeting please contact me. Remember, CPL is **YOUR** organization. See you at the next meeting.

*Dave Foster*

Welcome to **Cow Country Reporter**, the official newsletter of Cattle Producers of Louisiana. Inside this and every issue you will find timely and informative articles from some of our industry's top leaders and insiders, as well as, what's going on around our state with CPL. We value your membership and hope you are as excited about this new partnership as we are. We are only as strong as our membership. Please ask your friends and neighbors to join. Together we can make a difference in the our industry.

Do you have an idea for a news item or feature? We want to hear from you! Drop us a note, call or send us an email with your ideas and look for them in print in a coming issue. Remember, this is your organization and your newsletter. We look forward to hearing from you soon!

# MEAT INDUSTRY TO FACE SLATE OF ISSUES WHEN OBAMA TAKES OFFICE

By Janie Gabbett, Meatingplace.com

As the world watches to see how President-elect Barack Obama and a Democrat-reinforced Congress in January face a global economic crisis and ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the meat industry is also watching to see how industry-specific issues will be addressed.



Meat industry insiders told **Meatingplace.com** there are plenty of concerns about a long list of issues, including: renewable fuel subsidies, trade, immigration, animal rights, environmental regulation and food safety regulation.

## Renewable fuels

Obama has been vocal about his support for renewable fuels and biofuel tax incentives. In response to a pre-election questionnaire from the National Corn Growers Association, the president-elect said he would invest \$150 billion over the next ten years in the green energy sector with a goal of 60 billion gallons of fuel coming from biofuels by 2022.

## Trade

Trade issues are critical to a U.S. meat industry that has become increasingly dependent on exports for its financial viability. Obama has said he is keen to build into trade agreements enforceable labor and environmental standards to protect U.S. farmers and laborers from any unfair trading-partner advantages. The meat industry concern is ensuring that any new standards don't disrupt current meat trade or limit future opportunities.

## Immigration

Obama has said he will support additional personnel, infrastructure, and technology on the border and at ports of entry. On immigration reform, he supports a system that requires undocumented immigrants who are in good standing to pay a fine, learn English and go to the back of the line for the opportunity to become citizens.

## Environmental regulation

Obama has promised to reverse what he called the Bush administration's attempts to chip away at clean air and water standards. One Washington insider said that has the meat industry worried about talk on Capitol Hill of capping allowable carbon footprints based on industry-by-industry calculations.

Obama has promised to bring stakeholders to the table when environmental regulation impacts agriculture and to base decisions "on the best available, scientifically valid evidence and not on the ideological predispositions of agency officials or political appointees."

## Food safety

With a Democratic White House and a Democrat majority in Congress, there also is concern that proposals by Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) to combine the Food and Drug Administration and USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service into a single agency could gain ground.

## Animal welfare

While good animal husbandry is universally supported in the livestock and meat industry, there is concern that animal rights groups with agendas that go beyond animal welfare might find a more sympathetic audience in a Democrat-dominated Washington in the coming years.

On Tuesday, California voters passed Proposition 2, which phases out gestation crates for breeding pigs, veal crates for calves and battery cages for egg-laying hens.

## WHO WILL BE THE NEXT SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE?

By Janie Gabbett, Meatingplace.com

No one knows for sure who President-elect Barack Obama will choose to be the next secretary of agriculture, but a **Meatingplace.com** survey of agriculture industry insiders, major news outlets and political blogs came up with a few names repeated around the rumor mill.

### Tom Vilsack

The most often repeated name is former Iowa Gov. Tom Vilsack, who initially mounted his own campaign for the White House, then supported Sen. Hillary Clinton, but became an active campaigner for Obama once he secured the nomination.

That initial Clinton support may hurt his chances, however, according to the *Des Moines Register*. Vilsack was quoted on Wednesday as saying he had not been interviewed for any position but is ready to do whatever Obama asks him to do.

### Tom Buis

Another widely circulated name is Tom Buis, the president of the National Farmers Union. He was an aid to former Sen. Tom Daschle (D-S.D.), a prominent figure on the Senate Agriculture Committee. Buis was an Obama supporter during the campaign.

Possibly problematic is Buis' status as a registered lobbyist. Obama's chief strategist David Axelrod has said the administration officials would not be put in charge of agencies they had lobbied. The fact that the NFU represents the interests of small farms, however, might be less problematic, according to *The Hill*.

### Charles Stenholm

Former Rep. Charles Stenholm (D-Texas) is another name that is making the rounds. Stenholm served 13 terms and sat as the ranking Democrat on the House Agriculture Committee. He was defeated in 2004 and has since represented various agricultural interests, including the horse meat industry.

Stenholm's name has come up several times before for this post in Republican and Democratic administrations, including in Bush's second term.

### The rest of the list

Also named variously but not as prominently: Rep. Collin Peterson (D-Minn.), current chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, North Dakota Agriculture Commissioner Roger Johnson, Former Rep. Jim Leach (R-Iowa), who spoke at the Democratic convention in August, Marshall Matz, co-chair of Obama's rural outreach committee and a lawyer who has represented school nutrition interests, Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius, Rep. Stephanie Herseth Sandlin (D-S.D.), and Wisconsin Agriculture Secretary Rod Nilsestuen

## CALIFORNIA VOTERS PASS ANIMAL WELFARE INITIATIVE

By Ann Bagel Storck, Meatingplace.com

Voters in California on Tuesday voted in favor of Proposition 2, a measure that phases out gestation crates for breeding pigs, veal crates for calves and battery cages for egg-laying hens.

As of Wednesday morning, the legislation had received 63 percent of the vote.

The law requires that farms provide enough space for animals to stand up, turn around and extend their limbs. The measure goes into effect in 2015.

Prop 2 affects some 20 million farm animals in California, according to Farm Sanctuary, one of the measure's proponents. The Humane Society of the United States and the California Veterinary Medical Association were among other champions of the legislation.

Opponents such as the American Veterinary Medical Association argued that the cost could drive California livestock and poultry operations into other states or put some out of business.

"Now that the ballot initiative has passed, veterinarians and animal welfare scientists must be involved in its implementation to make sure that resulting changes in animal housing actually improve conditions for the animals they are intended to help," AVMA CEO Ron DeHaven said. "If we're not careful, animal health and welfare problems could be precipitated that are as significant as the concerns Proposition 2 aspires to address."

## COUNTRY OF ORIGIN LABELING IN PLAIN ENGLISH

There has been a lot of discussion about Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling since it has become law. According to the USDA, cattle producers and marketers are not regulated parties under COOL. The meat packers are the first handlers of a covered commodity and are responsible for making the initial origin claims. Meat packers *may* impose requirements on their supply chain relative to records or access to records.

The Interim Final Rule establishes that producer affidavits and other records used in the normal course of business can substantiate country of origin claims. In the case of affidavits, the information provided must be from someone who has first-hand knowledge of the claims made in the affidavit (the producer).

A universal affidavit statement (like the one found on our website) could be used by any operation in the livestock chain attesting to Country of Origin of Livestock, but particularly for first-level producers (cow/calf producers). This affidavit is one that was developed by 70 representatives of over 30 livestock industry sector, species and food organizations and companies who met in Kansas City in September to work on compliance issues for COOL.



*Be sure to visit us on the web!*  
You can find helpful resources, market news and commodity reports. You can also find information on what's going on and sign up your friends as members.

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