NCBA Says Access to Market Information Will Aid Cattle Producers

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A new USDA rule fought for by U.S. cattlemen will help producers make better-informed business decisions, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) said recently.

USDA today released its final rule that puts mandatory price reporting in place, making more market information available to the industry.

"This is a major step that will improve the market negotiating position of family farmers and ranchers," said NCBA President George Hall, a cattle producer from Mustang, Okla. "It gives producers a leg up without stifling the marketplace."

"Price reporting will greatly increase access to marketing information, much of which has never before been available to producers," Hall said. "Armed with more information, cattlemen can improve marketing decisions."

Mandatory price reporting is the result of a long-term joint effort between NCBA, state cattlemen's organizations and other segments of the beef industry to find a program that would best meet cattle producers' needs. Congress approved NCBA-backed legislation in 1999.

USDA initially will publish national reports and will then phase in state and regional reports as market information is gathered. The information will be available through USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service at http:/www.ams.usda-.gov/lsg/mncs/index.htm, and NCBA has plans to post it on the www.beef.org Web site.

The reporting covers price, volume and terms of trade for fed cattle and boxed beef. Livestock packers, product processors and importers that slaughter an average of 125,000 cattle, 100,000 swine, or 75,000 lambs per year, are required to report.

USDA is working to finalize a rule that mandates price reporting for exports. The proposed rule calls for meat exporters to report volume for all fresh and frozen meat, and USDA will collect and publish the information. A pilot program to use scanner data to report retail beef prices is also underway.

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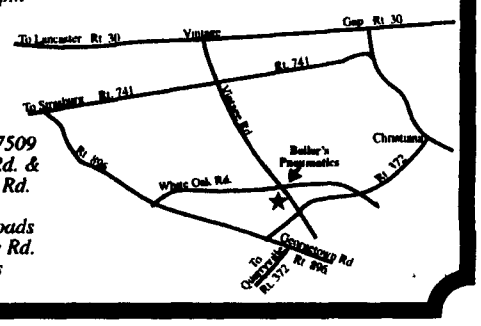

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