

NCBA Requests Congress To Fund Study On Livestock, Meat Industry

DENVER, Colo. — The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) is calling on the U.S. House and Senate Agriculture and Appropriations Committees to find funding for research that would get to the bottom of volatile markets and low prices for cattle producers.

In a June 17 letter to the committees, Wythe Willey, NCBA president, asked that funding be provided to USDA to "contract with an unbiased independent consortium of several preeminent business schools to conduct a thorough analysis of the entire livestock, poultry, and meat protein complex."

The letter pointed out that many changes have occurred over the past several years in the ways livestock are priced, sold, and raised. Recently, producers have faced tremendous volatility in the prices they've received for their animals.

The analysis, according to Willey, should take a broad look at the underlying fundamentals of the industry as well as those associated with it. It should also evaluate the affect of international trade on the industry, as well as the impact of regulatory activities and costs of regulatory compliance at all levels.

In the letter, Willey said increasing levels of concentration should be one of the issues investigated. Less than 40 percent of the steer and heifer slaughter was

conducted by the top four firms in 1980, and more than 80 percent is processed by the top four today. However, Willey pointed out that during the last 10 years, prices have been highly variable while market concentration has remained virtually unchanged.

Willey, a beef producer from Cedar Rapids, Iowa, pointed out that during difficult times like these "we need to take a careful and pragmatic look at the fundamental factors impacting our industries." He said this would allow producers to make informed decisions about the future and "assure that unintended consequences do not outweigh any potential benefits from legislated change."

Part of the analysis should include "looking at different business models and industry structures that will help producers maintain long-term profitability." The industry is changing rapidly, Willey said, and those changes should be recognized and understood.

Willey also said NCBA believes "this analysis should be conducted with an eye to discerning the best long range methods for livestock producers to maintain global competitiveness, sustainability and longevity while meeting the long-term needs of consumers, who are the ultimate source of every producer dollar."

Pa. Cattlemen Schedule Field Day

STATE COLLEGE (Centre Co.) — The Pennsylvania Cattlemen's Association, along with several affiliates and other organizations, have scheduled their annual Summer Cattlemen's Field Day for Saturday, July 27 in the Gettysburg, Adams County area.

The main location of the program will be the Eisenhower Historic Site, located just a few minutes southwest of Gettysburg.

There will be special tours of the historic battleground areas, as well as the Eisenhower buildings, including the Eisenhower home, Brown's Ranch and Mason-Dixon Farms.

Registration will begin at 9 a.m. Saturday, with bus tours scheduled not only of the battleground area, but also of Brown's Ranch, primarily to observe a wide variety of conservation practices.

During the noon program, there will be a presentation by Jana Malot, grazing specialist with NRCS, on the use of a new method of determining nutritive value of grassland.

Some of the practices that will be observed on the Brown Ranch are riparian buffers, crossings, water control structures, sub-surface drainage areas, watering systems, fencing, and critical area stabilization. Several leaders in conservation will lead the discussion about these practices at the Brown Ranch. Mr. Jere Wingert, extension area agent in the Adams County area will discuss the breeding program results and techniques used at the Brown Ranch.

Maxon-Dixon Farms, Inc. is a family-owned farm that includes 2,600 acres, over 2,300 milk cows, and over 1,700 replacements. The breeding endeavors are geared toward functional-type cows with a higher than 25,000-pound herd average milk production. The cows are milked three times daily in two double-12 herring-bone shaped milking parlors and one double-24 parlor.

Being environmentally conscious, Mason-Dixon Farms saw an opportunity to become energy self-sufficient with the installation of biogas digester in 1979. It provides not only more energy than the farm can use but also, with the digested manure, they can fertilize as well as irrigate crops using a slurry irrigation center-pivot system. They have also designed and built farm machines of industrial quality and size. Mason-Dixon Farm will be toured on Saturday afternoon.

Field Day attendees may take a guided bus tour of the Gettysburg Battleground sites, and will have access to the Eisenhower Home. The tours are being organized by Tom Vossler, an Adams County Simmental breeder and battlefield guide.

A large commercial hay harvesting operation owned and operated by Larry Wilkinson will

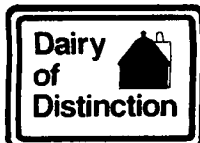
also be toured Saturday afternoon. The hay harvested from over 3,000 acres is sold for livestock feeding, mushroom compost and several other purposes.

The event is co-sponsored by the Pennsylvania Cattlemen's Association, Adams County Beef Producers, South Central Cattlemen's Association, Pennsylvania Grazing Lands Coalition Initiative, and the National Park Service.

Headquarters will be the Super 8 Motel at (717) 337-2160. Ask for the Cattlemen's rate (\$75), although there are many other hotels in Gettysburg area. There are also many camping facilities nearby. More information about the commercial trade show, arrangements for tour groups, and other specifics about the Field Day can be obtained by contacting Ray and Mary Grimes at (717) 334-1022, or the PCA Office at phone/fax (814) 238-5888, or by visiting the Pennsylvania Cattlemen's Association Website at www.pacattle.org.

Lancaster Farming's Classified Ads Get Results!

Lancaster Farming's annual Dairy of Distinction section is July 27. The issue is scheduled to include feature farm reports on more than two dozen Dairy of Distinction award winners. Watch for it!



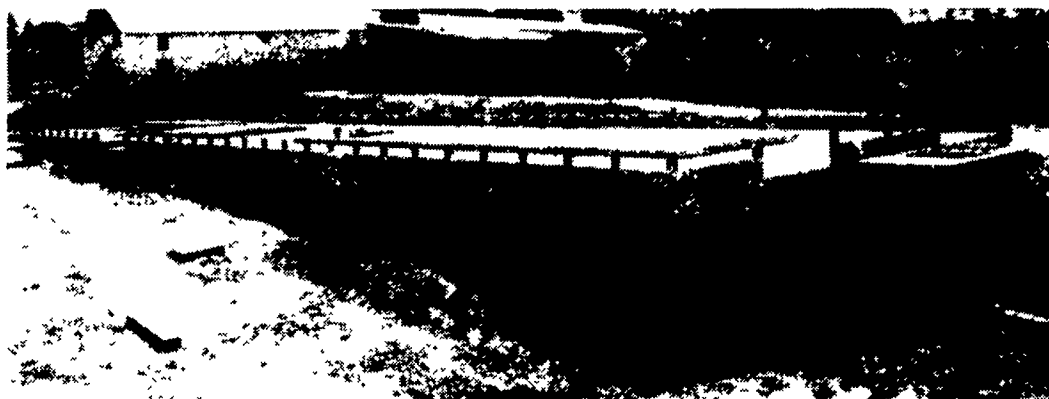
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