

## Dry Weather May Impact Nitrogen Applications

BROOKINGS — Surface application of nitrogen fertilizer in late fall and early spring is a typical practice in South Dakota, however, the dry conditions this season may be putting that nitrogen in jeopardy, says SDSU Extension Soils Specialist, Ron Gelderman, during a recent iGrow Radio Network interview.

"With the weather being so very dry, warm and windy, and if we didn't get that third to a half an inch of precipitation on that urea to move it into the soil and protect it, fields could have experienced some significant loss," Gelderman said.

Typically, moisture moves the nitrogen down into the soil profile where it is protected from loss, but the lack of moisture may have allowed some of the nitrogen to volatilize. Gelderman says a soil test can determine whether the nitrogen is still there, however, he recommends waiting to soil test, and to have the lab analyze the sample for both nitrate and ammonium.

"We can't assume that it's all going to be lost. We think there could be significant amounts remaining. Problem is that some of it may still be in the urea form, and not too many labs can test for urea. So, what we're suggesting is to soil sample later but still in time that we can fertilize these plants and still do some good," he said.

Gelderman says winter wheat, which is at, or close to jointing, will need a nitrogen application soon if significant loss of the applied urea occurred. Producers have more time before they need to test spring-planted grains and row crops. Gelderman says growers may want to use a urease inhibitor with future surface urea applications to increase the odds of getting some moisture.

For more information on this topic, visit iGrow.org. The iGrow Radio Network and SDSU Extension bring listeners an informative show each day. For more information on the iGrow Radio Network, or to listen to archived shows, visit www.igrow.org.

## USDA Offers Farm Loans For Socially Disadvantaged Producers

HURON — USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Executive Director Craig Schaunaman reminds producers that FSA offers specially-targeted farm ownership and farm operating loans to Socially Disadvantaged (SDA) applicants.

"FSA targets a portion of its annual loan funds for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers," said Schaunaman. "Farming and ranching is a capital intensive business and FSA is committed to helping producers start and maintain their agricultural operations."

In fiscal year 2011, South Dakota FSA dispersed \$12.4 million in farm loans to socially disadvantaged producers.

USDA defines socially disadvantaged applicants as a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of the group without regard to their individual qualities. For farm loan program purposes, SDA groups are women, African Americans, American Indians and Alaskan Natives, Hispanics and Asians and Pacific Islanders.

SDA producers who cannot obtain commercial credit from a bank can apply for either FSA direct loans or guaranteed loans. Direct loans are made to applicants by FSA. Guaranteed loans are made by lending institutions who arrange for FSA to guarantee the loan. FSA can guarantee up to 95 percent of the loss of principal and interest on a loan. The FSA guarantee allows lenders to make agricultural credit available to

producers who do not meet the lender's normal underwriting criteria.

The direct and guaranteed loan program offers two types of loans: farm ownership loans and farm operating loans.

Farm ownership loan funds may be used to purchase or enlarge a farm or ranch, purchase easements or rights of way needed in the farm's operation, build or improve buildings such as a dwelling or barn, promote soil and water conservation and development and pay closing costs.

Farm operating loan funds may be used to purchase livestock, poultry, farm equipment, fertilizer, and other materials necessary to operate a successful farm. Operating Loan funds can also be used for family living expenses, refinancing debts under certain conditions, paying salaries for hired farm laborers, installing or improving water systems for home, livestock or irrigation use and other similar improvements.

Repayment terms for direct operating loans depend on the collateral securing the loan and usually run from one to seven years. Financing for direct farm ownership loans cannot exceed 40 years. Interest rates for direct loans are set periodically according to the government's cost of borrowing. Guaranteed loan terms and interest rates are set by the lender.

For more information on FSA's farm loan programs, contact your local FSA office or on the web at www.fsa.usda.gov.

# Word-Of-Mouth Wars

## Beef Industry Struggles To Keep Up With PR Crises

BY TIFFANY HSU AND RICARDO LOPEZ  
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LOS ANGELES — Pink slime. Early death. Mad cow.

In the span of just a few weeks, the beef industry was hit by a string of crises this spring, resulting in the loss of hundreds of millions of dollars and hundreds of jobs.

But it could have been worse.

The industry, which had \$79 billion in sales in the U.S. last year, was lucky that the most potentially damaging of the disasters turned out to be, so far, extremely limited in scope. And there are signs that the industry, despite stumbling in some of its public response, has learned to better handle such matters.

The latest series of problems began in March with a double hit. There was a Harvard study that determined that eating beef could contribute to premature death. But it was the scandal over "pink slime" that was much more damaging.

The ammonium hydroxide-treated ground beef product — formally known in the industry as lean, finely textured beef — has been around for decades. But when worries about the stuff suddenly erupted on social media, the industry was caught off guard.

Before companies could mount a strong defense, unappetizing images of pulverized meat and stories focusing on the ammonium hydroxide treatment spread around the world on Twitter and Facebook.

Beef historian and author Maureen Ogle said the industry should have responded by running polished advertisements featuring ranchers touting their American heritage. There should have been billboards proclaiming the safety of products and executives should have been sent to major talk shows, she said.

Instead, because "the beef industry is a collection of not-very-well-connected sub-industries," Ogle said, there were some news releases and some promises of better labeling but not much of a united front.

"They did exactly what they always do, which is really not much of anything," she said. "Frankly, they're going to get killed from now on because of social media. It can do more damage in a day than old media used to be able to do in a month."

School cafeterias, food chains and supermarkets quickly disavowed the ground beef product. Some meat companies went bankrupt or suspended production.

A study from two Iowa State University economics professors found that the pink slime controversy probably would affect more than 2,000 jobs in the industry and beyond.

In March, ground beef sales slipped to 37.7 million pounds, the smallest amount in a decade and an 11 percent slide from the previous month, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

And as if the Harvard study and pink slime weren't enough, April brought an even more frightening discovery: mad cow disease.

The brain-wasting illness, officially called bovine spongiform encephalopathy, infected nearly 24,000 cows during an epidemic in Britain in the early 1990s and also played a part in more than 150 human deaths there. North America dealt with several scares in the last decade.

Tests on cows in the U.S. had come back negative for BSE since 2006. But last month, investigators discovered evidence of the disease in a dead dairy cow in Central California.

The USDA maintained that the case was "atypical" and that the risk of the disease spreading was low.

There was still some backlash, especially in the crucial foreign markets to which the U.S. exports about \$5.4 billion in beef a year,

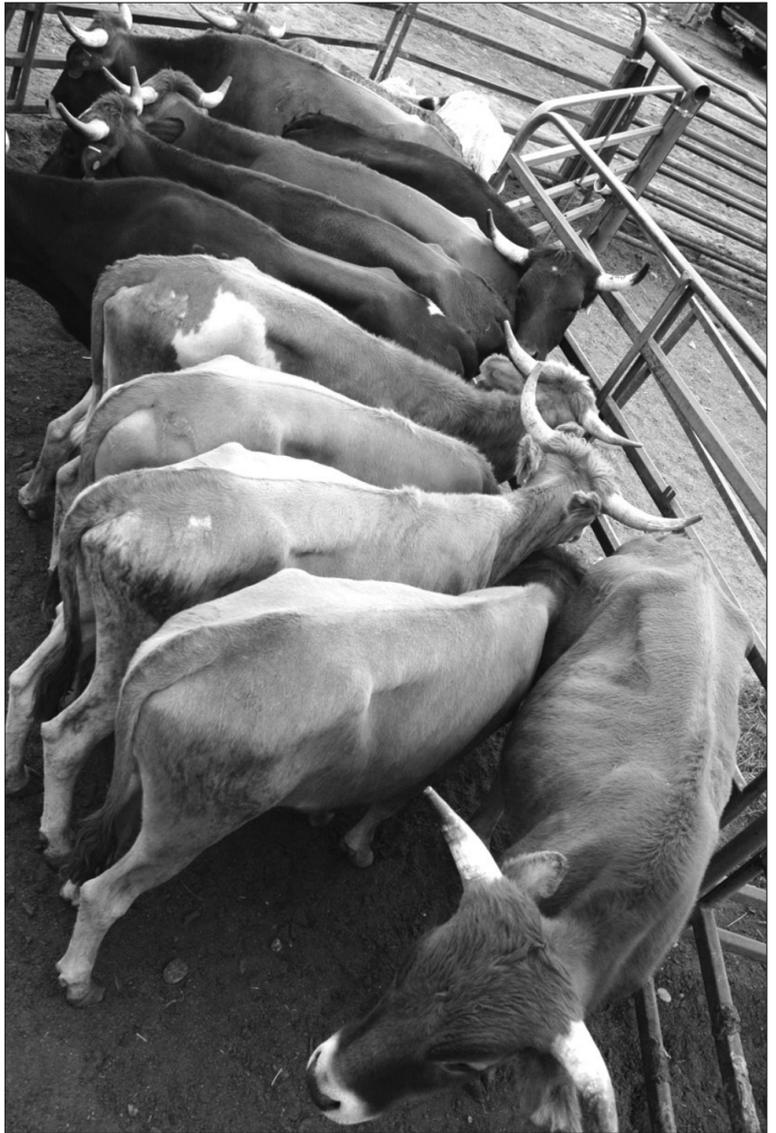


PHOTO: METRO GRAPHICS

according to the U.S. Meat Export Federation. Two large retailers in South Korea quickly pulled American beef from their stores and Indonesia announced it would block beef imports.

In 2003, after the first mad cow scare in the U.S., exports fell more than 70 percent.

"Long after the science had proven that the U.S. beef supply was safe, it took a long, long time to get beef back into some of those countries," said Tom Talbot, past president of the California Cattlemen's Association.

Negative reaction, however, quickly receded when no more mad cow cases emerged. And because of its past experience dealing with the disease, the industry was far better equipped to handle the situation than it was with the surprise pink slime controversy.

"The beef industry and its associations are finally catching up with the times, trying to do their best to reach out to consumers by using new tools," said Mike Smith, special projects manager at Harris Ranch Beef Co. in Selma, Calif.

"The outreach is there, it's growing, and we're hoping that it'll be more and more effective as we move forward."

The California Beef Council got its views out through social media and other online

tools. Its home page declares, "Join the 'I (heart) Beef' discussion on Facebook, follow the California Beef Council on Twitter, watch our beef industry videos on YouTube, and view our pictures on Flickr."

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association had established its BSEInfo.org site to get its views on the disease out to the public, and it encouraged its Twitter followers to "push factual information out to the public."

"Our strategy has and always will be to deal with sound science on these issues," said the association's communications chief, Daren Williams. "That's the bottom line. But we've adjusted our strategy accordingly to adapt to whatever latest communications vehicle helps us get accurate information to consumers the quickest."

The next crisis might be brewing already. This week, California state Sen. Ted W. Lieu, a Democrat, sent a letter to the USDA calling for an investigation over a binding agent called transglutaminase, or "meat glue," that helps patch pieces of meat together.

So far, beef industry representatives said they haven't heard much outcry on the topic. "Controversies have been distorted and blown out of proportion," Ogle said.

But "the meat industry," she said, "needs to understand that this is the new normal."

## Daugaard Declares May As Beef Month In S.D.

PIERRE — Gov. Dennis Daugaard recently proclaimed this fifth month of 2012 as May Beef Month—a great time to recognize the huge contribution that the beef industry makes to the state of South Dakota.

In making the proclamation, the executive director of the South Dakota Beef Industry Council (SDBIC) says the governor is honoring cattle producers and all of the allied industries that play a role in bringing beef to the plates of consumers in the state — and worldwide.

"It is important that South Dakotans recognize the valuable

contributions the beef cattle industry makes to our state," explains Frederick. "This proclamation is a 45-year-old tradition that recognizes one of the state's most important economic sectors."

In fact, says Frederick, South Dakota's number one industry, agriculture, has a \$21 billion-economic impact on the state's economy, and the beef industry contributes \$2.8 billion to that total — the largest segment.

"We appreciate the governor's recognition of the beef industry and its more than 15,000 cattle producers who not only contribute economically to our state but are

good stewards of their land, utilizing environmental practices that will ensure their ranches and farms will be productive for future generations," says Frederick.

The SDBIC will be celebrating Beef Month with a number of beef promotion events throughout the month across the state. Frederick also encourages South Dakotans to

simply enjoy a beef burger or steak this month as they begin the traditional grilling season.

"As you put that ground beef burger or steak on the grill," says Frederick, "just remember the thousands of producers in our state who are dedicated to producing a safe, nutritious and delicious product."



A prayer in it's simplest definition, is merely a wish turned heavenward.

—Phillips Brooks

Riverview Reformed Church

1700 Burleigh St., Yankton, 665-9204 • www.riverviewreformed.org

## Osteoporosis: Treatment & Prevention

Thursday, May 10  
Noon-1:00 p.m.

Avera Professional Office  
Pavilion & Education Center



**Robert Ferrell, MD,**  
**FACOG**  
Board Certified  
Obstetrician/Gynecologist,  
Yankton Medical Clinic, P.C.

Join us for a Community Wellness forum on osteoporosis. A light meal will be served. There is no charge for this event, but space is limited. Please make reservations by calling:

605-668-8357

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www.averasacredheart.org

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# THANKS

## AMERICAN TRUCK DRIVING ACADEMY

is proud to announce that the first round of our students have successfully graduated and are moving into a new career as a truck driver! We would like to recognize the following students for a job well done:

**Jim Ryan, Sam Langley, Chico Haught, Sandi Lineback, and Ethan Manning!**

We would also like to send a big thanks to **Marquardt Transportation** for the use of one of their trucks and trailers to train our students and **Yankton Livestock** for use of their grounds for our training yard! We appreciate all you have both done for our school!

