

NEBRASKA CATTLEMEN NEWSLINE

Issue 8 • June 14, 2006 representing the state's largest ag industry

USDA Begins To Open Up CRP As NC Pushes For Drought Relief On State & Federal Fronts

NC is working actively with state and federal officials to obtain relief for Nebraska farmers and ranchers as the drought of the past five years continues into 2006.

NC met Tuesday with Nebraska Farm Service Agency executive director Brian Wolford to hear about USDA's work in qualifying more counties for emergency haying and grazing on CRP lands.

Because no Nebraska county has a D3 designation on the Drought Monitor, requests for haying/grazing must be accompanied by evidence that the county has experienced a 40% drop in normal precipitation over the previous four months plus the current month.

Wolford told NC that on May 24, all local FSA offices in Nebraska were asked to review moisture information and submit qualifying applications. Nine counties have been approved for *immediate* emergency grazing of CRP and also for emergency haying of CRP as of July 16. Those counties are: Buffalo, Custer, Dawson, Garfield, Hayes, Hitchcock, Loup, Sherman and Wheeler.

Four counties have pending applications in Washington D.C., including Frontier, Furnas, Red Willow, and Valley. Chase and Lincoln counties have submitted requests that are being processed. Wolford's office continues to get haying and grazing applications from county FSA offices daily.

The Nebraska FSA office requested July 1 as a haying date, but USDA officials in Washington declined that request.

NC is continuing discussions with USDA about the potential for a provision that would allow producers in drought-declared areas to cooperate with landowners in eastern Nebraska to get hay to cows in western Nebraska.

Meanwhile, NC is also working on the state level. NC Executive Committee member Scott Reynolds hosted Gov. Dave Heineman on a tour of the Matthew Haumont Ranch north of Broken Bow. Reynolds told the governor that Custer County, the No. 3 cow/calf county in the U.S., faces potential losses of 50,000 cattle this year due to the drought.

USDA Natural Disaster Designations from are granted at the request of the governor with supporting FSA documentation to prove a 30% countywide loss in any one crop enterprise. Wolford's office is gathering that information from at least 52 western Nebraska counties. Benefits of disaster declarations include low-interest loans, FSA loan deferment and tax relief provisions. If you sell more livestock than you normally would in a year because of a drought, you may be able to postpone reporting the gain from selling the additional animals until the next year (see www.irs.gov/businesses/small/industries/article/0,,id=98990,00.html).

Register for Summer Industry Convention

Just a reminder to act quickly if you want to pre-register for the Summer Cattle Industry Conference July 10-13 in Reno, Nev. The pre-registration deadline is June 20. A 19-page brochure containing the forms, plus hotel information and a detailed schedule of events, is available at www.beefusa.org

Internet and fax registration is available with a credit card. Mailed forms must be postmarked by June 20.

Pre-registration costs \$105 for NCBA members and \$95 for CattleWomen. Non-member registration is \$205, but NCBA will apply \$100 to an association membership.

All registrations after June 20 must take place at the convention site, the Reno Hilton. (Call 800-648-5080 for reservations.)

NCBA committee meetings, informational sessions, regional caucuses and issues forums start Tuesday, July 11.

Entertainment is planned both Tuesday and Wednesday nights, and the conference winds up with an NCBA board of directors meeting on Thursday morning.

NC will be sending a delegation of staff and officers to this year's event, and encourages members to attend too.

To receive the *Newsline* via e-mail, send a message to nc@neccattlemen.org. Include your name, company or ranch name, postal address and phone number.

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Nebraska Cattlemen

NEWSLINE

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NC Joins 25 x '25 Alternative Energy Group

NC is a charter member of the Nebraska Steering Committee of the national 25 x '25 Energy Work Group, an agriculture coalition aimed at producing 25% of the nation's energy from renewable sources by 2025, up from about 6% now.

Term-limited senator Bob Kremer, chairman of the Legislature's Agriculture Committee, is heading up the Nebraska steering committee, which organized last month. He says that Nebraska's mix of crops, livestock, natural resources and transportation routes makes the state uniquely positioned to help the nation meet the 25% goal by 2025.

Other participants include the Nebraska Corn Growers Association, Nebraska Farm Bureau, Nebraska Soybean Association, the University of Nebraska, Nebraska Pork Producers, Nebraska Poultry Industries, Nebraska Rural Electric Co-op Association, and the Nebraska Department of Agriculture.

NC joined in order to contribute to the vision of renewable energies in Nebraska. NC is committed to a positive and long-term relationship between the ethanol and cattle industries, says vice president for legislative affairs Duane Gangwish.

The 25 x '25 group does not favor ethanol over other alternatives. It does not prescribe a specific method of how to attain the 25% goal, nor impose state mandates.

NC Adopts Two Interim Policies at Midyear Concerning Brand Law And Water Transfers

At last week's Midyear Conference in Holdrege, NC's Board of Directors approved two interim policy positions that were earlier passed in policy committee meetings. To become official association policy, they must be approved by membership at November's annual convention.

The first resolution, from the NC Brand Committee, opposes LB1162 or any state legislation that would make substantial changes to Nebraska brand law regarding documents of title.

LB1162 would have changed state brand laws to allow a photocopy of a brand release, bill of sale or other document of ownership for cattle rather than having to present the document and the brand inspector write a new document.

"Without having to surrender the document," said NC Brand Committee chair Jay Martindale, "someone could illegally claim title to cattle they had previously disposed of. For example, if you could sell an auto with a photocopy of the title, it would be possible to later claim title to the car because you still held the original document."

The second resolution opposes interbasin water transfers within Nebraska unless the applicant can demonstrate that there would be no harm to surface or groundwater users.

"Water availability and water use laws are both very complicated issues, and it is impossible for one resolution to address each water situation. However, the Nebraska Cattlemen has been and will continue to be very engaged in shaping public policy and regulations to ensure cattle producer concerns are addressed," said George Cooksley, chairman of NC's new Water Policy Subcommittee.

Because water availability and usage is a short and long-term concern for Nebraska cattle producers, this issue will come up again at NC's annual convention in November. "Producers who want specific aspects addressed are encouraged to contact George Cooksley, the NC office or myself, or attend the meetings at the convention," said Chuck Folken, chairman of NC's Natural Resources and Environment Committee.

Other issues addressed at Midyear included livestock waste regulations, foreign trade, University of Nebraska animal science teaching and research funding, animal identification, ethanol by-products and instrument grading.

Midyear, with more than 200 attendees, capped off with a beef and wine social that raised money for Holdrege-area charities. Also during Midyear, NC raised \$3,117 for its Political Action with a silent auction of various donated items.

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\$10,000 Prize Will Go To Nebraska Landowner In New Conservation Award

NC is partnering with the Sand County Foundation, a Wisconsin conservation group, to help sponsor the foundation's first Aldo Leopold Conservation Award in the state. It was announced at last week's NC Midyear Conference that **nominations are due Aug. 18** for the \$10,000 prize, which goes to a Nebraska landowner who demonstrates responsible stewardship and management of natural resources.

Given in honor of Aldo Leopold, the award recognizes extraordinary achievement in voluntary conservation. In his book, "A Sand County Almanac" (1949), Leopold called for an ethical relationship between people and the land they own and manage – which he called "an evolutionary possibility and an ecological necessity." This year, the foundation will present similar awards in Wisconsin, Wyoming, Colorado, Texas, and California.

"The land ethic described by Aldo Leopold is alive and well today in Nebraska," says NC executive vice president Michael Kelsey. "From managing native prairie to restoring habitat, Nebraska private landowners produce much more than beef. They produce important grassland bird habitat and clean water as well. Nebraska cattle producers contribute to a healthy environment and a healthy economy every day."

Sand County Foundation is a private, non-profit conservation group dedicated to working with private landowners to improve habitat. Sand County's mission is to advance the use of ethical and scientifically sound land management practices and partnerships for the benefit of people and their rural landscapes. The foundation works with private landowners because the majority of the nation's fish, wildlife, and natural resources are found on private lands. The organization places incentives before regulation, and encourages the exercise of private responsibility in the pursuit of improved land health.

The winner of the 2006 Nebraska Leopold Conservation Award will be selected by a varied panel of judges that will include representatives from the Nebraska Environmental Trust, the Nebraska Department of Agriculture and other organizations. The first annual award will be presented Nov. 29 at NC's annual convention in Lincoln. For more information, visit www.leopoldconservationaward.org, email mfitzgerald@necattlemen.org or call (402) 475-2333.

NC Offers Help To UNL Ag College

Last week's Midyear meeting marked NC's public unveiling of its work with UNL to assist the College of Agriculture (CASNR) during this period of tight funding. Declining enrollments have hurt the college's budget, and NC has formed a task force to provide private help from the state's agricultural industries.

Besides raising funds privately, NC will also help with student recruiting, participate in an industry/UNL advisory committee, and push for permanent staffing for a UNL livestock judging position.

NC has already agreed to raise \$150,000 to help support staff positions. In response to pledges covering at least a third of that goal, UNL has already agreed to replace animal scientist Jim Gosey, who retired in December, CASNR dean Steve Waller said Friday at Midyear. Replacing Gosey has been a top NC goal.

Waller said enrollment, now about 1,550 students, rose last fall for the first time in eight years.

Next Newslines: July 11

Newslines are published by the Nebraska Cattlemen,
134 S. 13th St., Suite 900, Lincoln, NE 68508-1917.
Newslines questions? Call (402) 475-2333.

Upcoming Events

- June 15** Southeast Nebraska tour for small livestock operators. Focus on Vegetative Treatment to replace holding ponds. Tour is free but noon lunch is \$8. Departs Lincoln 8 a.m. Call (308) 865-1594.
- 20 NC Region 5 Regional Roundup. Evening meal, social and discussion at Stockman in Amherst. Preceded by educational tour of Bosshamer irrigated pasture by Jerry Volesky and Bob Scriven, starting 3:30 p.m. Contact Eric Ryan or Brent Plugge (308) 236-1235.
- 23 NC Region 9 Regional Roundup. Chipper Hall, Cozad. 6:30 social; 7:30 meal. A chance to socialize, meet NC officers and staff, and discuss industry issues.
- 27 West Point BQA Training Seminar. \$10. 12:45 registration, 1:30 start. Runs through 5:30 supper. At least 7 guest speakers expected. Topics include feeds & feeding, testing & necropsy, biosecurity, QSA/animal ID.
- July 2** Eppely Benefit Team Penning, noon, David City.
- 10 Low-stress cattle-handling workshop, by vet Tom Noffsinger, featuring the Bud Williams Technique. \$20 for morning classroom instruction and afternoon field training. Gudmundsen Sandhills Lab, Whitman. Please RSVP to (308) 762-3008 by July 1.

Maassen Ranch Takes Top Feedlot Steer Honors In 7th Annual RVSC Fundraiser

North Platte rancher Barry Maassen won the top \$1,500 prize in the 7th annual Retail Value Steer Challenge fundraiser for the NC Research & Education Foundation.

His steer gained an average of \$3.61 per day in retail value during the 158-day contest.

NC's Bassett Affiliate won second (\$1,000) with a steer that averaged \$3.59 per day in retail value. Dan Roberts took third (\$500) with \$3.38 per day.

Results were announced last week at NC's Midyear Conference.

In December, donors contributed 72 steers to this challenge, with the foundation keeping the sales proceeds after the steers were processed and evaluated last month. It's the largest annual fundraiser for the foundation, which uses the proceeds to support beef research, industry educational efforts, and college livestock judging teams.

NC's Lincoln County affiliate got a \$1,000 check for recruiting the Maassen steer into this year's challenge. And the Dawson County affiliate collected \$500 for recruiting the most steers (nine).

Additionally, Maassen collected a \$300 prize for having the steer with the highest carcass value, at \$162.99 per cwt. J.D. Alexander and Jeff Dinklage collected \$200 for the second-place steer, at \$157.04. Mike Briggs and Wayne Milton donated the third-place steer (\$155.67), collecting a \$100 prize.

In a separate competition, Wayne and Lorri Milton, along with Ken Real, collected a \$300 prize for the top Average Daily Gain of 5.57 pounds. The Steve Hansen/Mark Spurgin entry took second (\$200 prize) with 5.47 pounds per day and Cuming County Feeders were third with 5.35 pounds per day (\$100 prize).

The foundation plans another steer challenge this fall, and would like to thank Darr Feedlot Inc. for feeding the animals and donating its yardage fees. NC and the foundation would also like to thank sponsors Bill's Volume Sales, ADM Alliance Nutrition, Pfizer Animal Health, Grace/Mayer Insurance, Zinpro Corporation, Real Cattle Company and the L&W Cattle Company.

A Little Business In A Fun Social Setting Is Goal of NC's Regional Roundups

NC is launching its second summer of "Regional Roundups," a combined social event and informational meeting for all cattlemen in each of NC's nine regions.

Affiliate officers are handling the details, lining up meals, sponsors and any special programs. NC president Pete McClymont and executive vice president Michael Kelsey are hoping to attend all the roundups. They will present an issues update and listen to member comments.

NC Director of Member Services Melody Benjamin says these events are a great opportunity for members to bring along a potential member.

The line-up so far:

* Region 5, June 20. Gather at Amherst Community Building at 4 p.m. for a tour of irrigated pastures. Return to community building by 6 p.m. for social and 7 p.m. meal. Local specialists are expected to discuss irrigated pastures. For info, call Eric at (308) 325-6557. For a meal count, RSVP to Brent at (308) 236-1235. Region 5 includes Garfield, Wheeler, Custer, Valley, Greeley, Sherman, Howard, Buffalo and Hall counties.

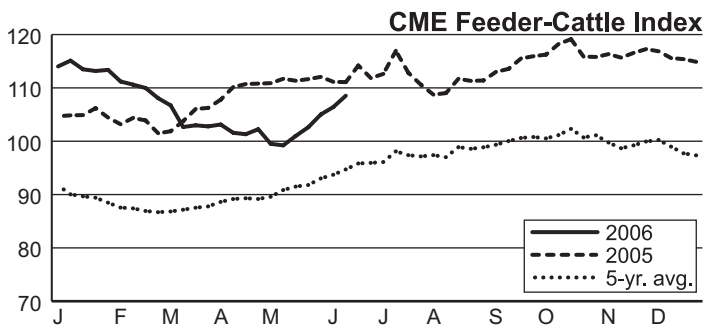
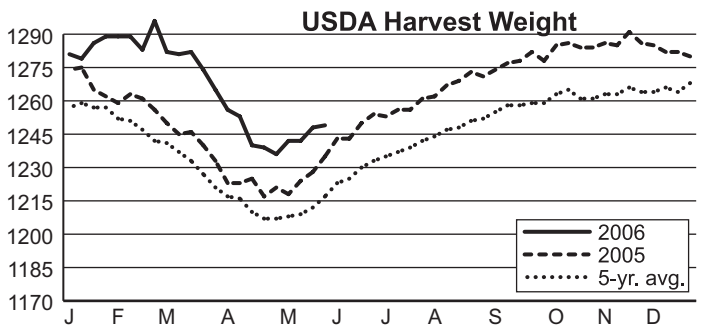
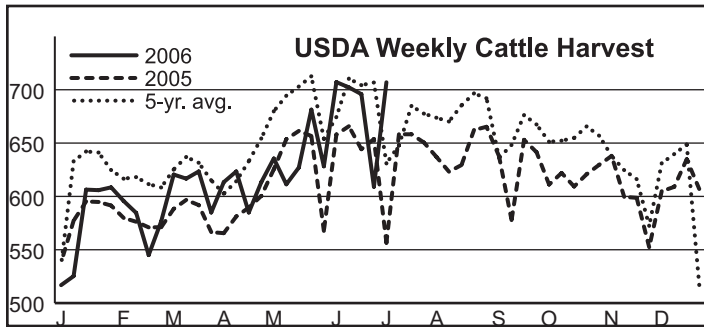
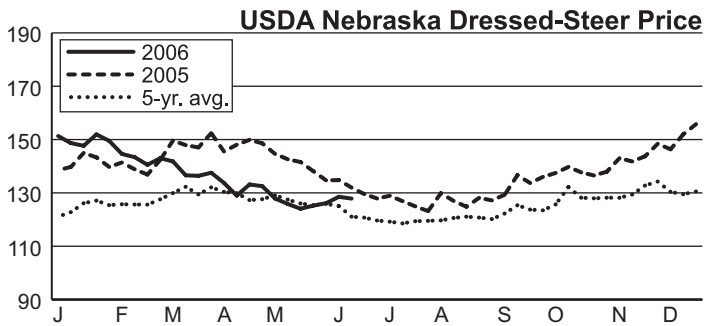
* Region 9, June 23, Chipper Hall, Cozad. 6:30 p.m. social, 7 p.m. meal. For info, call Eric at (308) 325-6557. For a meal count, RSVP to the Dawson County Extension

office at (308) 324-5501. Region 9 includes Dawson, Gosper, Phelps, Kearney, Franklin, Harlan and Furnas counties.

* Region 7, in southeast Nebraska. Sept. 18 at Meade.

* Regions 1 & 2 in Nebraska's western and northern ranching country are scheduling their Roundups around July 22, which President Bush has declared as the second annual National Day of the American Cowboy. (*American Cowboy* magazine wants to make it an annual celebration on the fourth Saturday in July.) NC Region 2 will round 'em up on July 19 in Valentine. Region 1 Roundup is planned for July 20 in Alliance.

A Look at the Market



U.S. Senate Fails To Repeal Estate Tax

On a 57-41 vote last week, the U.S. Senate failed to bring permanent repeal of the federal estate tax up for a vote. Supporters of permanent repeal fell three votes short of the 60 needed to block a filibuster by opponents.

There's talk that permanent repeal could be reconsidered yet this summer, before the Senate starts its August recess.

The 57-41 vote wasn't on repeal itself, but on whether to cut off a filibuster so that a vote could be taken.

Supporters of repeal offered a compromise, which also failed to attract enough votes. They wanted to raise the exemption to \$5 million per person, from the current \$2 million. They set a tax rate of 15% on estates over \$5 million and 30% over \$30 million, compared to rates that now can reach 46%.

Under a 10-year phasedown passed in 2001, the estate tax will disappear in 2010. But because of a "sunset provision," it returns in 2011 unless the Senate passes permanent repeal. The House has already done so.

Another Sellout For Cattlemen's Ball

The 2006 Nebraska Cattlemen's Ball, held June 3 at Milford, sold out all 3,500 tickets for this annual fundraising event for cancer research.

Besides ticket sales, which cost \$65 and up, funds are raised through various auctions held throughout the day. One auction, of 18 items, reported proceeds of \$158,000.

Ball organizers and the University of Nebraska Medical Center's Eppely Cancer Research Center are expected to announce the totals in about a month. UNMC gets 90% while the other 10% are kept in the Milford area for local medical needs.

Next year's Nebraska Cattlemen's Ball is set for June 2 at the Sandpoint Cattle Co. in Lodgepole.

NC Introduces Scholarship Winners

At last week's Midyear Conference, the NC Research & Education Foundation introduced its recipients of this year's \$1,000 college scholarships for the 2006-07 academic year. They are:

Chance Thayer of Imperial, Danelle Bauman of Falls City, Kyle Fornoff of Hayes Center, Blair Uden of Elwood, Paul Schmid of Bellwook, Tyler Gansebom of Osmond, and Michael Rennau of Wood River.

The scholarships are provided through contributions received by foundation, which has awarded \$170,100 to 183 students since its inception in 1968.

To apply for 2007-08 scholarships, contact Jana Jensen at (308) 588-6299 or Lee Weide in NC's Lincoln office at (402) 475-2333.