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### Livestock industry makes progress on COOL certifications

Created six years ago in the 2002 farm bill, the Country-of-Origin Labeling (COOL) program will go into effect at the end of this month. A major hurdle in implementing mandatory COOL was cleared in late August when dozens of livestock industry representatives agreed on a procedure for moving origin claims along livestock's chain of custody to slaughter facilities.



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## Cattle, rice among Hurricane Ike's casualties

Storm surge and 110-mile-per-hour winds from Hurricane Ike tore down fences in Brazoria, Chambers, Jefferson and Orange counties, allowing livestock to escape the rising water—and their pastures. The strong Category 2 storm made landfall on Sept. 13 in Galveston, Texas, and then moved through Houston.

State officials trying to get feed and fresh water to the cattle and horses estimate that at least 20,000 head of livestock were roaming loose throughout several southeast Texas counties at the beginning of this week. After

days without feed and fresh water, the animals are stressed and many have been drinking the salt water Ike left behind.

"Those animals have got to get some water and dry hay quickly and nearly all the fences are down," said Dr. Ed Smith, director of Texas AgriLife Extension Services.

The Extension Service, along with Texas Farm Bureau and a number of state agencies, has created a resource staging area, feed collection and transportation network to address the immediate needs of the cattle and the horses.

State agriculture officials said livestock owners are most in need of hay, water troughs and feed stocks, such as range cubes.

Once the livestock's immediate needs are met, ranchers will begin the difficult process of rounding up their animals and rebuilding their pastures.

"Some ranchers will be rounding up herds numbering in the hundreds and rebuilding miles of pasture fences," said Jim Sartwelle, American Farm Bureau Federation livestock economist. "So, on

Hurricane Continued on Page 2

## Action on comprehensive energy policy moves from House to Senate



**FARMERS AND RANCHERS**, like all other consumers across the U.S., are looking to Congress for leadership on addressing sky-high energy costs. With a comprehensive energy bill passed in the House, the Senate is beginning to work on its own legislation.

The House last week approved a package of energy initiatives that would expand offshore drilling and extend renewable energy tax credits. The Senate, taking a piecemeal approach, plans to start its work on energy policy with a set of energy tax incentives included in the House measure.

"Farmers and ranchers, like all consumers across the U.S., are feeling the tremendous impact of historically high energy costs," said Anne Steckel, American Farm Bureau Federation energy specialist. "Now, more than ever, agricultural producers are looking to lawmakers for leadership in alleviating these costs. The House's comprehensive energy package is a step in that direction. It puts us on

the path to meaningful reform."

The measure (H.R. 6899) would extend tax credits for wind and solar energy and create tax incentives for conservation, coal projects that capture carbon and fueling stations for natural gas. In addition, it would apply bonus depreciation rules to all cellulosic biofuel plants and extend and expand credits for biodiesel and renewable diesel.

Also included is a renewable electricity standard, which would require electric companies to produce at least 15 percent of their electricity from renewable resources by 2020, with increases starting in 2010.

Of the oil and natural gas drilling provisions, Steckel said that

while farmers and ranchers were hoping lawmakers would expand that option further than they did in this bill, it was a considerable step forward. The legislation would allow drilling between 50 and 100 miles from the Atlantic to the Pacific coasts, if the adjacent coastal states enact laws allowing it. Drilling beyond 100 miles would be permitted, regardless of state laws.

"With the House opening the door to drilling, we're optimistic that the Senate, when it takes up energy policy in the coming days and weeks, will further expand this opportunity to decrease our reliance on foreign energy

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# Humane Society of the U.S.: Try to imagine

By Sally Schuff

Here is a challenge for the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS): Try to understand the purpose of animal agriculture before you are blamed for a major mistake.

Animal agriculture is not about torturing animals in "factory" farms, nor poisoning the environment, nor obesity.

Animal agriculture is all about providing high-quality human nutrition not only to well-heeled and picky eaters in developed countries but also to those whose economic reality is defined by the deficit in high-protein foods.

Meat, milk, eggs, poultry and fish are high-quality, protein-rich foods that contain the essential amino acids required for human development. They hardly qualify as social evils.

When animal agriculture is attacked, as it clearly is by HSUS, there is a danger that it could be damaged or destroyed.

Considering global population growth, HSUS might want to think twice before risking the blame for promoting a future protein shortage.

On Sept. 10, Danielle Nierenberg, billed as an animal agriculture and climate change specialist for HSUS, showcased the group's agenda.

Her remarks came in Washington, D.C., at a Hudson Institute discussion of a new peer-reviewed paper showing that the use

*The excellence of an animal operation is governed by how good the people are—not how big it is.*



of bovine growth hormones reduces the dairy industry's carbon footprint by reducing the number of animals and inputs needed to produce milk.

Unimpressed, Nierenberg said, "There are numerous studies showing that Escherichia coli and avian influenza increase in factory farm conditions."

However, when Hudson Institute director of research on global food issues Alex Avery challenged her to cite her sources, Nierenberg was unable to do so.

Nierenberg's attack was revealing.

She called large-scale operations "filthy" and disease ridden and said, "My perspective is one that is critical of industrial animal agriculture, mostly the largest of the large-scale operations. I am not critical of small- and medium-sized dairy, chicken and pig farmers who have worked very hard in this country to

raise animals."

What Nierenberg missed, and what HSUS always misses, is that the size of the operation is not the issue. What matters is management.

People manage animals; they manage animal health and well-being, environmental remediation, public health concerns and community acceptance. The excellence of an animal operation is governed by how good the people are—not how big it is.

It would really be helpful if HSUS could understand this.

Maybe HSUS could lower its voice and understand that animal agriculture is not an evil industry, nor is it stuck in the status quo. It is an industry that openly seeks and adopts production improvements.

Most importantly, it is an industry that produces a product essential to human nutrition, and frankly, it could use all the well-intentioned help it could get.

Whatever its motives, HSUS needs to be concerned about what its current attack agenda will mean to the future of animal agriculture. If that agenda brings on a global shortage of high-quality, protein-rich foods, then the blame will fall squarely on HSUS and its allies.

*This article is reprinted with permission from Feedstuffs magazine. Sally Schuff is Washington editor for Feedstuffs.*

## Industry makes progress on COOL certifications

Continued from page 1

COOL regulations, which go into effect on Sept. 30, apply to muscle cuts and ground beef (including veal), lamb, chicken, goat and pork, as well as fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables, macadamia nuts, pecans, ginseng and peanuts. These commodities must be labeled at the point of sale to indicate in which country they were produced.

On Aug. 1, USDA rolled out its interim rule on COOL implementation. However, there remained some outstanding issues, including how to incorporate livestock and livestock products in the COOL process.

"Animals change hands numerous times between the producer and the grocery store," explained Caroline Rydell, American Farm Bureau Federation livestock specialist. "Developing a system to exchange information throughout this chain was a challenge."

With the deadline for implementation drawing nearer, 70 representatives from more than 30 livestock industry sector, species and food retail organizations and companies gathered on Aug. 26, in Kansas City, Mo. Rydell represented AFBF at the meeting.

"Our goal was to agree on universal procedures and language for

the necessary affidavits and/or Country-of-Origin (COO) declarations," Rydell said. "We were looking for the simplest, most effective, least burdensome approach for producers, marketers, feeders and packers to use in implementing and complying with COOL."

The coalition came up with three types of declarations. The first is a continuous COO affidavit/declaration, which will allow producers to make a continuous origin affidavit that would be kept on file by the market, stocker, feeder or slaughter plant, until revoked by the affidavit's signer.

The second is a supporting declaration of origin for specific transactions involving livestock from producers with a continuous affidavit on file, or as a "stand alone" affidavit/declaration related to a specific transaction. This language could be used on check-in sheets, invoices and/or other sales documents.

The third statement covers direct transactions to packers from producers, marketing businesses and feeders. The COOL law requires packers to maintain COO records for one year and they must be able to obtain records from their immediate suppliers within that period, to substantiate COOL claims. This statement

says the livestock supplier will maintain those records and make them available for one year from date of delivery of the livestock.

Meeting participants on Sept. 4 sent a letter to Bruce Knight, USDA undersecretary for marketing and regulatory programs, outlining their agreements. In addition to summarizing their decisions about declarations, the groups also said they intend to encourage people selling live animals to visually inspect all their livestock for markings of foreign origin.

"We all agree visual inspection for the presence or absence of foreign origin markings constitutes firsthand knowledge of the origin of those animals inspected and such inspection may be used to support an affidavit of origin," the groups wrote to Knight, who had also attended the meeting.

The letter emphasized that visual inspection would be particularly important between July 15—the date on which all livestock present in the U.S. were declared to be of U.S. origin—and whenever the federal government issues the final rule for implementing COOL.

Knight last week indicated that USDA is very likely to officially accept the documents drafted in Kansas City for the purpose of origin and verification declaration.

## Hurricane Ike

Continued from page 1

top of adding up their losses in terms of the cattle and horses that didn't survive the storm, they also have the steep cost of rebuilding ahead."

Sartwelle noted that some of these ranchers had few options for moving their cattle and horses out of the storm's path. "The storm was fast-moving and, as with all hurricanes, it was difficult to predict its exact path. Even with an unlimited amount of higher ground to move them to, which was not the case, you can only move thousands of cattle so far so fast."

Many other counties at the northern end of Ike's path across East Texas also suffered crop and livestock losses, said Gene Hall, Texas Farm Bureau director of public relations.

Among the coastal crops, grain sorghum and cotton have already been harvested. However, rice was still in the harvest stage in many areas and most likely affected by Ike, according to state agriculture officials.

For information on how to participate in the relief efforts, go to [www.txfb.org](http://www.txfb.org).

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## Decision 2008: Where the candidates stand on the agricultural issues that matter to you

Every four years, FBNews asks the two major party candidates for president to answer a few questions on issues that are important to farmers and ranchers. The result is an exclusive look at the candidates' positions and promises on everything from farm programs to environmental regulations

to property rights.

The fact that the candidates respond in such great detail during the height of the campaign is a great big nod to how involved and active Farm Bureau members are in policy and politics and how influential they are within their communities.

It's also an acknowledgment of how important rural votes are in this election. Neither candidate is taking the rural vote for granted, nor writing it off. Every vote will count. Your vote will count, and both candidates are asking for it.

If you are still uncommitted to a candidate, FBNews hopes the information

in this Q&A will fill in some blanks and help you make the right choice. If you've already made up your mind, we hope this information will at least give you more confidence in your decision—and the information you need to hold the winner accountable over the next four years.

**A new farm bill will be implemented over the next four years during a time of change for agriculture in the U.S. and the world. What policies do you propose to keep U.S. agriculture a profitable and viable industry?**

First, I will bring the agriculture community together to develop a market-driven risk management system for farmers and ranchers to sustain them during natural disasters. I will challenge America to enact fundamental reforms to our crop insurance program and other agricultural policies. Rapidly rising input costs and fluctuating commodity prices pose real threats to the financial stability of American agriculture. The global market is too complex for American farmers and ranchers to rely on an outmoded system that assumes a narrow trading band for these input costs and commodity prices. A market-based system of risk management will eliminate the influence of special interests on America's agricultural policy and allow individual farmers and ranchers to determine for themselves the scale and structure of their operations.

Second, I will engage the agricultural community and international leaders to move forward a trade agenda that expands access to overseas markets and promotes American agricultural exports. Expanding our farmers' and ranchers' access to foreign markets will provide an immense long-term benefit for our agricultural sector. As president, I will work to ratify multilateral, regional and bilateral trade deals. In particular, I will provide strong leadership to get the global talks back on track. In addition, I will work tirelessly to ensure that our farmers and ranchers receive fair prices for their products. I will uphold our obligations under bilateral and WTO agreements, and I will demand the same of other nations.

Third, I will work to ignite a 21st Century Green Revolution. I will direct the Department of Agriculture to launch a comprehensive research agenda to help develop more stress-resistant, higher-yielding crops to increase production per acre. This will enable American farmers and ranchers to optimize their use of land, water and other resources to meet the needs of an expanding world population.

**American farmers and ranchers utilize energy for production, processing and transportation. Agriculture is also a growing provider of renewable energy. With energy costs rising sharply, how do you propose to change energy policy to meet our country's short- and long-term energy needs, and strengthen our energy security?**

All across this nation, people are hurting. Farmers and ranchers are unable to cover the costs of production and transportation, and small business owners are struggling to meet payroll. All of this, in large part, is because the price of oil is too high, and the supply of oil is too uncertain. The next president must be willing to break with the energy policies not just of the current administration,

**McCain**  
Continued  
on Page B

**A new farm bill will be implemented over the next four years during a time of change for agriculture in the U.S. and the world. What policies do you propose to keep U.S. agriculture a profitable and viable industry?**

I support a robust safety net that targets assistance appropriately and provides farmers with risk mitigation tools that protect them from weather and market conditions that are beyond their control. This includes traditional farm programs, crop insurance and disaster assistance. I supported the 2008 farm bill and both the bill's permanent disaster program and ad hoc disaster assistance when farmers in Illinois and around the country have needed it.

It's important to implement the 2008 farm bill in keeping with the intent of Congress. The legislation is the product of more than 18 months of negotiations that attempted to satisfy a complex set of competing priorities. If particular provisions are difficult to administer or present technical challenges to the Department of Agriculture, I will work with leaders from both parties in Congress and relevant stakeholders to make appropriate adjustments that are acceptable to the key stakeholders involved.

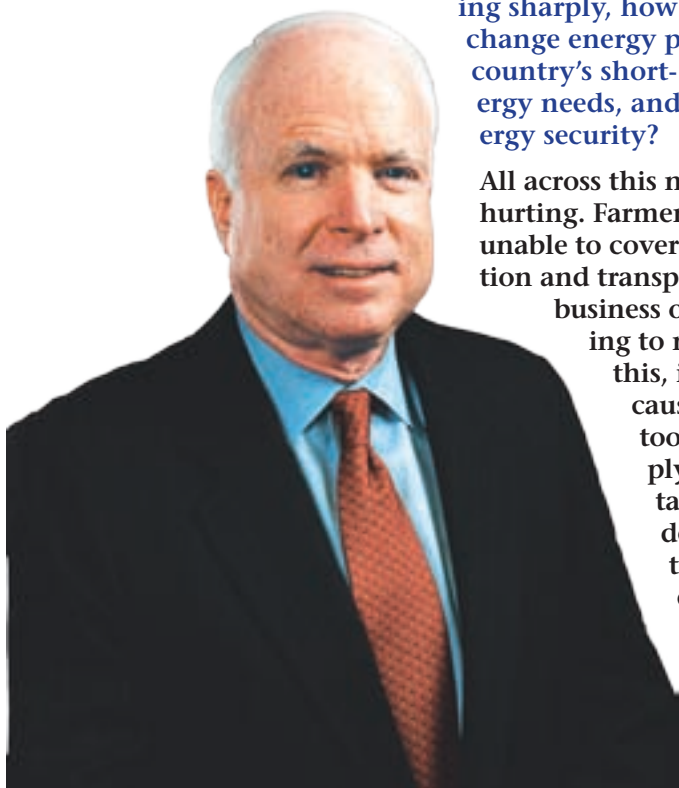
As president, I will work to ensure that the protections in the bill against gaming the system are properly enforced, and I will work with Congress to push for stronger payment limitations.

**American farmers and ranchers utilize energy for production, processing and transportation. Agriculture is also a growing provider of renewable energy. With energy costs rising sharply, how do you propose to change energy policy to meet our country's short- and long-term energy needs, and strengthen our energy security?**

Farmers are pinched by record energy prices and feel firsthand the effects of our energy crisis, yet farmers also know that rural communities are on the cutting edge of efforts to end it, and it's time Washington stepped up to help. That's why I have established a goal to have 60 billion gallons of our fuel come from sustainable, affordable biofuels by 2022, and I'll invest \$150 billion over the next 10 years in our green energy sector, creating up to 5 million new jobs in the process—jobs that pay well and can't be outsourced. In the interim, I also recognize that continued support for responsible development of domestic oil and gas resources must also be a priority as we work to diversify our nation's energy supply.

**Expanded opportunities for international trade have boosted export sales of U.S. agricultural exports to over \$108 billion annually. What are your views on maintaining current trade agreements and continuing to pursue further agreements such as the World Trade Organization's Doha Round and**

**Obama**  
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### McCain *Continued from Page A*

but the administrations that preceded it, and lead a great national campaign to achieve energy security for America.

In the short term, this requires more domestic production, especially in the Outer Continental Shelf. As a matter of fairness to the American people, we must assure affordable fuel for America by increasing domestic production of a variety of energy sources, which will reduce our dependence on foreign oil and lower the prices we pay at the pump.

In the long term, solving our energy crisis requires an “all of the above” approach. It will require aggressive development of alternative energies like wind, solar, tidal and biofuels. It will also require expanding traditional sources of energy by developing clean-coal technologies, promoting nuclear power and permitting offshore drilling. This nation cannot afford to put off serious energy reform any longer. For the sake of our economy, for the sake of our environment and for the sake of our national security, we need to get it done and get it right.

Expanded opportunities for international trade have boosted export sales of U.S. agricultural exports to over \$108 billion annually. What are your views on maintaining current trade agreements and continuing to pursue further agreements such as the World Trade Organization’s Doha Round and bilateral trade agreements? Will you support the renewal of Trade Promotion Authority?

A central focus of my agriculture policy is to expand international trade, bringing American products to more foreign markets and boosting the profitability of American farms. I believe that we must uphold our current inter-

national commitments, such as NAFTA, while looking for new opportunities, which is why I support ratifying pending trade deals with countries like Colombia, Panama and South Korea. As president, I will pursue multilateral, regional and bilateral efforts to reduce trade barriers, level the global playing field and build effective enforcement of global trading rules. I will provide energetic leadership to get our global trade negotiations back on track. Trade Promotion Authority is essential to making progress toward these important goals.

Without comprehensive immigration reform that provides a stable, legal workforce, U.S. agriculture risks losing up to \$9 billion a year in production to other countries. What reforms do you propose to ensure that agriculture has an adequate and legal workforce?

I reached across the aisle twice to bring about comprehensive immigration reform, working with Democrats to strike the proper balance between border security and the growth of our workforce. Unfortunately, partisans from both sides of the political spectrum stood in the way of reform, such as when Senator Obama five times proposed poison-pill amendments. As president, I will be committed to finally achieving the immigration reform our country so desperately needs. I will first convince Americans that we can secure the border and follow through on my commitment to do so. I will then work to enact a practical and fair immigration policy, one that ensures respect for the laws of this country, recognizes the important economic contribution of immigrant laborers, apprehends those who came here illegally to commit crimes and deals practically and humanely

with those who came here to build a better, safer life for their families, without excusing the fact that they came here illegally.

I will reform the H-2A visa program to provide a non-bureaucratic, adaptable, useable program that is reflective of market needs and protects both the immigrant and U.S. workers. I will also implement a secure, accurate and reliable electronic employment verification system to ensure that individuals are screened for work eligibility in a real-time fashion and provide responses to employer inquiries in a prompt and timely manner to give both the employer and employee security in their hiring decisions.

Farm Bureau supports the repeal of the death tax and reform of the capital gains tax. What changes in these taxes do you support in order to reduce the burden on farm and ranch families and small business owners?

This election presents a stark choice on these important issues of taxation. I will lower the estate tax to 15 percent and raise the exemption to estates valued at \$10 million. I will keep capital gains and dividend taxes at the current low levels. Senator Obama will raise them. My policies will help small businesses thrive and keep farms within the family. Senator Obama’s policies are a recipe for economic stagnation.

What policies do you support to address the issue of climate change while maintaining economic growth?

Global climate change demands our urgent attention, especially in Washington. To dramatically reduce carbon emissions, I have proposed a new cap-and-trade system that over time will change the dynamic of our energy economy. We will cap emissions according to specific goals, measuring progress by reference to past carbon emissions. By the year 2050, we would achieve an emissions reduction of 60 percent below 1990 levels. Under my cap-and-trade proposal, we will transition into a low-carbon energy future while staying on a course of economic growth. As part of my plan, the agricultural community would not be subject to greenhouse gas emissions caps, but would be able to develop verifiable carbon credits to sell to other sectors subject to the caps. As never before, the market would reward any person or company that seeks to invent, improve or acquire alternatives to carbon-based energy. As president, I will turn all the apparatus of government in the direction of combating climate change

and achieving energy independence for our country—authorizing new production, building nuclear plants, perfecting clean coal, improving our electricity grid and supporting all the new technologies that one day will put the age of fossil fuels behind us.

Farmers and ranchers are impacted by environmental regulation because they depend on our natural resources to produce food and regulatory costs often cannot be recouped. What is your perspective on environmental regulation as it affects farmers and ranchers?

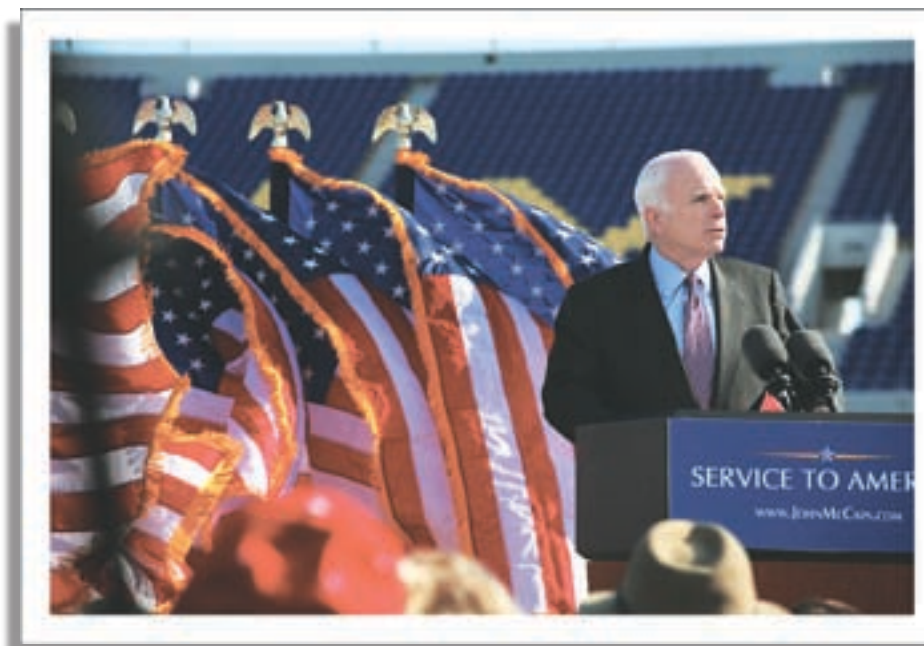
As I have said, as president I will launch an ambitious research agenda—a 21st Century Green Revolution—to enable farmers and ranchers to make better use of natural resources, cutting costs and making farms more productive, while promoting responsible stewardship of our environment. By developing new agricultural techniques and technologies, we can rejuvenate America’s agricultural industry while conserving our natural resources and combating climate change.

In addition, my comprehensive cap-and-trade plan to halt climate change exempts agriculture and small businesses, while providing the agricultural sector the opportunity to develop carbon credits to trade to other sectors subject to the emissions caps. This practical approach ensures the continuing viability of our agriculture industry while cutting greenhouse gas emissions 60 percent by 2050.

I will also promote conservation programs that encourage maximum environmental protection of America’s farmlands, which will assist farmers and ranchers in the protection of wildlife and rivers.

Regulations governing water quality frequently have unintended consequences at the farm level. How would your administration protect our water resources while taking into account the diverse business concerns of livestock and crop producers, as well as their contributions to a cleaner environment?

I am a strong believer that decisions about environmental safety and conservation should be made with the input of all stakeholders and that the views of local communities should be given great weight in decision-making. We all know that decisions about natural resources can be divisive and, if not carefully thought out, can result in tension between resource users and con-



Republican presidential candidate John McCain says opening more foreign markets to U.S. exports would be a central focus of his agricultural policy, along with a reformed, “market-based” risk management program.

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**Obama** *Continued from Page A*

**bilateral trade agreements? Will you support the renewal of Trade Promotion Authority?**

Trade is vital to our agriculture sector. About 50 percent of the wheat, 20 percent of the corn and 35 percent of the soybeans we grow in the United States are exported. These markets increase demand for our homegrown products and provide American farmers with additional revenue. Our farmers are among the most efficient in the world and, if given a level playing field, can compete effectively with anyone in the world.

There are several steps we must take to remain competitive and expand our access to markets. I support providing full funding to vital market promotion programs that enhance our access to important international markets. I have fought to break down trade and investment barriers that restrict our access to markets and will continue to do so. I supported bipartisan efforts to lift Korea's and Japan's bans on American beef.

It's also important that we ensure that our trade agreements create a level playing field for American businesses and workers, and that our farmers and businesses secure robust market access as a result of these agreements. Trade agreements must contain strong and enforceable labor and environmental standards so that American farmers are able to compete on a level playing field. I will also continue to support providing resources to research and technology that enhances the productivity and profitability of our farmers.

**Without comprehensive immigration reform that provides a stable, legal workforce, U.S. agriculture risks losing up to \$9 billion a year in production to other countries. What reforms do you propose to ensure that agriculture has an adequate and legal workforce?**

The agriculture industry relies heavily on seasonal and migrant labor. I helped lead the fight for comprehensive immigration reform in the Senate, and I will make it a priority as president. We need comprehensive reform that secures our borders, fixes our broken immigration bureaucracy and puts the 12 million undocumented immigrants on a responsible path to citizenship. At the workplace, we need a simple, but mandatory electronic system that enables employers to verify the legal status of the people they hire. We need to make sure we allocate visas in a way that honors America's commitment to family unity and hard work while also leaving room to bring people that America needs to compete in a global economy. We

must also ensure that immigrant workers have full rights and responsibilities, like any other worker in our labor market.

**Farm Bureau supports the repeal of the death tax and reform of the capital gains tax. What changes in these taxes do you support in order to reduce the burden on farm and ranch families and small business owners?**

I have a comprehensive plan that would provide a tax cut for 95 percent of households and simplify the tax code. I support a reasonable estate tax policy that would effectively repeal the estate tax for 99.7 percent of estates. For the remaining 0.3 percent of estates that have more than \$7 million per couple, I will retain a rate of 45 percent. This policy would cut the number of estates touched by the tax by 84 percent relative to 2000.

My plan for capital gains is to maintain the current rate for families with incomes below \$250,000. Those in the top two income brackets would pay a new rate of 20 percent, which is equal to the lowest rate that existed in the 1990s and the rate that President Bush proposed in 2001.

**What policies do you support to address the issue of climate change while maintaining economic growth?**

I support implementation of an economy-wide cap-and-trade system to reduce carbon emissions by the amount scientists say is necessary: 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. This market mechanism has worked before and will give all American consumers and businesses the incentives to use their ingenuity to develop economically effective solutions to climate change.

I will use some of the revenue generated from this cap-and-trade permit auction to invest in climate-friendly energy development and deployment. This will transform the economy, especially in rural America, which is poised to produce more renewable energy than ever before, creating millions of new jobs across the country. I will also develop domestic incentives that reward forest owners, farmers and ranchers when they plant trees, restore grasslands or undertake farming practices that capture carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, creating new opportunities for rural America to help solve the climate crisis.

**Farmers and ranchers are impacted by environmental regulation because they depend on our**

**natural resources to produce food and regulatory costs often cannot be recouped. What is your perspective on environmental regulation as it affects farmers and ranchers?**

As president, I will support balanced policies to encourage responsible stewardship of our natural treasures and reverse the Bush administration's attempts to chip away at our nation's clean air and water standards.

**Regulations governing water quality frequently have unintended consequences at the farm level. How would your administration protect our water resources while taking into account the diverse business concerns of livestock and crop producers, as well as their contributions to a cleaner environment?**

The federal government has an important role in the process of tackling water management issues—to help local communities manage scarce water resources. The federal government has to be an honest broker between competing interests, but shouldn't decide water policy in a heavy-handed, top-down way.

**A modern transportation and communications infrastructure is vital to food and energy production. What ideas will you propose to address highway, rail, waterway and port needs? How will you deal with the need for greater access to high-speed Internet infrastructure in rural America?**

One of the hurdles farmers and those in rural America face is the creation of a modern transportation system. As president, I will increase funding so that we can

upgrade and maintain our waterways as they are a vital component of our rural infrastructure and enhance the competitiveness of our homegrown products. In addition, I supported the Water Resources Development Act, which authorized major upgrades to our waterways infrastructure, including the Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway System, and will work to provide the funding necessary to advance these new projects. I will also invest in rural communities by improving rural transportation infrastructure, increasing the availability of high-speed Internet access and cell phone service.

**Why should farmers and ranchers vote for you?**

During my time in the Illinois Senate and in the U.S. Senate, I've had the great privilege of representing some of America's hardest working and most productive farmers. And farmers have helped teach me how important this sector is to the nation. We depend on agriculture to provide food, feed, fiber and fuel, and it's vital that federal policies help our farmers make a living and contribute to our nation's food security.

This election is our chance to bring about the change our farms and rural areas so desperately need. We cannot afford four more years of the Bush rural agenda, and that's what Sen. McCain is offering. Like President Bush, he opposed a farm bill that is helping many family farmers. And he has a long history of opposing renewable fuels. It's time to make the rural agenda America's agenda. That's the kind of leadership you deserve—and if you stand with me in November, that's the kind of leadership I will offer as president.



Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama says he will make immigration reform a priority, increase funding for transportation infrastructure needs and have 60 billion gallons of our fuel come from biofuels by 2022.



### McCain *Continued from Page B*

ervationists. We must strive toward a fair and sensible balance.

As a Westerner, I am deeply aware of the significance of water, a precious commodity. Ensuring an ample and clean supply for municipal, agricultural, industrial, tribal and conservation purposes is one of our most essential but difficult tasks. I have several principles I would apply. First, existing water rights, compacts and agreements should be respected and protected. Second, any modifications to the allocation of water supply should be negotiated among the affected stakeholders to ensure just and proper outcomes. Third, to the maximum extent possible, water rights disputes should be resolved in state and local courts that can recognize and protect all legitimate claims, rights and authorities. Fourth, any necessary mediation of water rights disputes must recognize applicable law, involve all affected local communities and ensure that water is used responsibly, sustainably and for maximum public benefit.

**A modern transportation and communications infrastructure is vital to food and energy production. What ideas will you propose to address highway, rail, waterway and port needs? How will you deal with the need for**

### greater access to high-speed Internet infrastructure in rural America?

Advances in agriculture and information technology will allow rural Americans to create their own economic opportunities that are the key to expanding economic prosperity throughout rural America. I support improving the flow of private capital, broadening the availability of technology, supporting the rapid evolution of technology into a sustainable industry and strengthening the infrastructure necessary to deliver the economic output of rural America to the global market.

Our transportation infrastructure is vital to our economy and to our agricultural sector in particular. As president, I will ensure that our infrastructure meets the requirements of a 21st century economy. I will work to find solutions to reduce congestion at our inland port facilities and to improve our ability to identify cargo at its point of origin. I will make sure that the federal government provides all necessary funding for our roads and rail facilities.

I will also work to allow a serious investment to upgrade our national electricity grid to meet the demands of the 21st century. Rural America can play a leading role in generating electricity from biofuel, biomass, geothermal, solar and wind sources. I believe that America must reduce the barriers to developing energy gen-

eration facilities and transmitting the energy necessary to meet the goal of national energy security.

Expanding Internet access to rural communities will be a priority in my administration. I have long believed that all Americans should have access to high-speed Internet services and receive the economic opportunities derived from technology. Access to high-speed Internet services facilitates interstate commerce, drives innovation, promotes educational achievements, allows access to health services and literally has the potential to change lives. As president, I would continue to encourage private investment to facilitate the build-out of infrastructure to provide high-speed Internet connectivity all over America. However, where private industry does not answer the call because of market failures or other obstacles, I believe that people acting through their local governments should be able to invest in their own future by building out infrastructure to provide high-speed Internet services. That is why I introduced the "Community Broadband Bill," which would allow local governments to offer such services, particularly when private industry fails to do so.

I have proposed a "People Connect Program," which will reward companies that offer high-speed Internet access to underserved, low-income customers by allowing those companies to

write off the cost of that service. I will also work to enable communities to build information infrastructure when private companies will not by offering government-backed loans or by issuing bonds with low interest rates.

### Why should farmers and ranchers vote for you?

The continuing success of American agriculture and the health of America's rural heartland require leadership that understands that productivity and innovation are created by the effort, ingenuity and investment of individual Americans. Our nation's security depends on the health of American agriculture and I will promote agricultural policies that help America's farmers and ranchers thrive in the 21st century. As president, I will work to develop all of America's domestic energy resources, reduce taxes and government regulation, preserve property rights, provide a sustainable, market-driven risk management system for farmers and ranchers, improve incentives to invest in technology and rural infrastructure, reduce trade barriers, secure our borders while providing a fair and practical temporary labor program and strengthen the American economy by eliminating wasteful government spending.

## Farmers have a lot to think about in 2008 election

Farmers and ranchers have a tough choice ahead of them this November. Both presidential candidates are making strong appeals to rural voters.

"Both McCain and Obama have strong points and hurdles in terms of their positions on agricultural issues," said Linda Johnson, director of policy implementation for the American Farm Bureau Federation. "They're making the best case they can and fighting for votes in swing states like Pennsylvania, Ohio, Florida, Colorado, Iowa and others where agriculture is important."

Neither candidate voted on the 2008 farm bill, either when the Senate first voted on it or when it twice voted to override the president's veto. But, Sen. Barack Obama said he supported the farm bill. Sen. John McCain said he did not.

McCain went as far as submitting a statement for the Congressional Record in which he called the farm bill "bloated" and "flawed."

Obama said in a Sept. 15 letter to Carl Shaffer, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau president, that he would have liked to see more reforms in the bill; however, he supported it because it "provides farmers

with a robust safety net in these increasingly volatile markets."

Obama's letter was in follow-up to a question that Shaffer asked when both candidates spoke by teleconference to a meeting of state Farm Bureau presidents in July.

Both candidates support stricter payment limits, something that AFBF strongly opposes.

Instead of traditional farm programs, McCain points to his support for reforming crop insurance and opening international markets as a way of enhancing farmers' and ranchers' profitability.

McCain's support for negotiating new trade agreements and ratifying those that have been negotiated but not approved in Congress is unequivocal. Obama says trade is important to agriculture, but during the primary campaign he criticized the North American Free Trade Agreement, which has been a boon for agricultural exports to Canada and Mexico.

Both candidates pledge to cut the estate tax, with McCain promising a lower tax rate and higher estate value exemption (15 percent and \$10 million) than Obama (45 percent and \$7

million). McCain says he would keep capital gains taxes at the current level of 15 percent. Obama says he would raise the rate to 20 percent for the top two tax brackets only.

Maintaining tax incentives and fuel blending standards to encourage production and use of renewable fuels is another top priority for AFBF. McCain says we need to produce more renewable fuels. However, this summer he joined an effort to roll back the renewable fuels standard (RFS) that sustains investment in biofuels.

Neither candidate voted when the Senate voted on an energy bill in December 2007 that raised the RFS. But, one of Obama's first actions in the Senate was introducing the American Fuels Act (S. 133) to provide tax incentives for development of cellulosic ethanol and flex-fuel vehicles. The Senate has not passed the bill.

Both Obama and McCain pledge to see comprehensive immigration reform enacted. However, McCain prioritizes securing the border before reforming the temporary worker program.

On environmental regulations, both candidates support creating

a greenhouse gas cap-and-trade system. McCain has gone a step further and said he would exempt farms from climate change regulations.

Both candidates have indicated that they would take industry concerns into account in developing environmental regulations. McCain says in his platform that he embraces a multiple-use approach to natural resources, and Obama says in his letter to Shaffer that he would bring stakeholders to the table whenever important policy decisions would affect agriculture.

However, in his platform Obama says CAFOs (concentrated animal feeding operations) "pollute the environment," seeming to lump all large livestock operations together as bad actors.

"Where Obama seems to come out stronger on issues like the farm bill and renewable fuels, McCain might look better on taxes and government regulation of farms and livestock operations," said Johnson. "So farmers and ranchers have to weigh it all and see where the candidates stand with them. For many it could be a tough choice this year."

# Incentive programs increase farmers' market sales

To increase area farmers' market sales, Warren County (Iowa) Farm Bureau is offering "Farm Bureau Bucks." The vouchers, worth \$2, \$3 and \$5 when used to buy produce from vendors, are also helping farmers' market shoppers stretch their food dollars and increasing WCFB's visibility within the community.

WCFB each week selects a state-registered farmers' market in Norwalk or Indianola at which to pass out the Farm Bureau Bucks. With a budget of \$500, WCFB hands over to the farmers the cash value of the Bucks they've received.

"I surprised many local shoppers by offering them a chance to reach into a bag and draw out a Farm Bureau Buck," said WCFB's Jan Walters of her June 21 visit to the Indianola Farmers' Market. "The shoppers were very pleased

to receive 'free money' that could be used to buy the wonderful food items."

Once Walters has handed out the bucks she's brought, she's done, explained Tosha Brooks, office administrator at WCFB.

The program has generated such buzz that people in the area are stopping by the WCFB office to ask for vouchers, although they're available only at the farmers' market selected for that week. The weekly selection is not announced.

The program, launched on June 21, will run through Oct. 25.

WCFB isn't alone in trying to give a boost to growers and budget-strapped consumers alike. From coast to coast, more farmers' markets are accepting food stamps. According to USDA, the number of farmers' markets across the country accepting electronic benefit transfer (EBT)

transactions increased from 532 in 2007 to 605 as of June 2008.

In New York, the Humpty Dumpty Institute (HDI) has gone one step further by providing a \$125,000 grant to the Farmers' Market Federation of New York to provide 25,000 food stamp recipients in upstate New York with coupons and incentives to double their purchases of locally grown fruits and vegetables at 43 farmers' markets.

"This program has a double impact," said Constance Milstein, HDI chair, in announcing the grant last October. "It not only encourages food stamp recipients to purchase more fruits and vegetables, but also benefits New York's small family farmers. We are very excited about this innovative way to link the thousands of upstate food stamp clients to additional fresh, local, healthy

New York State fruits and vegetables with hundreds of our hardworking small produce farmers selling at farmers' markets."

In California, the Wholesome Wave Foundation, a group dedicated to linking local farmers with new markets, as well as with low income urban communities, provided a \$10,000 grant to double food stamp, Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition program recipients' money for local fruits and vegetables at the City Heights Farmers' Market in San Diego County.

The grant from Wholesome Wave, which also donated to HDI's effort in New York, expands the value of EBT cards used by food stamp and WIC recipients as well as senior vouchers at the market. During the 2008 market season, for every \$5 spent on fruits and vegetables, each client receives an additional \$5 coupon for produce, effectively doubling their food purchasing power.

"This innovative approach gives seniors, food stamp and WIC recipients the ability to eat more fresh healthy fruits and vegetables," said Mike Nischan, president of the Wholesome Wave Foundation. "We are very excited about connecting them to the hardworking small produce farmers at these markets."

## State Focus



### Maryland FB files suit to keep nutrient plans confidential

Maryland Farm Bureau in July filed a lawsuit in the Circuit Court for Dorchester County requesting declaratory judgment and injunctive relief to protect the confidentiality of the state's farmers' business plans. The request is the result of legal action taken by the Waterkeeper Alliance to force the release of farm nutrient management information by the Maryland Department of Agriculture. "No other business in this state is required to release proprietary information that may impact the company's competitiveness," said Mike Phipps, MFB president. MFB said the WA's Public Information Act request is part of the group's stated goal of targeting family poultry farms with lawsuits.



### New Mexico FB produces wolf introduction documentary

The New Mexico Farm and Livestock Bureau (NMFLB) plans to soon release a documentary film that takes a comprehensive look at the Mexican Grey Wolf Introduction Program in New Mexico and Arizona. Michael White, NMFLB president, said the organization's board of directors has become increasingly concerned with misinformation about the program being disseminated to the public. The film crew has interviewed business people, ranchers, county officials, pro-wolf advocates, outfitters, predator experts, school officials, teachers and others. White hopes that with the release of the documentary "a true debate can be restarted on this federal program."



### Groups file lawsuit over Ohio's dairy label regulation

The Organic Trade Association and the International Dairy Foods Association are suing the Ohio Department of Agriculture over its dairy labeling rule. The groups are seeking an immediate injunction until the legality of the Ohio regulation can be determined. Among the OTA's and IDFA's claims is that the rule violates free speech, enforcement of organic regulations and the U.S. Constitution's commerce clause. Under the rule, labels that claim milk is from cows not supplemented with the hormone rBST must include a disclaimer stating there is no significant difference between milk derived from rBST-supplemented and non-rBST-supplemented cows.

## Newsmakers

**John Lincoln**, president of **New York Farm Bureau**, is **retiring** at the end of this year. Lincoln has served as NYFB president for 14 years.



**Indiana Farm Bureau** has hired **Jennifer Chandler** as **regional manager** for seven counties in the southwestern part of the state. For the past two years, Chandler worked as a 4-H agent with the University of Tennessee Cooperative Extension Service. In addition, **Bob Kraft**, IFB's state government relations director, has been named **interim director** of the public relations team.

**Anne Marie Diener** is **Minnesota Farm Bureau's** new **south central area program director**. Most recently, Diener was employed in dairy sales for Nutrition Physiology Corporation.

**Heather Lienthal** has rejoined the **Iowa Farm Bureau Federation** news services staff as **ag commodities writer**. Lienthal was a features writer for IFBF from 2000 to 2005, managing *Family Living* and writing articles for the *Spokesman*.

### Making Agriculture's Voice Heard This November



Election Day is coming up fast!

Voting is more than just showing up at the ballot box this November; it is about making a thoughtful, educated choice.

As farmers, ranchers and rural Americans, it's important that we elect candidates who are supportive of agriculture and rural issues.

Many issues in the next year will affect Farm Bureau members. Energy, trade, taxes and environmental policy will hinge on this election. Farm Bureau members and other rural Americans will determine the direction our government moves by electing government officials from the president to the city council.



**ACTION ALERT** 

Go to [www.fb.org](http://www.fb.org) for more information.

## FB members tapping into Grainger benefits

With discounts on hotels, rental cars, travel, trucks and more, the list of Farm Bureau membership benefits is a long one, and as one Colorado Farm Bureau member recently learned, can provide hefty savings.

Having just built a new shop, third-gen-

**GRAINGER**  
FOR THE ONES WHO GET IT DONE

eration rancher Jay Van Loan found himself in need of a gantry crane for heavy hauling and lifting. A gantry crane lifts objects by a hoist fitted in a trolley and can move horizontally on a rail or pair of rails fitted under a beam.

In shopping around, Van Loan found himself with a serious case of, not sticker shock, but shipping shock. Each vendor quoted him substantial shipping charges, from \$700 to more than \$900, because of

the weight of the crane. However, when he went to *grainger.com*, Grainger's online store, Van Loan was again thrown for a loop: shipping for the 4,000-pound capacity gantry crane weighing over 1,000 pounds was free. As a Farm Bureau member, Van Loan was entitled to prepaid freight for all items purchased on *grainger.com*, whether it's heavy duty industrial products or small repair parts for home use.

"I've been very impressed with the Grainger discount structure offered to Colorado Farm Bureau members," said Van Loan, whose ranch is located just outside Grand Junction. "The free shipping incentive offered by Grainger for online purchases, as well as the competitive Farm Bureau discounts, saves my business money—and that issue is top of mind for everyone given soaring fuel prices and rising labor costs. And, in addition to saving money, *grainger.com* makes the ordering process quick and easy."

Van Loan is not the only one reaping the Grainger rewards of Farm Bureau membership.

Harvey and Brenda Burke of Delta Junction, Alaska, needed a backhoe to remove earth for a pipeline to the wood-burning furnace they were installing in the log cabin of their dreams they were building. After meeting a few dead ends in their effort to find the equipment, the Burkes turned to Grainger.

Harvey called the branch in Fairbanks where a customer service associate explained that even though Grainger didn't carry a selection of backhoes in its catalog, he would check into buying the item direct from the manufacturer through the company's sourcing department.

A few days later, the Grainger associate provided the



Jay Van Loan's gantry crane was delivered free of charge—saving him more than \$700—through his Farm Bureau member benefits from Grainger.

Burkes with the pricing—the most competitive offer—and availability of the backhoe, putting them one giant step closer to their dream log cabin.

"Farm Bureau member benefits go beyond considerable discounts on apparel, travel, automobiles and farm, ranch and home products," explained Brad Eckart, director of the American Farm Bureau Federation's organization department. "They also provide a broader network of companies and people who want to maximize those benefits for Farm Bureau members."

For more information about using your Grainger benefits and the numerous others available, Farm Bureau members should contact their state offices.



When Harvey and Brenda Burke had trouble getting a backhoe, a resourceful Grainger sales associate managed to dig one up.

## Action on comprehensive energy policy moves to Senate

Continued from page 1

sources," Steckel said. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) said he is considering bringing up to three competing drilling bills to the Senate floor. However, before the Senate discusses drilling and other energy issues, Reid said the chamber will tackle legislation extending a number of expiring or expired tax incentives, including renewable energy tax credits.

The Senate's bipartisan tax package was crafted by Sens. Max Baucus (D-Mont.) and Charles Grassley (R-Iowa). The package is broken down into two bills: one (S. 3478) that contains the renewable energy tax incentives included in the House-passed bill and another (H.R. 6049) that would extend and expand a number of expiring tax provisions.

H.R. 6049 contains provisions for the deduction of state and local general sales taxes, a qualified tuition deduction, an additional standard deduction for real property taxes, an enhanced charitable deduction for food inventory and an extension and expansion of the 50 percent tax credit for certain expenditures for maintaining railroad tracks.

Baucus and Grassley also incorporated provisions to allow certain farming business machinery

and equipment to be depreciated over five years, reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools and Payment in Lieu of Taxes and provide Midwestern disaster tax relief.

In addition, the extension package also contains increased exemption amounts for 2008 for the Alternative Minimum Tax. The increased exemptions are designed to help reduce the number of middle-income taxpayers, such as farmers and ranchers, from being unfairly snagged by the tax.

The Senate intends to begin debate on H.R. 6049 on Sept. 23.

While parts of the energy and tax bills have broad support, there are some differences between the parties and the House and Senate that could hamper passage by both chambers, as required to make a bill a law, along with the president's signature.

On the tax front, there is disagreement over whether the extension of the tax breaks should be offset to make up for the resulting decreased revenue. Democrats for the most part are calling for the tax extenders package to abide by the Senate's pay-as-you-go or pay-go budget rules that require any tax cut to be offset by either other tax increases or entitlement spending cuts. Republicans oppose offsetting extensions of existing tax incentives.

Also, the House-passed energy bill includes a provision that would deny a current manufacturing deduction to certain major integrated oil companies and oil companies controlled by foreign governments. Senate Republicans do not want to eliminate

the reduction, but they have agreed to language in a bipartisan energy bill that would freeze the deduction at 6 percent for oil and gas companies instead of going forward with a scheduled 9 percent increase in 2010.

### Corner Post

#### U.S. Farm Production Expenditures

Total and Average Per Farm



Source: USDA, NASS