



TAD News

January 2010

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Next TAD Board Meeting:
1 p.m., Feb. 11
Grapevine, Texas

Dairy industry under pressure going in to 2010

2010 opens for Texas dairy farmers much as 2009 ended, with many of you continuing to endure devastating financial hardships.

As TAD moves forward, we will try to ease your burden by working on your behalf on issues of environmental regulation, public policy not friendly to our industry, and animal health and welfare matters that may impact all of you without regard to whom or how you market your milk. There is much to do in these arenas.

As the March primary elections approach, the political climate in Texas is facing some key changes in some Texas legislative seats. TAD's Political Action Committee is contributing to some of these races, and we are watching the results to determine how they might impact the dairy industry. Our mission is to be an active advocate for you and your neighboring dairy farm families, and we have done just that.

Speaking of neighbors, knowing your neighbor is more important now than ever. With Texas population growing quickly, gone are the days you could leave your doors unlocked or lend a piece of equipment based on an assumption of trust.

Maintaining good neighborly relations is vital, as dairy operations are under increasing scrutiny. In 2009, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency began to tighten regulations on air and water. Environmental stewardship is a necessity rather than just a bureaucratic requirement. Dairy producer families must take an active role to ensure their farm management practices are in accordance with state and federal rules and regulations.

If you have a neighbor complaint and don't get out front to mitigate it, further scrutiny of your operation by regulatory agencies would be much worse. Keep good and accurate records of what you do on your farm and practice good neighborly ways.

On a final note, I want to welcome TAD's newest member, Hilmar Cheese Co. Hilmar will gain two seats on the TAD Board, which will be reorganized at its February meeting. ■

Manager's Update

John Cowan

Capitol Report

The stage is set for upcoming battles in legislative primaries

By Shayne Woodard

The Texas election filing deadline ended Jan. 4, and now all eyes are on the Democrat and Republican primaries set for March 2. While the statewide races, especially the governor's race, will soak up much of the attention, there are a few legislative races to watch

But the biggest surprise happened after the filing deadline when, in a startling move, powerful Sen. Kip Averitt (R-Waco), chairman of the Senate Natural Resources Committee, announced he would not seek re-election due to health reasons even though he had filed. Averitt's name must remain on the primary ballot, where he is facing a challenger. No Democrat filed for the seat. Many Republicans are hoping to re-elect Averitt in spite of this announcement, in order to force a special election for this seat. Averitt has been a very approachable

chairman and fair in his dealings. TAD wishes him all the best as he recovers from his health issues.

In addition to Averitt's seat, the Senate has one other open seat, as Sen. Eliot Shapleigh (D-El Paso) chose not to return. The winner of the Democratic primary is expected to fill this seat. In Senate District 5, Steve Ogden (R-Bryan) changed his mind about retirement and is back in the fray to hold this seat. Candidates from both parties have filed for SD 5.

In the Texas House of Representatives, there are eight open seats. Choosing not to seek re-election are Reps. Kino Flores (D-Mission), Joe Crabb (R-Humble), Carl Isett (R-Lubbock), Brian McCall (R-Plano), Frank Corte (R-San Antonio), Dan Gattis (R-Georgetown), David Farabee (D-Wichita Falls) and

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David Swinford (R-Dumas). Speculation in Austin is that these open seats will be filled by the winners of the current officeholder’s party primary. The one exception could be Farabee’s seat. Many in agriculture knew the day was coming when agricultural advocate David Swinford would choose to retire. TAD wishes the best of luck to David in his future endeavors and thanks him for his tireless efforts in support of Texas agriculture. ▪

Did you get your calendar?

Just in time for the New Year, the 2010 Dairy Environmental Calendar, jointly produced by TAD and Texas Agri Life Sciences and Extension, was mailed to Texas dairy producers in December.

The calendar will help producers with required record keeping. It was sent to both the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality for review, and both agencies positively responded to the calendar and indicated it was a good tool for dairy producers and a simplified method of record keeping.

If you did not receive your calendar, please contact TAD. ▪

Compliance Corner

New I-9 form available

By Ellen R. Jordan, Ph.D., Extension Dairy Specialist, Texas AgriLIFE Extension Service

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services updated its Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification, again in 2009. This form expires Aug. 31, 2012, and can be downloaded at: www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-9.pdf.

You and the employee must complete the form within three days of hiring. If you need to re-verify information, you may either complete a new form or correct the old one. Check your files and make sure you have a form on every employee. Update the form by the work authorization expiration date. ▪

New testing requirements for bulls

As of Jan. 1, Texas bulls that are sold, traded, leased or undergo any change of ownership (except to slaughter) must be either certified as a virgin bull or be tested first for cattle trichomoniasis.

In April 2009, the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) enacted requirements for bulls entering Texas. In-state regulations were delayed until Jan. 1.

The regulations include three basic steps: identify the bull; certify virgin bulls; and test older or non-virgin bulls.

Because there is no effective treatment for trichomoniasis, infected bulls must go to slaughter within 30 days of confirmation. The remaining bulls in the herd will be held, isolated from female cattle, until they undergo consecutive negative tests.

When they are confirmed negative for trichomoniasis, the bulls remaining in the herd are free to be moved or to be commingled with cows.

The TAHC’s cattle trichomoniasis regulations and additional information are available on the TAHC Web site at www.tahc.state.tx.us. ▪

Texas AgriLife Extension Service Save the Date – 2010

Feb. 3 – Silage Conference, Comanche County

Feb. 18 – Texas Animal Nutrition Conference meeting, Stephenville

Feb 24 – East Texas Forage Conference, Emory (Rains County)

Mar 2-4 – Hoof Trimming School – Hopkins County

(For more information on the above events, visit <http://texasdairymatters.org>)

March 10-12 – High Plains Dairy Conference, Amarillo. For more information, visit www.highplainsdairy.org.

April 12-13 – MidSouth Ruminant Nutrition Conference, Arlington. For more information, visit www.txanc.org. ▪