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Lawmakers float 3 bills amending Idaho's animal cruelty statute

By SEAN ELLIS
Capital Press

BOISE — Three separate proposals that would amend Idaho's animal cruelty law are floating around the Idaho Legislature, and the controversial issue is simmering again.

Two have been printed and one is being re-drafted with input from representatives of the state's main agricultural groups.

A proposed bill by Rep. Ken Andrus, chairman of the House Agricultural Affairs Committee, was pulled from that committee's agenda Feb. 10 because of opposition from farm groups, Andrus said.

Idaho lawmakers in 2012 passed a bill that makes a third offense for animal cruelty a felony. It addresses companion animals and exempts production agriculture.

Some national and Idaho animal rights groups have



Sean Ellis/Capital Press
Idaho's Capitol in Boise is shown in this Feb. 8 photo.

said they might push a ballot initiative if the state doesn't strengthen the law.

Andrus, a Republican rancher from Lava Hot Springs, introduced legislation in 2013 that would have amended Idaho's animal cruelty law to include a second-offense felony provision and define torture.

It died because the former chairman of the Senate Agricultural Affairs Committee, a retired farmer, refused to introduce it in the Senate. He said he believed it was the first step in a plan by animal activist groups to keep chipping away at the law until it hampers production agriculture.

Andrus was ready to introduce a similar bill this week but pulled it to see if he can work with opponents to alter it into a version they can support.

"We're going to see if we can work something in the bill so we can get more support, especially from the production agriculture people," he said.

The current chairman of the Senate ag committee, Sen. Jim Rice, R-Caldwell, told the Capital Press he also won't allow a bill similar to the one Andrus introduced in 2013 to be heard in that committee.

Rice instead introduced his own bill Feb. 11 that would allow a judge to order a pre-sentencing psychological evaluation for people convicted of animal cruelty. His bill would also allow prosecutors to request an evaluation.

He said people who commit heinous acts of animal abuse are almost always mentally ill and without appropriate treatment, they will come out of prison the same or worse.

"You have to address the mental health issue and you don't deal with that without psychological evaluations," he said. "This allows us to actually address the root problem."

A bill printed last week by Rep. Ilana Rubel, D-Boise, would make it a felony to be convicted of a second animal cruelty offense and it defines torture and includes a first-offense felony if the offense is committed in the presence of a minor.

Top bull goes for \$12,500 at sale

By LEE JUILLERAT
For the Capital Press

KLAMATH FALLS, Ore. — Lee and Glenda Stilwell of Country Inn Cattle Co. were surprised and pleased after their success in the 56th annual Klamath Bull & Select Ranch Horse Sale at the Klamath County Fairgrounds.

The Stilwells, who have a small ranch in nearby Algoma, had the sale's supreme bull that sold for \$12,500, the champion halter Limousin bull that sold for \$7,500, and the top judged pen of replacement heifers that sold for \$10,250.

"We had an outstanding day," said Glenda Stilwell, a fourth-generation rancher, who said the showing was unexpected because of the sale's many outstanding bulls and heifers. "It's always a surprise — and always a good surprise."

Pleased, too, was Jolene Moxon, the sale's cattle manager, who said 90 bulls were sold for a total price of \$403,850, an average price of \$4,487.22.

Eight pens of replacement heifers, including the Stilwells', were sold for \$62,300, an average price of \$7,787.50. Four horses were sold in the select horse sale for a total of \$22,550, an average of \$5,637.50.

In comparison, last year's sale price for 56 bulls averaged \$5,397, the select ranch horse sale averaged \$6,090 for five horses while replacement heifers sale averaged \$2,480 per head on six pens. This year's sale was Feb. 4-7.

Jason Chapman, a bull sale committee member, said he expected prices would be lower this year but noted the overall total sale prices, because of the volume of bulls,

was up over 2015. "I expected it would be lower than it was," he said of the sale prices.

"We had a great turnout," Moxon said, noting there were 114 registered buyers and strong participation in a variety of sale-related events, including a ranch rodeo she said drew thousands of spectators.

Other activities included stock dog trials, a Beef N Brews, brandings, Klamath County Cattlewomen's dinner and dance, an "amazing" trade

show and several kids functions, including goat roping and a stick horse boot race.

Erin Daughtery of Bly was named the contributor of the year for the four-day.

"People really seemed to enjoy the variety of activities," Moxon said.

"The whole event ran really well," Chapman agreed, who credited bull sale chairman Stan Gorden and other committee members. "We had great participation in all the events. It was really a well-run, smooth sale."

Glenda Stilwell, who said her family has participated in sales for many years, shared Chapman's and Moxon's enthusiasm.

"We've been participating in the bull sale as long as I can remember," she said, giving credit to event organizers with the Klamath Cattlemen's Association. "I think this year's sale was an outstanding event with all the activities."

Winner in the ranch rodeo was Gorden Ranches of Bonanza with team members Clay and Steve Gorden and Flint Lee.

In the stock dog finals, Kathy Garner took first in the open and nursery divisions with Rango and Vaquero while Gayle Hybarger and her dog Zeva won the intermediate category.

R-CALF leader: TPP would be 'death knell' for industry

Bullard: Trade deal benefits global interests, not U.S. ranchers

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

SPOKANE — Approval of the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement would be a "death knell" for U.S. ranchers, an industry organization's leader says.

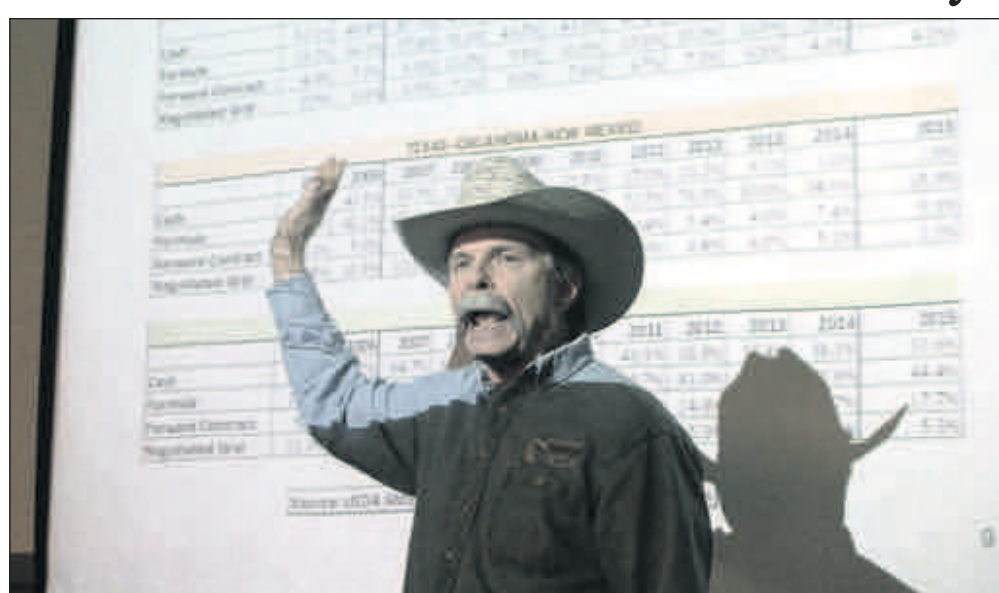
Under TPP, meat packers could slaughter foreign-sourced beef in the United States and have it be considered a U.S. product, shipping it to other countries duty-free, said Bill Bullard, CEO of R-CALF in Billings, Mont. R-CALF represents independent cattle producers.

"The TPP is a license for the multi-national meat packers to steal from you, your good name, your image, your reputation and affix your good name, image and reputation on beef from animals sourced anywhere in the world with a USA label," Bullard said.

Lamb, mutton and pork would also be affected, he told Eastern Washington cattle producers.

Others in the beef industry have voiced support for TPP, saying it would increase access and decrease tariffs on U.S. beef when shipping to other countries. The National Cattlemen's Beef Association said that the agreement is not perfect, but represents a "vast improvement" over current tariff rates in Japan.

Bullard said the trade partners in the TPP don't rep-



Matthew Weaver/Capital Press
R-CALF CEO Bill Bullard outlines some of the problems with the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement for U.S. cattle producers Feb. 10 during a meeting in Spokane.

resent much more marketing opportunity for U.S. ranchers. Australia, Canada, Mexico and New Zealand are four of the largest beef and cattle exporters in the world and the 12 countries included in the TPP produce more beef than they can consume, he said. Without the United States, they represent 103 million head of cattle, third to India and Brazil in herd size.

"Is that what you would select as an ideal group of countries to have a free trade agreement so we can lift our economy up domestically? Absolutely not," Bullard said.

Vietnam and Japan are the most meaningful opportunities, Bullard said, but the United States already has a third of Vietnam's beef market, while Japan's population and beef consumption are declining.

The number of cattle

Online
<http://www.r-calfusa.com/>

ranchers and size of cattle herds have declined in the wake of previous trade agreements, Bullard said.

He said the industry now consists of four large national packing companies, which slaughter roughly 85 percent of all U.S.-fed cattle.

It's in beef packers' interest to source foreign livestock against domestic livestock, Bullard said.

"Producers want the meat packers to source their cattle domestically," Bullard said. "Meat packers want to expand their access to sources around the world, so they can leverage those foreign sources to lower the prices of the domestic product."

Bullard said he would like to see meat packers and feedlots separated, as they were in

the early 1980s, or regulated as "monopolistic structures."

R-CALF believes the U.S. should withdraw completely or scale back from the World Trade Organization instead of giving up its negotiating authority, he said. The U.S. repealed its country of origin label law after the WTO ruled it was unfair to Canada and Mexico because it depressed their cattle prices.

Bullard doesn't expect the TPP to be brought up in Congress until after the presidential election. He expects President Barack Obama to try to get the Senate to ratify the agreement during the lame-duck session after the November election.

Bullard spoke before a joint meeting of the Spokane County Cattlemen and Cattle Producers of Washington in Spokane. He recommended that ranchers contact their members of Congress.

Idaho Dairy Council hires wellness manager

Chelsea Schoenfelder has joined the Idaho Dairy Council as its new manager of health and wellness.

She will serve as a link supporting nutrition science and research to educators, school food service professionals and health professionals, the council stated in a press release.

"Chelsea brings a deep knowledge of nutrition, and community outreach experience that will be a great addition to our team," said Crystal Wilson, senior director of health and wellness with the Idaho Dairy Council, said.

Schoenfelder previously worked as a clinical dietitian for St. Luke's community outreach program. She also helped develop nutrition education curriculum for the After-school Meals Program and created dairy lessons that are now used by the Idaho State Department of Education statewide.

She holds a master's degree in public health and a bachelor's degree in dietetics from Idaho State University, as well as a bachelor's degree in science and nutrition from the University of Idaho.

Dairy prices slipping, even butter

By LEE MIELKE
For the Capital Press

Dairy Markets
Lee Mielke



CME cash block Cheddar cheese finished the Friday before Valentine's Day at \$1.49 per pound, up 2 cents on the week but 4 cents below a year ago. The Cheddar barrels closed at \$1.48, up 1 1/2-cents on the week and a half-cent below a year ago.

Thirteen cars of block traded hands on the week at the CME and none of barrel.

The markets were closed Monday for President's Day but the blocks were unchanged Tuesday, while the barrels lost 2 cents and dipped to \$1.46, as traders anticipated Friday afternoon's January 2016 Milk Production report.

Cheese production is steady, with milk supplies remaining mostly even, according to Dairy Market News. "Demand is slower at many packaging firms, which has rippled back to manufacturers. Concern with inventory levels is increasing in many cheese plants."

Western cheese is active and stable. "Cheese makers are hoping domestic demand

can continue to be strong but concern is building somewhat over limited export opportunities and heavy cheese inventories."

Cash butter saw continuing weakness, finishing Friday at \$2.11 per pound, down 6 cents on the week but still 39 cents above a year ago. Twenty-three cars traded hands on the week at the CME, 15 on Thursday alone.

The spot butter dropped 6 cents Tuesday, sliding to \$2.05, the lowest price since Jan. 12.

The Dairy and Food Market Analyst's Matt Gould, said in Friday's DairyLine the CME grading rule change has resulted in increased liquidity and "that's a good sign," but he adds that his ear-to-rail says, "Lower butterfat prices are coming."

Central region cream supplies are readily available, according to DMN. "Western butter output is strong and running at full schedules.

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