

NCBA: Trump win positive for cattlemen

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS
Capital Press

SUN VALLEY, Idaho — Donald Trump's election took many by surprise, including the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, but an organization representative says it's a shocker that's looking positive for beef producers and rural America.

"It's a new day in Washington and the country as a whole," Colin Woodall, NCBA vice president of government affairs, told the Idaho Cattle Association annual convention on Tuesday.

The race was Hillary Clinton's to lose, and that's what she did, he said.

"It's a bit of a sigh of relief. ... Clinton would have been more of the same (and) that's not sustainable for us," he said.

Republican control of the House and Senate also bodes well for beef producers and rural American, he said.



Carol Ryan Dumas/Capital Press

Colin Woodall, NCBA vice president of government affairs, talks to cattle producers about the changing political landscape in Washington, D.C. during the Idaho Cattle Association annual convention in Sun Valley.

"I'm excited about what the future holds," he said.

Trump's political appointments — some 4,000 — are still early in the process. With a Republican Senate in charge, those that require Senate confirmation will be a lot easier to push through, he said.

It's expected that will include putting a conservative judge on the Supreme Court to replace the late Antonin Scalia. And Justice Ruth Ginsburg is 83, so her seat could flip to the conservative side, he said.

House Speaker Paul Ryan will stay in place, and he's

been good for agriculture. Most Republican committee chairman in the House and Senate will also continue, which can help NCBA move priority issues, he said.

A Trump presidency and Republican control of Congress bodes well for many issues the beef industry is dealing with, he said, but passage of the Trans-Pacific Partnership is NCBA's top priority, and there's still a lot to be done in 2016, he said.

Trump ran against TPP and has maintained that position, and Republicans don't want to bring it up in the lame-duck session.

Meanwhile, the U.S. beef industry is losing \$400,000 a day from lost access in Japan due to a trade deal between Australia and Japan that reduced tariffs on Australian beef. Losses next year will be even greater because that tariff goes down in 2017, he said.

"It's extremely important we get this addressed as soon

as possible. The only tool to stop the hemorrhaging is this trade agreement," he said.

NCBA will continue to push passage, making sure the House and Senate leadership understand the harm, he said.

TPP would lower Japan's 38.5 percent tariff on U.S. beef to 9 percent on muscle cuts and zero on beef variety meats, such as tongue.

Other issues of Interest to NCBA in the lame-duck session are the annual military spending bill and the government funding bill.

The former includes a rider that would delay any potential listing of sage grouse under the Endangered Species Act as well as sage grouse land-management plans by the Interior Department. The latter includes language to defund EPA's Waters of the U.S. rule and changes to Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration that would lead to government interference and harm in cattle

markets, he said.

Looking ahead, NCBA sees overall regulatory relief with Trump in the White House. The first 100 days are probably going to focus on eliminating "nonsensical" rules and regulations, he said.

"One of the first things I think we're going to see him do is roll back (the Waters of the U.S. rule)," Woodall said.

The ag community was "mad as hell" when President Barack Obama went around Congress to advance the rule, he said, but NCBA is now glad he took that route because Trump can unravel it without Congress, he said.

Trump and a Republican Congress could also provide an opportunity for true Endangered Species Act reform and are also likely to kill the "death tax" on inheritances once and for all, he said.

"Overall, I'm very optimistic. I'm excited about where this is going," he said.

Pocatello trials pave way for new food safety technology

By JOHN O'CONNELL
Capital Press

POCATELLO, Idaho — An Atlanta company plans to begin construction before the year's end on the first commercial facility using a food safety and preservation technology tested on the Idaho State University campus.

ScanTech Sciences invested about \$4 million to build a research and development facility inside ISU's Research and Innovation in Sciences and Engineering Complex, where the company honed a proprietary food-treatment process called electronic cold pasteurization.

The company's method uses an electronic linear accelerator to shower food with accelerated electrons, killing pests and pathogens while dramatically extending shelf-life, explained ScanTech CEO Dolan Falconer.

ScanTech's planned 100,000-square-foot commercial facility, to be built in McAllen, Texas, should be operational by mid-summer, Falconer said. He said the plant's conveyor system and "horn" — which works like a shower head that emits electrons — were refined in Pocatello.

"That work provided the proof of concept for the commercial build (in Texas)," Falconer said.

Falconer said the Pocatello facility has also been used, both by ScanTech and in grant-funded research involving various partners, to develop protocols for treating specific commodities.

Falconer said USDA is mulling a grant proposal to study electronic cold pasteurization on pecans, and several retailers and food producers plan to request additional grants for next year. He said further testing in



John O'Connell/Capital Press

Dolan Falconer, CEO of ScanTech Sciences, shows his company's research and development facility at Idaho State University in Pocatello, where it refined electronic cold pasteurization technology. Treatments kill pathogens and pests while extending shelf life of food, according to testing.

Pocatello will help establish commodity-specific electronic cold pasteurization trade protocols, and he sees special promise for potatoes and apples.

The Texas plant will have the capacity to process 10 to 20 truckloads of produce per day, with the conveyor designed to run at 120 feet per minute.

The plant would treat produce entering the country from Mexico, as well as exports from the U.S.

"This improves the economics of exporting," Falconer said.

Falconer said the company already has enough commitments from customers to run the plant at capacity, and investors want a second and third plant to be built

as soon as possible.

He said the company may eventually automate the Pocatello facility to add commercial business, in addition to continued research and development.

In testing in Pocatello, ScanTech has proven it can consistently deliver the precise dosage of electrons needed to preserve food without damaging it, said Rocky Starns, ScanTech's chief technology officer and vice president of engineering and manufacturing.

He said treated potatoes have retained at-harvest quality after a year in storage, including sprout suppression, and strawberries have maintained the same smell, texture and taste after a month in the refrigerator.

USDA closes book on only bird flu case — in Alaska

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

More than 15,000 wild birds in the U.S. have been tested for highly pathogenic bird flu since July 1, and only one tested positive, a mallard duck in Alaska, according to USDA reports updated Thursday.

The duck was infected with a virulent strain first detected in 2014 in northwestern Washington.

The USDA submitted a final report to the World Organization for Animal Health on the mallard. The live duck was sampled in August at a wildlife refuge near Fairbanks.

The USDA reported no other cases but confirmed that the mallard's virus was a close match to the potent mix of Eurasian and North American strains found in a northern pintail duck collected nearly two years ago in Whatcom County, Wash.

Over the next six months, highly pathogenic bird flu spread to poultry in 15 states, claiming 50.4 million turkeys and chickens in 211 commercial farms and 21 backyard flocks, according to the USDA.

Highly pathogenic bird flu has been largely absent from the U.S. since mid-2015, even though state and federal authorities have stepped up sampling of wild birds to detect where the deadly virus is circulating.

Since July 1, 15,712 wild birds have been sampled in the U.S., including 671 in California, 417 in Washing-



Don Jenkins/Capital Press

A strain of highly pathogenic bird flu similar to one that first appeared in the U.S. in a duck in Washington state in 2014 has resurfaced in a mallard duck in Alaska.

ton, 370 in Idaho and 552 in Oregon.

"We're sampling at a statistically significant level, and it's just not coming up," Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife veterinarian Colin Gillin said.

Low pathogenic bird flu is common among wild birds in the U.S. But in the wild, strains commingle and can strengthen.

Migratory waterfowl carry the disease fatal to poultry and likely introduced a highly pathogenic virus to domestic flocks in Canada and U.S. in early December 2014, according to the USDA.

The USDA says the U.S. has since adopted the best avian influenza surveillance system in the world.

The virus did not reappear in the winter of 2015-16, but authorities are continuing to sample wild birds, especially as migratory waterfowl pass through the Pacific Flyway from Alaska south

along the West Coast.

"We would expect to see it, if we see it, from mid-November on," Gillin said.

Meanwhile, new cases of highly pathogenic bird flu are surfacing around the world.

Switzerland, Austria, Croatia, Germany and India have reported outbreaks among wild birds.

In the worst case this month involving commercial poultry, bird flu claimed more than 10,000 turkeys at a farm in Hungary, according to the World Organization for Animal Health.

Animal health officials warn backyard flock owners to keep their birds from coming into contact with migratory waterfowl.

The virus first appeared in the West in late 2014 and 2015 and later jumped to the Midwest, where it spread rapidly through large poultry farms and grew into what the USDA called the worst animal-health event in U.S. history.

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