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**(S.D.) - Public Meetings with Ex GIPSA Chief Scheduled for Bismarck, N. D., May 16, and Ft. Pierre, S. D., May 18**

By: John Thayer Posted at: 05/07/2012 03:57 PM

Billings, Mont. - J. Dudley Butler, former Administrator of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA), will make two public appearances in the Dakotas this month. The first at 7:00 p.m., Central Daylight Time, at the Kist Livestock Auction in Mandan, N.D. Butler's second appearance will be at 7:00 p.m., Central Daylight Time, at the Fort Pierre Livestock Auction in Fort Pierre, S. D., on May 18.

Butler will inform the public about his efforts as GIPSA chief to prevent the vertical integration of the U.S. cattle industry - what Butler characterized as the "chickenization" of cattle production - by the largely unregulated meatpacking industry.

"Cattle producers and the communities they support need to know what is going on behind the scenes to literally strip independent cattle producers of their economic independence," Butler said adding, "I'm going to tell area cattle producers what I know about the current state of competition in their industry and suggest what they should do to preserve their independence, before it's too late."

The meetings with Butler are open to the public, will include questions and answers, and are jointly sponsored by the Independent Beef Association of North Dakota (IBAND), the South Dakota Stockgrowers Association (SDSGA), and R-CALF USA.

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