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## **R-CALF USA Praises FSIS for Steps to Preserve Integrity of Beef Supply; Denounces NCBA's Opposition to Livestock Title**

By: John Thayer Posted at: 05/04/2012 06:58 AM

Billings, Mont. - Along with several other groups, R-CALF USA fought for and won a first ever Livestock Title in the 2008 Farm Bill. That new Livestock Title required implementation of country of origin labeling (COOL), more rigorous prevention measures for livestock diseases and pests, and it authorized state-inspected meat plants to ship meat in interstate commerce. Importantly, the new Livestock Title also required the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) to preserve the integrity of the U.S. beef supply by taking steps to prevent contaminated meat from entering the food supply.

Specifically, the new Livestock Title required meatpackers to provide immediate notification to USDA in the event that adulterated or misbranded meat enters commerce and required meatpackers to have written recall plans for all meat produced.

"The purpose of those requirements was to prevent contaminated meat from ever reaching the retail segment of our beef supply chain," said R-CALF USA CEO Bill Bullard adding, "Accomplishing that goal will limit the need to recall products after they are purchased by consumers, which will go a long way toward maintaining consumer confidence in our beef supply."

Yesterday, the FSIS announced it was implementing the Livestock Title's directive by requiring meatpackers to notify USDA within 24 hours if contaminated meat enters commerce and maintain written recall procedures. In addition, the FSIS announced it is going to initiate traceback procedures of potentially contaminated meat to the actual source of contamination.

"This is a huge and long overdue improvement," Bullard said adding, FSIS's previous policy was to hold downstream meat processors accountable for the contamination actually caused by major packing plants. As a result FSIS did not trace contaminated meat back to the meatpacker that actually caused the contamination, which allowed the offender to keep distributing contaminated meat to other downstream processors, thus increasing the frequency of demand-depressing meat recalls from consumers."

"We will strengthen demand for beef if we demand that meatpackers maintain the highest sanitation levels possible. The steps FSIS has announced will certainly help to reduce the incidence of contaminated beef in the marketplace," said Bullard.

"What we can't figure out, however, is why the NCBA (National Cattlemen's Beef Association) has targeted the elimination of the Livestock Title as among its highest priority," Bullard commented.

"The Livestock Title in the 2008 Farm Bill is helping to maintain and build consumer confidence in our product. No legitimate cattle organization can be opposed to that," concluded Bullard.

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R-CALF USA (Ranchers-Cattlemen Action Legal Fund, United Stockgrowers of America) is a national, nonprofit

organization dedicated to ensuring the continued profitability and viability of the U.S. cattle industry. For more information, visit [www.r-calfusa.com](http://www.r-calfusa.com) or, call [406-252-2516](tel:406-252-2516).