

## PURPOSE OF WISCONSIN CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

WCA is an independent, non-governmental, voluntary member organization of farm and ranch families working together to provide leadership, representation and support for the beef industry by stimulating growth, profitable production, recommending legislation, supporting education, research and youth programs and by promoting beef consumption, product development, building market strength, and increasing market share in cooperation with other organizations.

### STATE ISSUES

#### TAXATION

Sales and Use Tax – The application of this tax is exempt for manufacturing inputs of industry and should also be exempt for all items used in production agriculture such as machinery, equipment, supplies and all materials used directly in farming. It is also important to not consider any expansion of the state sales and use tax because of the competitive disadvantage this would impose on our producers

Property Tax – We support use value assessment of agricultural land. We further recommend that land dedicated to conservation practices (i.e. wind breaks, buffer strips, etc) or programs be assessed as farmland under use value. We urge that use value assessment be expanded to include nonproductive farmland and agricultural woodlands. We support a revision of the managed forest crop law.

#### TRANSPORTATION

Highways – A sound highway system is vital to the well being of agriculture and the entire economy. We urge that highway user taxes collected on over-the-road vehicles be used only for highway purposes.

We support allowing wider driveways for easier access to farmers' yards from state highways.

We urge that greater emphasis be placed on improvement and maintenance of present highways rather than on new highway construction, using existing right-of-ways wherever possible.

We oppose the registration of implements of husbandry or the licensing of their operators. We urge fellow farmers to use caution and courtesy when traveling with farm equipment on public roads.

We urge the Department of Transportation to treat agricultural land equal to wetlands when obtaining land for the building of roads. The same degree of effort should be used in preserving agriculture land as is used in preserving wetlands.

The highway use laws in Wisconsin are a maze of access – non access for large trucks. WCA supports the open access of all roads for livestock truck trailer combinations which do not exceed the seventy five foot length restriction without regard to axel placement.

WCA supports the exemption of USDOT numbers on truck/trailer combinations for hauling livestock in the State of Wisconsin. This does not exempt a person on the Federal Level once a truck/trailer combination leaves the State of Wisconsin. One must follow the Federal Rules at that point.

## MARKETING

Livestock Marketing Education WCA urges the University of Wisconsin-Madison to allocate resources to the College of Agricultural Life Sciences to rebuild the capacity of the University to provide education and services needed to improve profitability and sustainability of Wisconsin animal agriculture.

Meat Grades We Would encourage that the use of the USDA grade designation names (Prime, Choice, Select) not be used in any way but in conjunction with USDA graded beef.

## LIVESTOCK

Beef Quality Assurance – WCA advocates that every beef producer in Wisconsin become familiar with the WCA/NCBA quality assurance program and implement the principals learned into his/her operation.

The beef industry is dependent on the perceptions and confidence of the consumer and nothing less than the absolute best quality product is acceptable for the market.

Animal Care – WCA supports appropriate programs and accurate information aimed at schools and the general public showing how people benefit from today's farming methods and animal research. Animal research has proven to be vital to the medical field in improving the quality of life and to livestock producers and consumers in developing more efficient ways to produce food.

Animal ID System – We believe food safety, animal health and bio security are interstate issues that affect the entire country. We support collaborative efforts of industry and governmental animal health officials to develop a national identification system for livestock. We strongly encourage Wisconsin to support programs that are national in scope. An animal ID system should be confidential, not create an additional paperwork burden and recognize that the owner has no control over the animal prior to his ownership or once it leaves the farm.

WCA is concerned with the cost of the Animal ID System. WCA urges all legislators to remember the cost as it needs to be affordable for all producers.

Wisconsin Vet Diagnostic Laboratory – The cattle producers of Wisconsin need to have a dependable source of diagnosis for animal sickness and disease. The purebred/seedstock

industry (beef and dairy) needs a fully accredited laboratory for national and international export. And the DNR needs a source of disease analysis for the wildlife. WCA requests that the Wisconsin Legislature and the Governor continue to support adequate funding of the animal health system.

Disease – We support the continuation of interstate testing for brucellosis of livestock from states that are not “class-free”. We recommend stronger action be taken against those who violate animal health laws and regulations.

Neospora Caninum – The disease Neospora Caninum is a major cause of abortion, premature birth and impaired calves in cattle; other ruminants are also affected including deer. Domestic dogs and some wild canines have been identified as definitive hosts for the disease. This is a concern for cattlemen as wild canines are rapidly increasing their population and range into areas of cattle production.

WCA supports further research to determine the prevalence of Neospora Caninum among potential canine host animals in Wisconsin and develop appropriate protocols to minimize the economic impact of the disease on the Wisconsin cattle industry.

Deer Feeding Ban – Wild deer and domestic cattle are infected with Bovine Tuberculosis in Michigan and Minnesota. Experts have testified that feeding wild deer increases the risk of transmitting diseases such as CWD, Brucellosis, and Bovine TB.

WCA supports a total permanent ban on the practice of feeding and baiting of wild deer throughout the State of Wisconsin in order to help protect the Wisconsin cattle industry from Bovine TB and other diseases.

WCA supports the implementation of the Wisconsin Livestock Industry Task Force recommendations published by the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, January 27, 2004 not contradicting current WCA policy.

## WOLF PREDATION

Wolf Management – WCA supports effective state and federal management of the gray wolf (canis lupus) to prevent the increasing incidence of the destruction of cattle and the spreading of infectious disease to livestock on Wisconsin farms.

WCA supports federal agricultural appropriations to sufficiently fund USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services to investigate wolf complaints and to control destructive wolves that are depredating on livestock. WCA also supports adequate WDNR funding for promised reimbursement to livestock producers for losses due to wolves.

WCA supports the development of a policy where it is the WDNR’s responsibility to dispose of livestock mutilated and killed on Wisconsin farms by wolves.

WCA supports direct input by cattlemen with the state of Wisconsin and federal agencies (a seat at the table) regarding present and future wolf management decisions and policy.

WCA supports the federal delisting of the gray wolf by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service so there will be more options available to manage problem wolves.

## LAND USE and ENVIRONMENT

Private Property Rights – We have for many years observed government bodies and agencies passing laws and rules that take portions of property rights and noted that these actions have diminished the value of individuals' property. WCA is proponent of legislation which would make those that diminish property value provide just compensation.

We support requiring a municipality that annexes land from a neighboring township to pay off the township debt allocated to that land as part of the annexation.

Eminent Domain – WCA opposes the ability of the government to utilize eminent domain powers in the manner and as allowed by the United State Supreme Court in the case of *Kelo v. City of New London*, 72 U.S.L.W. and supports legislation which would establish safeguards against such actions in Wisconsin.

Right to Farm – We support continued efforts which will protect agricultural operations from nuisance suits resulting from odor, dust, noise, etc. when the farming enterprise is operated in accordance with current agricultural practices. We also urge consideration of the role zoning, education, research and other activities may play in helping to prevent or alleviate these conflicts between differing land uses.

Trespass and Liability – There exists a trend toward freedom of property occupation and trespass by the general public. We support action to recognize and enforce ownership rights to prohibit unwanted activities on private property, including those of government agencies.

Non-Point Source Pollution – WCA is opposed to any new regulations which are not supported by appropriate scientific facts and/or formulae while demonstrating they are necessary to promote water quality or which do not carry adequate public funding to implement so that farmers will not be forced out of business.

Nutrient By Products/Soil Conservation – WCA encourages State and Federal agencies to expand the numbers and types of educational materials on soil erosion, nutrient management and water quality for farmers, and increase cost-sharing and other programs to promote voluntary participation in beneficial environmental programs.

Agricultural Siting: WCA supports the enactment of the Livestock Siting Regulations which are contained in the current revised final draft rule ATCP 51. However as ATCP 51 goes forward there are 4 areas of concern that need further work these are:

1. ATCP 51 incorporates by reference most of the new 2005 Wisconsin version of NRCS technical standard 590, Nutrient Management. It is our understanding the DATCP sometime in 2006 will propose to update existing ATCP 50 to reference this updated standard as well. Further, it is our understanding the DNR sometime this spring will be proposing its final version of NR 243, which will include nutrient management standards

- as well. The cattle industry is committed to be involved in these discussions to ensure consistency among regulations that are practical and workable for farmers.
2. The cattle industry is committed to pursuing efforts to modify the way animal units are calculated and counted in this state. Wisconsin should be not be more restrictive than the federal requirements if we want to promote the growth of our industry. This comment is particularly apt in the discussion concerning revised NR 243. One of the legislative goals is to encourage growth in the 500 – 1000 animal unit range. As ATCP 51 is implemented, we respectfully request the DATCP to monitor where and what type of growth is occurring.
  3. The rule requires a level of inspection and compliance of existing facilities before a permit for new facilities or expansions is granted. We are very interested in seeing how this existing facility approval program will work in practice and the cost incurred by producers for compliance.
  4. The cattle industry will be monitoring the effects of livestock siting in areas where the local unit of government had a pre-existing threshold lower than 500 animal units to see what the impacts of ATCP 51 are on livestock farms under their jurisdiction. It is our belief that these farms should be offered cost sharing for the water quality practices required by DATCP as part of livestock siting. But the industry is willing to see what actually happens locally before pursuing this issue further.

Environmental Standards or Requirements: WCA supports protection of Wisconsin's natural resources. WCA is however opposed to the adoption of any environmental standard or requirement that is not based on sound science and sound public policy. WCA is also opposed to any attempt to misuse any environmental standard or requirement to regulate an activity it was never intended to regulate.

## ENERGY

Ethanol Fuel – WCA is a proponent of ethanol fuel made from agricultural products as it can be an excellent source of energy and when mixed with petroleum products can reduce the environmental pollution hazard. The coproduct of this process is an excellent feed source for feeding cattle.

## FARM FINANCE

Beginning Farmers – To maintain the family farm and to encourage the transfer of farms, there is a need to assist the beginning farmer. We urge that this be done through existing lending institutions, tax incentives, individual assistance and existing government agencies. We also urge that loan guarantees be extended to individuals providing land contracts just as are currently provided to lending institutions.

WHEDA – We support continuation of WHEDA loan programs to agriculture and agri-business.

# NATIONAL ISSUES

## LIVESTOCK / MARKETING

### Disabled (Downer, non-ambulatory) Cattle

WCA supports policies to prohibit the slaughter of disabled (downer, non-ambulatory) cattle for the commercial food supply. Freshly injured animals should be able to be harvested for the owner's personal use.

Market Access – WCA supports the investigation of the meat packing industry to determine the impact on producers and to take action against those companies which are adversely affecting market prices.

WCA favors removing the confidentiality portion of the Mandatory Price Reporting law.

WCA opposes any trade agreements with other countries that would not result in equal access in beef imports.

WCA favors federal government price supports of cattle in the event of an act of bio terrorism.

The Chicago Mercantile Exchange allows for the direct delivery of contract cattle to packing plants, however none are east of the Missouri River. WCA supports the establishment of a delivery point close to Eastern Iowa, Illinois & Wisconsin.

Meat Inspection – WCA endorses the concept of all Wisconsin State inspected meat processing plants be certified for interstate shipment of processed meat.

Many kinds of animals, birds and fish are designated as wild and therefore not subject to the mandatory inspection rules. This leaves open the possibility of undetected animal diseases among confined species. The rules for all meat produced for human consumption should assure protection of health. WCA supports the extension of mandatory inspection of all species produced for the human food market and endorses the concept that all meat products should be subject to the same stringent requirements that the beef industry has operated under for years.

Beef Promotion – We support the Beef Promotion and Research Act Check-Off Program.

## GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Taxes – WCA supports the elimination of inheritance and capital gains taxes which are a deterrent to keeping the working farm in the family.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Land—WCA supports a continuation of the CRP program with an emphasis on conservation and wildlife and avoid any kind of partial use scenario.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)– WCA supports the continuation and expansion of the EQIP program in that it enhances the environment while maintaining land under an agricultural use.

Animal Feeding Operation (AFO)/Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO)– The various proposals which have been put forth by EPA serve only to duplicate and confound a very sound and workable system in Wisconsin. We are opposed to the Total Mass Daily Load's and other proposals which may be needed in some parts of the nation but not in Wisconsin.