



TAD News

February 2006

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VOTE! It's your chance to make a difference

The following is reprinted in part from an article published by the Texas Agricultural Cooperative Council.

Getting the vote out is critical, especially for those candidates who support Texas agriculture . . . John Cowan.

Manager's Update
John Cowan

There are a number of high interest races being generated by the Tuesday, March 7, 2006 statewide primary election, especially if you are connected to rural values and agriculture.

Early voting runs from Tuesday, February 21 through Friday, March 3.

When you vote in the March 7 primary, you will be asked to vote Republican or Democrat. You will not have the option to vote for both Republicans and Democrats.

For some people, herein lies a problem. As an example, you may wish to vote for a Democrat state representative that is a friend of yours; but at the same time, you may also want to vote for a very ag-friendly Republican for state Senate. That will not be possible on March 7!

So, you may ask, "What should a smart voter do under these circumstances?"

The quick answer is to study all the local, county and state races that will be on the ballot in your voting both to determine:

- *Which of all the races is most critical to your well being, and*
- *Which of the races appear to be close contests.*

Thereafter, we would encourage you to vote in the Democrat or Republican arenas, which could have the greatest impact on the outcome of the race. ■

Texas ID program delayed by TAHC

The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) earlier this month – after hearing from a large crowd in opposition – postponed taking action on proposed regulations that would require identification of physical locations where livestock, exotic livestock, domestic fowl, and exotic fowl are held, managed or handled.

TAHC commissioners will reconsider the proposed rule at its May 4 meeting. The commission was going to require livestock owners to pay a \$20 registration fee every two years beginning July 1, with penalties including a fine up to \$1,000 for noncompliance.

TAD supports the establishment of a premises registration system that would promote the confidentiality of individual producers but yet would allow, in the event of a national outbreak of a foreign animal disease, to trace back the origin of that disease and reopen producer markets, said John Cowan, executive director.

So far, more than 7,000 of the state's 200,000 or more farms, ranches or other facilities have voluntarily applied for premises registration.

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Dairy marketing symposium set

The marketing of fluid milk is the topic of an upcoming Dairy Marketing Research Symposium that is free for Texas dairymen who register.

The symposium, sponsored by the Southwest Dairy Farmers Association, will be 8:15 a.m. to 5 p.m. March 6 at the Renaissance Worthington Hotel in Fort Worth.

Among the topics that will be covered include:

- Current market situation of fluid milk;
- Drivers of demand for dairy products, including advertising and price;
- Identification of market segments, including the health- or environmentally conscious consumer and minority markets; and
- Marketing strategies and product development for dairy products.

For more information, contact Conference Chairman Oral Capps Jr., professor and Southwest Dairy Marketing Endowed Chair, Texas A&M University, at (979) 845-8491 or at ocapps@tamu.edu.

Capitol Update

By Shayne Woodard

Fourteen incumbent House members chose not to run for re-election for the 80th Legislature, which will begin in January 2007. They are Reps. Ray Allen (R-Grand Prairie), Todd Baxter (R-Austin), Mary Denny (R-Aubrey), Bob Griggs (R-North Richland Hills), Peggy Hamric (R-Houston), Glenn Hegar (R-Katy), Ruben Hope (R-Conroe), Bob Hunter (R-Abilene), Suzanna Gratia Hupp (R-Lampasas), Terry Keel (R-Austin), Pete Laney (D-Hale Center), Joe Nixon (R-Houston), Jim Solis (D-Harlingen) and Carlos Uresti (D-San Antonio).

In the Senate, four incumbents are not seeking re-election. Todd Staples (R-Palestine) is running for agriculture commissioner. Sens. Jon Lindsay (R-Houston), Gonzalo Barrientos (D-Austin) and Ken Armbrister (D-Victoria) are not seeking re-election.

Rep. Hegar, a rice farmer from Katy, is running in a crowded Republican primary to replace Armbrister. Reps. Nixon and Hamric are battling along with two other Republican candidates to replace Lindsay.

Currently, 87 Republicans and 63 Democrats are in the Texas House of Representatives, and 19 Republicans and 12 Democrats are in the Texas Senate.

The primary election is Tuesday, March 7.

Dewhurst Makes Senate Changes

Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst has announced interim committee charges and four new committee chairs. The new chairmen are: Sen. John Carona (R-Dallas), Transportation; Sen. Kip Averitt (R-McGregor), Natural Resources; Sen. Mike Jackson (R-

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Premises registration is the foundation for the three-tiered National Animal Identification System (NAIS), which, when fully implemented, is designed to enable animal health officials to trace the movement of diseased or exposed livestock or poultry within 48 hours.

All states have begun implementation of premises registration.

In Texas, HB 1361, signed into law in 2005, authorized the TAHC to institute an animal identification program consistent with the NAIS, and to collect fees, to offset some costs of agency operations.

People may send their comments to the animal commission at comments@tahc.state.tx.us.

La Porte), Nominations; and Sen. Kim Brimer (R-Fort Worth), Administration.

Sen. Kyle Janek (R-Houston) will become chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Emerging Technologies and Economic Development, and Sen. Craig Estes (R-Wichita Falls) will become chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Affairs and Coastal Resources.

The Senate Natural Resources Committee has been charged with eight specific charges including a very inclusive assessment of all issues related to ground and surface water law, policy and management.

Committee members include: Averitt, chair; Estes, vice-chair; Barrientos, Duncan, Fraser, Hinojosa, Jackson, Lindsay, Madla, Seliger and Staples. For more information on the committee, visit www.senate.state.tx.us.

EPA extends CAFO deadline for some dairy producers

Some concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) will have extra time to seek water permit coverage and implement nutrient management plans (NMPs) as required by EPA's 2003 CAFO rule. Under a final rule, facilities newly defined as CAFOs will have until July 31, 2007, to seek National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit coverage.

Producers in the Bosque River watershed, however, still must have a CNMP certified by Dec. 31, 2006, under Texas law.

The 2003 EPA rule required newly defined CAFOs to seek NPDES permit coverage by Feb. 13, 2006, and for all CAFOs to have NMPs in place by Dec. 31, 2006. EPA will be revising the 2003 rule in response to a federal court decision. ■



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