

Senate Farm Bill a 'bust' for cattlemen

Billings, MT- Voting 64-35, the U.S. Senate on Thursday passed its version of the 2012 Farm Bill.

"They rushed to get it done, without any consideration for getting it done right," said R-CALF USA CEO Bill Bullard.

Bullard said the Senate cannot claim to have done its job, let alone claim to have done a good job, when its version of the 2012 Farm Bill ignored completely the single greatest threat to the single largest segment of American Agriculture.

"The cattle industry is the largest segment of American Agriculture and for the first time in history the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), throughout all of 2010, held joint workshops around the country to determine how public policy has impacted the U.S. cattle market and other agriculture markets and isolate the problem(s) affecting those markets.

The historic DOJ/USDA workshops attracted unprecedented numbers of U.S. farmers and ranchers, with literally thousands of livestock

producers attending the Fort Collins, Colo., workshop on livestock competition alone. The workshops revealed that competition in U.S. livestock markets has eroded, and something needs to be done.

According to a report issued by the DOJ regarding those historic workshops, the DOJ committed to taking "all appropriate enforcement action" against such antitrust practices in agriculture markets as price fixing, collusion to reduce competition, and agreements to limit bidding competition or divide territories, all of which threaten to harm the competitive process.

"Importantly, the DOJ made it clear that it did not have statutory authority to address all the problems plaguing agriculture markets and it acknowledged that legislative, regulatory, and other initiatives were critical to promote "free and fair competition" in agriculture," Bullard said.

Bullard said one of the critical legislative initiatives presumably considered in the DOJ report is the bill to ban packer ownership of live-

stock, which would prohibit packers from reducing competition by owning and feeding their own cattle. Senators Charles Grassley (R-IA) and Kent Conrad (D-ND) properly filed an amendment to include the bill to ban packer ownership of livestock in the 2012 Farm Bill.

"But, the leadership in the Senate refused to even allow the packer-ban amendment to be debated on the floor, and rank and file Senators did not have the fortitude to stop the Farm Bill's momentum to ensure it was done right," Bullard commented.

A Senate Farm Bill that does not even address the current and most dangerous threat to the well-being of independent U.S. cattle producers and independent U.S. cattle feeders - the threat of eroding competition - is a disservice to U.S. agriculture producers," Bullard said adding, "And that is precisely what this 2012 Senate Farm Bill is. It's an absolute bust for independent livestock producers."

Fall interships open for college students

U.S. Senator Jerry Moran recently announced he is accepting application for congressional internships in his Washington, D.C., and Kansas offices for the 2012 fall semester.

An internship in Senator Moran's office provides a unique opportunity to work closely with Senate staff on behalf of the state of Kansas. Interns will gain a better understanding of the legislative process in the U.S. Congress, and develop knowledge and professional skills valuable to future career pursuits.

The Intern Program is open to qualified under graduate and graduate students who have strong interest in public service and government and have achieved academic excellence. While preference is given to Kansas Residents, students from all states are encouraged to apply.

The application deadline for the fall 2012 semester is Friday, July 20. Application forms can be obtained and completed on the

"Services" section of Sen. Moran's website at www.moran.senate.gov.

Applicants should submit a completed application form, resume, academic transcript, two letters of recommendation and a cover letter explaining the applicant's interest in public service and goals of serving

as an intern. Please submit required materials to internships@moran.senate.gov.

For questions, please contact Sen. Moran's office at internships@moran.senate.gov or call (202) 224-6521 and request to speak with the intern coordinator.



Steve Guenther (top from left), Jerry and Annette Fairbanks talk to Elwyn Vatcher at the opening of the Black Bird Gallery, 921 Main, on Friday evening. Composer, singer Julie Sutton of Winfield provided the entertainment for the opening.

Photos by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News

Local artist had private opening Friday night

Local artist Shirley Houston had a private opening Friday evening of her new Black Bird Gallery and Studio, 921 Main.

Artists as well as art supporters were treated to music by Julie Sutton of Winfield, wine and cheese buffet. Sutton sings original pieces accompanied by herself on guitar. Previously she had performed at one of the Goodland Arts Coun-

cil's spaghetti dinners. Houston had works of her own on display, works by Elwyn Vatcher and photos by Dale Petefish of Walden, Colo.

Houston said that she and her husband worked up to the wire to be ready for the opening. The doors were installed last week.

She said the space will give her an opportunity to concentrate on

her work with an area dedicated to that. Houston is in the process of setting up artists to display their works.

For questions call her at (785) 890-8729.

The gallery is open to the public on Tuesday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Friday and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

corrections

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