

THE Agricultural Business Council of Kansas City

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Alaska Congressman Refuses Award From HSUS

U.S. Rep. Don Young has refused to accept an award from The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) honoring him for his work in wildlife conservation and management. He called HSUS an extremist and hypocritical organization that preys on people to raise money "that will eventually go to pay (HSUS personnel's) salaries and pensions, not to helping better the lives of animals."

AMI Asks FSIS To Reject Non-Ambulatory Petitions

Earlier this month the American Meat Institute urged the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) to reject two petitions filed by the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and Farm Sanctuary calling for livestock that cannot walk when they arrive at plants to be euthanized.

HSUS wants to prohibit the common practice of warming veal calves to permit them time to rest and become ambulatory. The Farm Sanctuary petition seeks for any livestock that are non-ambulatory for any reason when they arrive at plants to be immediately euthanized. FSIS

Missouri State Senator Offers Reasons Behind Prop B Makeover



Sen. Mike Parson

In short order Senator Michael Parson got to the point of why he was trying to modify some of the provisions in Proposition B, which was approved narrowly by Missouri voters last fall after an emotionally charged campaign. As he spoke before the Council members at the April luncheon, Sen. Parson called Prop B one of the "the worse initiatives ever written." He also noted his efforts to revise Prop B - in Senate Bill 113 - had nothing to do with partisan politics, further explaining that SB 113 was not a repeal of Prop B. Rather, he said "if I know something is wrong I have to change it." It's common knowledge the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) orchestrated the effort to put Prop B on the ballot. What irks the agriculture community, Sen. Parson remarked, was that HSUS never

came to the state to negotiate.

Most Missourians in agriculture felt Prop B was a faulty initiative, as did many other citizens. But Sen. Parson enumerated the flaws in such legislation that would make it extremely bad policy. First of all, he pointed out the formal name for Prop B - Puppy Mill Cruelty Prevention Act - was a misnomer. Puppies spend the least of amount of time at the breeding facilities, so S.B. 113 suggests a name change to the Canine Cruelty Prevention Act. Prop B's use of puppy terminology and imagery seemed more for the purpose of stoking emotions than for describing the real intent of the law - which opponents say is the eventual eradication of animal agriculture and companion animal ownership.

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USFRA Gearing Up For Campaign Launch

Since Hugh Whaley, general manager of the U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Association (USFRA), spoke to Council members in March, the Alliance has picked up steam for the launch of its first public relations campaign this summer. At the same time the organization continues to grow its membership and develop funding sources.

Whaley reported on the Alliance's goals and plans during the National Institute for Animal Agriculture's annual conference in early April. The alliance which began with 20 organizations, including the National Corn Growers Association, American Farm Bureau, NCBA, the Pork Producers Council and others now includes 32 groups. These organizations, he says, have significantly different positions on some issues, but all want to build consumer trust. Although they all have varying advocacy goals, these member organizers believe they will

indicated that it is inclined to grant the HSUS petition, according to AMI.

HSUS and Farm Sanctuary argued that non-ambulatory livestock provide an incentive for plant personnel to abuse the animals and force them to walk. AMI countered by saying strong incentives exist to ensure an animal's welfare, in terms of the quality meat product and the reduction of costs associated with regulatory compliance.

AMI also noted the Farm Sanctuary petition would impede disease surveillance and could cause confusion if an apparently non-ambulatory hog was simply tired but rises and moves on before a veterinarian arrives to check it. "Granting the petitions would result in unnecessary waste with no identifiable benefit," AMI stated.

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Top Chef Helps Pork Producers Introduce New Campaign

Richard Blais, winner of the Top Chef: All Stars competition, helped America's pork producers kickoff their new "Pork® Be Inspired" campaign at a special event in New York City on April 14. The one-day-only opening (and closing) of the "Pork Inspiration Café" was designed to inspire home cooks nationwide to embrace all the possibilities pork offers.

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River Recovery Committee Meets in May

The Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee (MRRIC) will meet May 3-5 in Overland Park, Kansas, to discuss the current recovery, mitigation and ecosystem restoration actions underway in the Missouri River basin. The meeting which is open to the public will be held at the Double Tree Hotel and starts at 8 a.m., Tuesday, May 3. It concludes at 12:30 pm on Thursday, May 5.

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Kansas Beef Council Urges Farmers to Blow Their Own Horn

For years farmers and ranchers have been unfairly and untruthfully portrayed as despoilers of the land by anti-agriculture activists and environmental extremists. That's why groups like the newly formed U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance (USFRA) have begun fighting back. The Kansas Beef Council has also been involved in efforts to set the record straight. "Basically, we encourage producers to tout the measures that they take on a daily basis to care for the land and cattle," says Kevin Thielen, Executive Director of the Kansas Beef Council.

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The Veterinary Profession: It's Complicated

For the last several years conventional economic wisdom has been saying the companion animal industry is recession proof. Consumer spending trends in that sector since 2007 have supported the sentiment - this year pet product sales will top \$50 billion, up about \$2 billion over 2010. But a study released in January by Bayer Animal Health, Brakke Consulting and the National Commission on Veterinary Economic Issues found that veterinarians have not been party to the boom. At least lately. More than half (56 percent) of the veterinarians who responded to the survey reported patient visits for the first nine months of 2010 were down compared to the same period in 2009.

The study gave a number of reasons why the decline was occurring, citing, besides the recession as a top cause, the reluctance of cat

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owners to bring their felines to the clinic because, well, it is just too difficult. Not all veterinarians, either, are keen to examine a skittish, ornery cat.

However, speaking last week at the Kansas City Animal Health Corridor's continuing series, Corridor Conversations, hosted by The Chamber and the Kansas City Area Development Council (KCADC), John Payne, CEO, of Banfield - The Pet Hospital, painted a subtler, more complex picture of the veterinary profession.

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