



AFTC BOARD TAKES ACTION ON FOOD SAFETY, LIVESTOCK, HOS, WEIGHT LIMITS

October 9, 2008

While there was a lot less good news than sobering news at this week's ATA Management Conference and Exhibition (MC&E) in New Orleans, the conference provided valuable economic, regulatory and political information that will help AFTC members manage their businesses.

This report will summarize the discussion and actions taken during a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Agricultural and Food Transporters Conference (AFTC) held on Monday, October 6, at the MC&E. The board discussed several current transportation issues, including food safety, livestock, hours of service (HOS) and weight limits.

Food Safety – Several outbreaks of foodborne illness have focused attention on preventing food contamination. While production practices have been the primary focus, all aspects of the supply chain, including transportation, have been discussed. AFTC members are concerned about efforts by state regulators and some industry groups to impose new laws and regulations at the state level.

AFTC has participated in research into practices to ensure safe food transportation. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently invited public input regarding the use of third-party certification programs to ensure food safety, food tracing procedures used in the fresh produce industry, and revisions to an FDA guidance document on fresh produce production systems. The Board discussed the efforts of AFTC's Food Safety Task Force, led by Brian Daugherty of Bulkmatic, and directed staff to continue monitoring these issues and represent the interests of food transporters.

Livestock – Animal rights activists' efforts to publicize limited cases of animal abuse in meat processing facilities have put animal care issues under scrutiny. AFTC-member livestock haulers, led by AFTC Livestock Division Chairman Rick Yost of VY Truck Lines, crafted a Humane Handling and Animal Welfare Policy which each member company may adopt to outline their company's proper animal care procedures. The American Meat Institute, which represents meat processors, is creating audit procedures for livestock haulers that deliver animals to their plants. USDA has held meetings involving AFTC and other industry groups to discuss industry practices. The Board directed staff to continue monitoring these issues and represent the interests of livestock transporters.

Hours of Service – The Board discussed various aspects of hours of service related to agricultural transportation and approved two policy resolutions. Bud Wallace moved, and Greg Owen seconded, that the Board resolve to support the short haul position regarding working with the American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI) to advance research to gather safety data on operations which operate from terminal to terminal. The HOS Subcommittee of the ATA Safety Policy Committee also discussed the issue and advanced a similar resolution during a meeting on October 5, 2008.

Rick Yost expressed the importance of retaining the current hours of service exemption for agriculture during the 2008 highway bill reauthorization debate. Bud Wallace moved, and Mike

Miller seconded, that AFTC protect and defend the current hours of service exemption for agriculture. The motion passed.

Weight Limits – The Board discussed several size and weight increase proposals, including the AgTec Coalition's 97,000-pound tri-axle configuration. Board members indicated that some may like to advance other proposals as well, including the expansion of the use of longer combination vehicles (doubles or triples) in western states. The Board resolved to request that ATA donate \$500 for a membership fee to the AgTec Coalition. The motion was made by Mike Miller and seconded by Bud Wallace.

The meeting ended with a discussion of future leadership of AFTC. You will soon receive information about nominations for leadership positions as we seek members who are interested in joining AFTC leadership.