



## **MORE ANIMAL RIGHTS ATTACKS ON TRANSPORTATION EXPECTED**

December 10, 2008

Two news stories below. None of this is a surprise. AFTC will stay on top of these issues but livestock transporters should be ready for a fight next year.

### **ANIMAL ACTIVISTS' NEXT TARGET MAY BE LIVESTOCK TRANSPORTATION**

Dec. 10, 2008

BrownfieldAgNews reports:

As ag organizations gather for annual meetings this winter, on both the state and national level, one of the hottest issues is how to deal with the growing animal rights movement.

University of Florida researcher Dr. Wes Jamison, who has been studying the movement for 20 years, says opponents of animal agriculture are feeling emboldened by the overwhelming passage of Proposition 2 in California.

"They see now a method by which they can win at the state level, and they are going to try to translate that to the federal level," Jamison says. "They're going to begin with transportation. Under the interstate commerce clause, they're going to come in, probably through the Department of Transportation-maybe through Ag-and try to legislate and regulate the transportation of animals."

Jamison predicts the activists will seek farm animal-related amendments to the Federal Animal Welfare Act, and ultimately, will try to influence the next federal farm bill. And he says the incoming administration may be more sympathetic to their cause.

"I could very easily see the Obama administration signing off on-not vetoing-amendments to the Federal Animal Welfare Act. They won't be proponents for animal welfare, but they're not going to be opponents."

As Washington deals with the nation's economic problems, Jamison says it could slow the momentum of the animal rights movement at the federal level. But he says activists will continue their efforts in individual states.

Jamison spoke at the Nebraska Farm Bureau annual meeting this week.

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From Meetingplace.com:

Meat industry faces emboldened animal rights lobby next year

By [Janie Gabbett](#) on 12/10/2008

When California voters on Nov. 4 voted in favor of Proposition 2, a measure that phases out gestation crates for breeding pigs, veal crates for calves and battery cages for egg-laying hens, it sent a shudder up the spines of many involved in animal agriculture.

And well it should have, according to Steve Kopperud, senior vice president of Policy Directions Inc., a Washington, DC government affairs and communications firm, specializing in production agriculture and food processing and retailing.

Kopperud founded and served as the first president of what is today the Animal Agriculture Alliance, a public education organization dedicated to countering animal rights propaganda. **Meetingplace.com** asked him to elaborate on what is ahead on this issue.

**How significant is California's passage of Prop 2 in the overall debate about what constitutes animal welfare in production agriculture? Should the meat industry be concerned?**

The meat industry should most assuredly be concerned because it may redefine "welfare" in that it's an indictment of proven, science-based, producer-endorsed and well being-enhancing housing practices.

It gives the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and its allies a major lever with the new Congress to try and move federal legislation based upon precedents set in Florida, Arizona, Oregon, Colorado and California even though the overall welfare of the animals is diminished and the safety of meat, poultry and dairy may be compromised.

It also demonstrates we still have a lot to learn in fighting such initiatives and getting our message of professional and consistent top-quality animal care to the public.

**PETA and HSUS seem to garner the most press. Should the industry be trying to engage these groups?**

The key in talking to the public is using messages that include strong, trust-building messages about producers and production practices. However, engaging PETA — whether you're a fast food chain, supermarket, meat processor or farm group — is a waste of time. You will never negotiate successfully with an animal rights group.

PETA is there to be the freak of the movement. This allows groups like HSUS to come in behind "scary" PETA, leverage their image as dog and cat protection groups, and pose as the "moderate" groups with which companies can work to make the animal rights issues go away.

This never works. It simply signals the movement your company is vulnerable. When you peel away the rhetoric and posturing of all animal rights groups, the bottom line is the same: "You have no right to be in business. Animals should not be used for food. We'll continue to fight to make it unpopular or uneconomical to be in the livestock and poultry business."

**What is on your radar in Washington regarding animal rights policy or legislation in 2009?**

I fully expect HSUS to leverage its political contributions in the last election to continue to push its agenda. That agenda includes:

- leveraging the California Prop 2 victory with Congress
- major rewrites of federal humane slaughter laws, with a push to include poultry
- a ban on transport of horses for export if they might be heading to slaughter in Mexico or Canada

- a ban on federal purchases of meat, poultry and dairy from farms not practicing HSUS's definition of "welfare"
- a move to federally regulate the transport of all animals to all destinations, and
- active alliances with environmental and food safety groups to attack animal biotechnology, the use of animal drugs by anyone other than a vet, and other conventional production practices.

**What kind of work is there to be done so that livestock producers, processors and retailers speak with one voice on this issue?**

The first step is for every producer, processor and retailer group, as well as individual companies, to understand they cannot battle the animal rights movement on their own.

Swine must and will support cattle, with cattle returning the favor; ditto for dairy. The four-leggers must and will support poultry and vice versa. All producers must stand with or in front of their processor and retailer customers, making sure they understand the consequence of ill-advised public relations gambits when animal rights attacks come.

We have many of the national producer groups in an ad hoc coalition I manage called the Farm Animal Welfare Coalition, but it needs to include every group, not just some groups.

**What would you like to see the meat industry doing to engage consumers directly on this issue?**

I'd like to see a cooperative consumer education campaign that sells farmers and ranchers, their expertise and the systems they use while selling the products they provide as cheaply, safely and abundantly as they do.

I'd like to see the smallest chunk of checkoff dollars dedicated to selling producer and production practice along with product.

I'd like the public to know organic and "natural" are legitimate product choices in the marketplace, but they're not better than conventionally produced, just different. I'd like to see our organic and natural brethren promote their products without bashing conventional production, because production practices notwithstanding, if the animal welfare movement's goal is no food animal production, then no one gets a pass.

But bottom line, I'd like the consumer to assume the great food they're fortunate enough to be able to buy comes from great people dedicated to what they do and how well they do it. That's the only way they'll turn a deaf ear to the animal rights noise.