

A Newsletter about Livestock, Pastures and Rangeland
Edited by John M. Harper, Livestock & Natural Resources Advisor, Mendocino & Lake Counties

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John Harper's Livestock & Natural Resources Blog Updates August 9 — December 16, 2011

From time to time *The Grazer's Gazette* will reprint articles from John Harper's on-line blogs and postings to Facebook and Twitter. If you are not already on John's email distribution list and would like to get this information when it is posted, please contact the UC Cooperative Extension at 707-463-4495 or email cemendocino@ucdavis.edu with your current email address. Also, be sure to notify us of email or address changes so that you continue to receive timely information. You can also subscribe to John's Blog by going to our website at <http://cemendocino.ucdavis.edu>. Scroll down to one of the blogs. At the end, click on the RSS feed icon (see sample here) to subscribe.



CAFF Feasibility Study: Aggregation & Marketing Center for California's North Coast August 8, 2011

In July the Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF), with support from the USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program, released a feasibility study on creating Aggregation & Marketing Centers (AMC) for California's North Coast region. The counties covered included Lake, Mendocino, Sonoma and Napa. An AMC is, in its simplest form, a cold storage facility — similar to the Thomas' facility in the Ukiah Valley — that producers in a collective could use to hold crops or meat for distribution to the greater local area that could include the Bay area. I've reproduced the Executive Summary of the study below, but the full report is worth a read. You can download it as a pdf from: <http://caff.org/programs/local-food-systems/aggregation-and-marketing-center/>

"This report presents a market analysis of the food system in California's four North Coast counties (Sonoma, Napa, Mendocino, and Lake), with the core aim of identifying opportunities to expand local markets for food producers.

After a robust series of interviews, surveys, and meetings with both producers and buyers, it was determined that there is both the supply and demand necessary to expand local food production and distribution in the North Coast region. It was further

Continued on next page

determined that an Aggregation and Marketing Center (AMC) could provide an effective mechanism to increase the availability of local product efficiently and sustainably.

It is clear that there is a real desire from distributors and other large purchasers to make more local product available. Consumer demand for local food is high, driving demand from restaurant, retail, and institutional customers. Regional producers have likewise indicated that they are willing to make more of their product available to the local market, predicated on profit margins sufficient to justify any necessary investment, and there appears to be North Coast farmland available for additional production. Many growers also indicated a need for services in addition to straightforward aggregation, including cold storage, packing, and various forms of training.

Locally produced fruits and vegetables are in particularly high demand, and would be well served by the establishment of an AMC. While there is a demand for and local supply of cheese, meat, and grains, these products have unique challenges, which

put them beyond the focus of an AMC, at least in its early stages.

An early-phase AMC could be managed by a non- or for-profit organization, with concurrent business or programmatic activities complementary to produce aggregation, appropriate entrepreneurial and produce handling expertise, and adequate capital and infrastructural resources. While multiple organizational candidates exist, there is currently no appropriate turnkey facility.

There is sufficient business justification to establish a North Coast AMC, however. This service is much needed by both growers and buyers, and its social, environmental, and economic impacts could extend throughout the region."



US Farmers & Ranchers Alliance Survey Show Disconnect Between American Consumers and Their Food

September 22, 2011

The following is a press release from the US Farmers & Ranchers Alliance (USFRA). It's a fascinating read and shows the need for more education in marketing agriculture products.

CHESTERFIELD, MO. (Sept. 22, 2011) – Today, findings of two national surveys about food and how it is grown and raised will be released during “The Food Dialogues,” a town hall-style discussion presented by U.S. Farmers & Ranchers Alliance (USFRA). The surveys focused separately on the opinions, attitudes and questions consumers and farmers/ranchers have about the current and future state of how food is grown and raised in the U.S. Results reveal that lack of access to information, as well as no interest or passion for the topic, have divided consumer opinion on the direction of agriculture.

“Americans have a lot of questions about where their food comes from, how it is raised and if it is good for their health long-term,” said Bob Stallman, chairman of USFRA and president of the American Farm Bureau Federation. “USFRA commissioned two separate surveys to first ask farmers and ranchers what they wished Americans could have more information about where their food comes from. We then

asked consumers what questions they have on the same topic. The findings of both surveys indicate there is an opportunity for more dialogue between farmers, ranchers and the American public about how food is grown and raised in the U.S.”

Results of both surveys will be shared and discussed during The Food Dialogues, which took place in four U.S. cities and online via Facebook and www.fooddialogues.com. Highlights of the research include:

- While nearly all Americans agree that food production is important to the success of the country, they are split over whether it is going in the right or wrong direction
- Consumers think about food production constantly, yet know very little about how food is brought to the dinner table
- Overwhelmingly, farmers and ranchers share the same values as consumers on issues related to environmental stewardship and animal care

Additional Consumer Survey Highlights

The purpose of the consumer survey was to ask Americans what additional information they want to learn more about related to how food is grown and raised in the U.S. The survey revealed that consumers have become disconnected from their food, yet think about the subject regularly. According to the survey findings:

- 72 percent of consumers know nothing or very little about farming or ranching
- 69 percent of consumers think about food production at least somewhat often
- 70 percent say purchase decisions are affected by how food is grown and raised, with three-quarters (72 percent) of Americans saying they think about this topic while purchasing groceries
- 42 percent or two-in-five Americans say the way that food is grown and raised has improved in the last 10 years, while a slightly smaller group say it has worsened (37 percent)
- Those who say the way that food is grown and raised has improved cite food safety (22 percent) and food quality (17 percent), whereas respondents who said the way food is grown and raised has worsened also cite food safety (21 percent) and food quality (21 percent)
- Of all the aspects of how food is grown and raised, Americans are most satisfied with the availability of healthy foods (73 percent) and food safety standards (66 percent)
- One in five consumers who say food production has worsened in the last 10 years cite environmental impact as the top area of demise
- 79 percent of consumers say producing healthy choices for all consumers is very important for farmers and ranchers to consider when planning farming and ranching practices



Consumers also were asked to identify the top five topics they want more information about; responses included:

1. How chemicals are used in farming/ranching
2. How pesticides are used in farming/ranching
3. Food safety standards
4. Effect of government regulations on farming/ranching

5. How antibiotics are used and genetic engineering in crops

Additional Farmer/Rancher Survey Highlights

The goal of the farmer/rancher survey was to identify topics that farmers and ranchers wished Americans had more information about when it comes to food and how it is grown and raised in the U.S. According to the survey, farmers and ranchers said the top misconception they need to overcome as an industry is that a few “bad actors” are representative of the entire industry. Additionally, farmers and ranchers identified the effect of pesticides, antibiotics and fertilizers on food as the most important priorities they should address when communicating with consumers. Additional findings included:

- 86 percent of farmers/ranchers responded that the average consumer has little to no knowledge about modern farming/ranching
- 58 percent of respondents in this survey felt consumers have a completely inaccurate perception of farming and ranching
- Nearly all farmers and ranchers say that protecting the environment (99 percent) and practicing humane animal care (96 percent) are very or somewhat important goals or practices related to their business
- 80 percent of farmers/ranchers say that consumers have little to no knowledge about proper care of livestock or poultry
- 83 percent of farmers/ranchers responded that new ways of improving yields with fewer environmental inputs will have a major impact on farming/ranching in the future

When asked which top five topics were most important to educate consumers about, farmers and ranchers responded:

1. The effect of pesticides, fertilizers and antibiotics on food
2. Where food comes from in general
3. Proper care of livestock and poultry
4. Effect of government regulations on farming/ranching
5. Economic value of agriculture

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“We hope the results of the survey combined with today’s Food Dialogues event will continue the conversation between farmers, ranchers and anyone who is interested in learning more about how food is grown and raised in the U.S.,” added Stallman. “We want all Americans to join us to ask questions and regularly get information from farmers and ranchers who are growing and raising their food. We invite all to join the discussion online at www.fooddialogues.com.”

For additional information on the surveys or The Food Dialogues event, visit www.fooddialogues.com.

About the Surveys

The 2011 USFRA Farmer/Rancher Survey was fielded by phone for USFRA by Ketchum Global Research Network and Braun Research between August 6-18, 2011, reaching 1,002 farmers and ranchers nationwide. The base sample has a margin of error of +/- 3.1 percent.

The 2011 USFRA Consumer Survey was fielded by phone for USFRA by Ketchum Global Research Network and Braun Research between August 24-31, 2011, reaching 2,417 consumers nationwide. The base sample has a margin of error of +/- 2.0 percent.

About U.S. Farmers & Ranchers AllianceSM

U.S. Farmers & Ranchers Alliance (USFRA), established in 2010 and headquartered in Chesterfield, Mo., currently represents more than 50 of the top farmer- and rancher-led organizations and agricultural partners. The Alliance includes prominent agricultural groups at the national, regional and state levels that have collaborated to lead the dialogue about their commitment to continuous improvement and best production practices. For more information on the Alliance, affiliates and partners and the movement to lead the conversation with Americans about today’s agriculture, visit www.fooddialogues.com; <http://www.facebook.com/pages/US-Farmers-Ranchers-Alliance/103189669746931> and <http://twitter.com/USFRA>.

This press release was wholly or partially funded by one or more Checkoff programs.

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Source of California Pasture Rental Rates September 27, 2011

A fellow livestock and natural resource advisor, Glenn Nader, recently shared a source for non-irrigated pasture rental rates on a per acre basis by geographic area in California. The rates in the table below show a comparison between 2008 through 2011 and summarize the percentage change for the different areas from 2010 to 2011. The last row of the table shows state averages.

Glenn thinks that rentals may increase for 2011-2012 and he has been hearing rumors of Texas cattle coming to California for winter pastures.

The source of the table below is the 2011 California Land Values and Cash Rents Release (September 15, 2011) USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service, California Field Office. It also contains information on both irrigated and non-irrigated crop rental rates.

It can be found at: [http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics by State/California/Publications/Other Files/201109lndvlscshrnts.pdf](http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/California/Publications/Other_Files/201109lndvlscshrnts.pdf)

Agricultural District 2008 2009 2010 2011 Percent Change

| | \$ Per Acre | | | | 2010-2011 |
|----------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| North Coast | 14.00 | 13.00 | 20.00 | 21.50 | 8% |
| Siskiyou-Shasta | 16.50 | 18.00 | 10.50 | 14.00 | 33% |
| Northeast | 14.50 | 13.00 | 14.00 | 13.50 | -4% |
| Central Coast | 15.50 | 11.00 | 10.00 | 9.00 | -10% |
| Sacramento Vly. | 15.00 | 17.00 | 15.50 | 16.00 | 3% |
| San Joaquin Vly. | 14.00 | 15.00 | 13.50 | 13.50 | 0% |
| Sierra Mtns. | 25.00 | 17.00 | 17.00 | 15.00 | -12% |
| So. California | 8.80 | 10.00 | 6.10 | 5.90 | -3% |
| State Average | 15.00 | 14.00 | 13.00 | 12.50 | -4% |

Economic Study Shows That US Beef and Pork Industry Will Lose Market Share Without an Animal ID and Traceability Program

September 29, 2011

The following is the executive summary of an Economic Assessment of Evolving Red Meat Export Market Access Requirements for Traceability of Livestock and Meat. The full report can be downloaded as a pdf at: <http://www.usmef.org/downloads/USMEF-Final-Project-Report-Tonsor-et-al.-03.30.2011.pdf>. It was prepared by agricultural economists from Montana State, Kansas State and Colorado State Universities and was funded by the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose

The international marketplace for red meat is rapidly changing with animal identification (ID) and meat traceability systems becoming widely adopted in many key U.S. meat export destinations. The United States lags behind many countries in adopting livestock and meat traceability systems. As major meat importing and exporting countries adopt animal and meat tracking systems, the United States is becoming less competitive and risks losing market access. The purpose of this study is to provide an economic analysis of impacts of potential changes in U.S. meat access to global markets and costs associated with possible increases in domestic adoption of traceability programs.

Procedure

A host of complementary research activities were conducted including:

1. Reviewing existing published literature associated with ID and tracing;
2. Conducting several personal interviews with industry and government stakeholders;
3. Gathering details on current animal ID and tracing programs in major meat exporting countries and associated requirements in major importing countries;
4. Estimating costs of adopting animal ID and tracing systems that may be required for future exporting of U.S. beef and pork; and

5. Quantifying short-run and long-run net economic impacts of adjustments in international market access and domestic tracing programs using an equilibrium displacement model.

Summary of Findings

Our evaluation of changes in traceability requirements and associated adjustments in international trade focuses on a particular traceability system. In this study, we consider source and age verification programs as a potential requirement for future access to specific beef export markets. Similarly, we consider a comparable pork traceability program that is market based, but specifically focuses on source verification because age verification is not relevant for the pork sector. The economic impact of adjustments in the U.S. livestock and meat industry is estimated for several scenarios that could represent future realities for industry stakeholders. The impact of costs associated with expanded participation in traceability programs and various responses in export meat demand is assessed. Similarly, the economic impact of maintaining the status quo (i.e., not expanding traceability domestically) and losing access to various export markets is considered.



The loss of access to both beef (7.3%) and pork (6.3%) export markets roughly the size of 2009 volumes sent to South Korea as a result of not expanding domestic traceability in the U.S. beef and pork industries is estimated to harm the beef and pork industries by \$1,792 million and \$518 million dollars, respectively, while U.S. meat consumers gain \$610 million over a ten-year period. Furthermore, losing market access to all countries except Canada and Mexico (48.7% decline in beef; 68.3% decline in pork exports) results in the beef and pork industries incurring damages of \$12,582 million and \$5,505 million, respectively, versus consumers being better off by \$6,094 million. These estimates quantify the potential damage to domestic livestock industries if the United States were to lose access to key target markets.

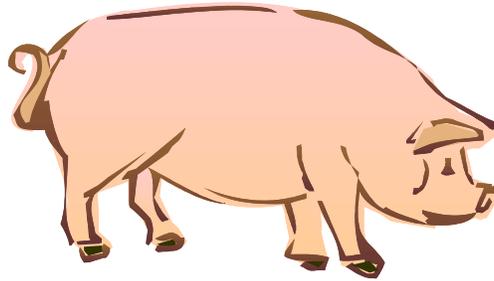
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Export expansion that would be necessary to offset direct costs associated with adopting domestic traceability is also assessed. The increases in 2009 export volumes required to "break even" (i.e., exactly offset costs of traceability program participation) are equivalent to gaining (or losing) access to a single country. For example, to offset costs of 20% participation in cattle and pork traceability programs, an increase in beef exports of 1% (19.5 million lbs.) and pork exports of 0.5% (21.7 million lbs.) would be required. To put this in perspective, the United States exported 140 million lbs. and 258 million lbs. of beef and pork, respectively, to South Korea in 2009.

Implications and Industry Recommendations

This study highlights the substantial economic damage that could occur to U.S. livestock industries if export market access is restricted because of comparatively slow responses to global animal ID and traceability standards. Industry leaders are encouraged to weigh the estimated impacts of "doing nothing" with the associated costs of expanding participation in enhanced traceability programs. This study provides information to help the red meat industries assess tradeoffs of expanding domestic traceability programs versus lagging behind export competitors and importing country requirements. Our assessment is relatively conservative in its consideration of traceability costs and associated impacts. For instance, it is expected that future economies of scale and scope in information technology development will reduce traceability participation costs. Similarly, our export market access simulation results are conservative estimates of industry benefits. The estimates are conservative because we do not consider a variety of potential benefits that could result from expanded traceability programs including possible domestic demand enhancements, improvements in disease surveillance and eradication efforts, better on-farm management capabilities, cost reductions in meeting country of origin and recently passed nutritional labeling regulations, and related efficiencies in developing value-added programs and credence claims.

Targeted industry recommendations reflecting this study's findings and implications include:



- 1) *Prosperity of the U.S. livestock industries will increasingly depend on expanding international trade of meat products. Industry stakeholders must recognize this fact and carefully consider the corresponding adjustments necessary if they desire to remain competitive in the global meat marketplace.*
- 2) *A candid and more complete recognition of the United States falling behind competing global meat exporters with respect to evolving world meat trade standards for animal and meat traceability should be a priority for industry leaders. Serious consideration should be given for producer educational programs raising recognition.*
- 3) *Designing and adopting animal and meat traceability systems that attain current world standards involves differential benefits and costs to individual industry participants. As a result, despite large meat and livestock industry-wide economic benefits from adoption of traceability practices gained through greater global market access, direct benefits for some will be smaller and less obvious. Furthermore, philosophical changes may be necessary to encourage adjustments required to meet world standards. Success will necessitate industry champions to help guide the industry effort to become a world leader in animal and meat traceability.*
- 4) *Industry leaders and individual producers should start viewing additional traceability as investments in the viability of their industry. This study notes the substantial value of export market maintenance and expansion. Coupled with other recognized benefits omitted from this assessment, we suggest corresponding "investment" should be seriously discussed and considered.*
- 5) *While economies of size exist resulting in higher per head costs for smaller operations participating in traceability programs, broader recognition is needed of these same operations absorbing a substantial segment of industry economic losses stemming from lost export markets or an inability to gain access to potential markets. Industry leadership that clearly communicates this is needed to facilitate substantial increases in voluntary participation rates in traceability systems.*

Guard Dogs Relax Sheep

November 4, 2011

The following is reprinted in part from the Capital Press and came to me via ASI. It talks about research on guard dogs and the behavioral responses sheep have with them. Neat stuff!

Research Shows Guard Dogs Relax Sheep

Sheep tend to travel greater distances in the presence of a guard dog, likely because they're less concerned about predators, according to new research led by Idaho State University (ISU).

Bryson Webber, a graduate student in ISU's Geographic Information Science (GIS) department who analyzed the data, said the study affirms the importance of guard dogs because stressed sheep tend to gain less weight. Previous sheep dog studies have focused on mortality linked to predation; Webber is unaware of any other studies done about how dogs affect sheep behavior.

"We don't always have to remove predators," Webber said. "With this, hopefully we can show that the lifestyle improves with the guardian dogs being present. That equates to larger income for the ranchers."

The data was collected during a 16-day period in the spring of 2010. Oregon State University supplied global positioning system collars to record the elevation, location and velocity of the sheep every second. Webber plotted the data with mapping software to depict movement. Students with the ISU GIS club volunteered to observe the behavior of the sheep.

The U.S. Sheep Experiment Station in Dubois, Idaho, provided the livestock and the four expansive pastures utilized for the study.

The study tracked herds of sheep accustomed to predators. Half of the sheep were left alone and half were guarded. The guarded flocks were switched, and the process was repeated. Though the guarded flocks were more at ease to travel farther, Webber noticed no difference in speed.

"The trend seems to be to move toward (guard dogs) now, especially as people are moving up against wolves that are moving in," Weber said.



UC-Hopland Research & Extension Center BLOG

This BLOG post is an almost daily submission by HREC staff. It consists of a photograph somehow related to UC-HREC and a short one-to-three paragraph explanation. You can sign up to receive an email notice of each new submission by:

- Go to: <http://ucanr.org/blogs/Hopland/>
- Once you are to the BLOG, from the right hand menu select "SUBSCRIBE"
- Enter your email and cryptic numbers and submit
- You will receive email notification

The USDA Rangeland Conservation Practice Effectiveness Program Scientific Review is Now Available Online

November 8, 2011

The USDA Rangeland Conservation Practice Effectiveness Program scientific review is now available online. This is a very comprehensive review (3 years, 40 scientists) of the current science on rangeland management for conservation. <http://rangelandwatersheds.ucdavis.edu/> See bottom of Home Page, "Just Published" "Conservation Benefits of Rangeland Practices"

The chapter titles and authors are shown below.

Chapter 1. An Evidence-Based Assessment of Prescribed Grazing Practices. David D. Briske, Justin D. Derner, Daniel G. Milchunas, and Ken W. Tate

Chapter 2. Assessment of Prescribed Fire as a Conservation Practice. Samuel D. Fuhlendorf, Ryan F. Limb, David M. Engle, and Richard F. Miller

Chapter 3. Brush Management as a Rangeland Conservation Strategy: A Critical Evaluation. Steven R. Archer, Kirk W. Davies, Timothy E. Fulbright, Kirk C. McDaniel, Bradford P. Wilcox, and Katharine I. Predick

Chapter 4. Assessment of Range Planting as a Conservation Practice. Stuart P. Hardegree, Thomas A. Jones, Bruce A. Roundy, Nancy L. Shaw, and Thomas A. Monaco

Chapter 5. A Scientific Assessment of the Effectiveness of Riparian Management Practices. Mel R. George, Randy D. Jackson, Chad S. Boyd, and Ken W. Tate

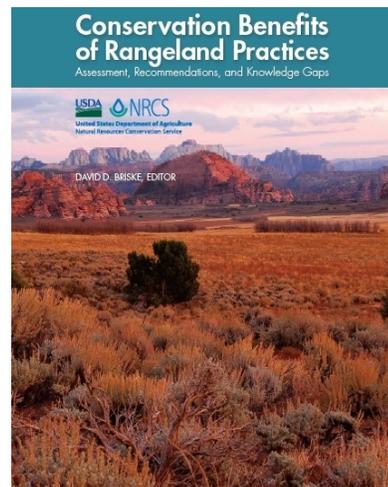
Chapter 6. An Assessment of Rangeland Activities on Wildlife Populations and habitats. Paul R. Krausman,

Vernon C. Bleich, William M. Block, David E. Naugle, and Mark C. Wallace

Chapter 7. Invasive Plant Management on Anticipated Conservation Benefits: A Scientific Assessment. Roger L. Sheley, Jeremy J. James, Mathew J. Rinella, Dana Blumenthal, and Joseph M. DiTomaso

Chapter 8. A Landscape Approach to Rangeland Conservation Practices. Brandon T. Bestelmeyer, Joel R. Brown, Samuel D. Fuhlendorf, Gene A. Fuets, and X. Ben Wu

Chapter 9. A Social and Economic Assessment of Rangeland Conservation Practices. John A. Tanaka, Mark Brunson, and L. Allen Torell



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5 Facts About the Proposed Child Labor in Ag Rule

December 16, 2011

The following is a re-post from the US Dept. of Labor and was forwarded to me from Dr. Jim Oltjen. Source: United States Department of Labor

Five Facts about the Proposed Child Labor in Agriculture Rule

Fact # 1: The proposed Child Labor in Agriculture rule will not prohibit all people under the age of 18 from working on a farm.

The proposed rule would not change any of the Fair Labor Standards Act's minimum age standards for agricultural employment. Under the FLSA, the legal age to be employed on a farm without restrictions is 16. The FLSA also allows children between the ages of 12 and 15 years, under certain conditions, to be employed outside of school hours to perform nonhazardous jobs on farms. Children under the age of 12 may be employed with parental permission on very small farms to perform nonhazardous jobs outside of school hours.

Young people can be employed to perform many jobs on the farm — and this would be true even if the proposed rule were adopted as written. The proposed rule would, however, prohibit the employment of workers under the age of 18 in nonagricultural occupations in the farm-product raw materials wholesale trade industries. Prohibited establishments would include country grain elevators, grain elevators, grain bins, silos, feed lots, feed yards, stockyard, livestock exchanges, and livestock auctions not on a farm or used solely by a single farmer. What these locations have in common is that many workers, including children, have suffered occupational deaths or serious injuries working in these facilities over the last few years.

Fact # 2: The proposed rule would not eliminate the parental exemption for owners/operators of a family farm.

The parental exemption for the owner or operator of a farm is statutory and cannot be eliminated through the regulatory process. A child of any age may perform any job, even hazardous work, at any age at any time on a farm owned by his or her parent. A child of any age

whose parent operates a farm may also perform any task, even hazardous jobs, on that farm but only outside of school hours. So for children working on farms that are registered as LLCs, but operated solely by their parents, the parental exemption would still apply.

Fact # 3: This proposed regulation will not eliminate 4-H and FFA programs.

The Department of Labor fully supports the important contributions both 4-H and the FFA make toward developing our children. The proposed rule would in no way prohibit a child from raising or caring for an animal in a non-employment situation — even if the animal were housed on a working farm — as long as he or she is not hired or "employed" to work with the animal. In such a situation, the child is not acting as an "employee" and is not governed by the child labor regulations. And there is nothing in the proposed rule that would prevent a child from being employed to work with animals other than in those specific situations identified in the proposal as particularly hazardous.



Fact # 4: Under the proposed rule, children will still be able to help neighbors in need of help.

In order for the child labor provisions of the FLSA to apply, there must first be an employer/employee relationship. The lone act of helping a neighbor round up loose cattle who have broken out of their fencing, for example, generally would not establish an employer/employee relationship.

Fact # 5: Children will still be able to take animals to the county fair or to market.

A child who raises and cares for his or her animal — for example, as part of a 4-H project — is not being employed by anyone, and thus is outside the coverage of the FLSA. Even if the child needs to rent space from a farm, the animal is not part of the farm's business and with regard to the care of the animal no employer/employee relationship exists, so the child labor provisions would not apply. Likewise, there would be no problem with taking the animal to the county fair or to market, since the child is doing this on his/her own behalf — not on behalf of an employer. The proposed prohibitions would apply only if the child was an employee of the exchange or auction.

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*The University of California working in cooperation
with Mendocino and Lake Counties and the USDA*

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