**References**


**Conservation easements funded**

By JACQUI FATKA

CONSERVATION programs of the past tended to force participants into one program or another. However, under the 2014 farm bill, the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) “creates flexibility to put our ideas together and then seek assistance and funding to accomplish those goals,” according to Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack.

On Sept. 8, Vilsack announced that $328 million in conservation funding is being invested to help landowners protect and restore farmlands, grasslands and wetlands across the nation. The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s initiative will benefit wildlife and promote outdoor recreation and related sectors of the economy.

ACEP signup attracted more than 1,450 applications seeking up to $546 million of requests and covering 345,000 acres. In the end, USDA selected 380 projects nationwide to protect and restore 32,000 acres of prime farmland, 45,000 acres of grasslands and 9,000 acres of wetlands.

“Conservation easements help farmers and ranchers protect valuable agricultural lands from development, restore lands that are best suited for grazing and return wetlands to their natural conditions,” Vilsack said. “These easements are making a dramatic and positive impact for our food supply, rural communities and our environment.”

In addition, conservation strengthens outdoor recreation and helps secure the economy. According to the National Fish & Wildlife Federation, annual U.S. conservation spending generates $38 billion, but it generates $93.2 billion of economic output throughout the economy. This output takes the form of more than 660,500 jobs, $41.6 billion in income and $6 billion in tax contributions to national gross domestic product.

The 2014 farm bill streamlined next step is to have all parties — including the Department, ranchers, landowners and others — working together on the other side of the table to determine the most appropriate combination of programs,” said AAPB past president Dr. Nigel Cook with the University of Wisconsin. “They will be updated regularly as scientific evidence emerges so that our recommendations represent the best possible science.”

The guidelines discuss age at castration and dehorning, proper chemical or mechanical methods used to castrate and dehorn calves and anesthesia and pain relief. “These new guidelines accept that these are painful procedures where pain mitigation is a priority,” Cook explained. “They provide the most up-to-date recommendations for the use of different procedures for castration and dehorning, the use of local anesthesia and the use of long-acting pain-relieving pharmaceuticals.”

Cook emphasized, however, that these guidelines are only — not legislation. “They allow the veterinarian to work with (the guidelines) with their clients in deciding the most appropriate procedures for a given farm situation,” he said. “It is the veterinarian’s profession that should take the lead in providing the most appropriate practice based on the current circumstances that exist on any given farm.”

Use of anesthetics or pain mitigation may include extra-label drug use as provided for in the Animal Medicinal Drug Use Clarification Act, and their use should be based on the judgment of the farm’s veterinarian of record in consultation with the client/patient relationship (VCRP).

The guidelines, plus AAPB’s VCRP guidelines, are available at http://www.aapb.org/about/AAPB_Guidelines.asp.

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**AABP offers guidelines on cattle castration, dehorning**

THE American Association of Bovine Practitioners (AABP) has created “Castration & Dehorning Guidelines” that provide general information on the castration and dehorning of beef and dairy cattle.

These guidelines are meant to assist veterinarians and their clients in enrolling the welfare of cattle on beef and dairy farms by providing information on best practices for dehorning and castrating calves.

“These new guidelines for castration and dehorning represent our combined view on the best approach to be taken per country these procedures,.molding, selling science where it exists and sound judgment and common sense where science is less clear, accepting that the veterinarian of record for the farm to determine and ultimately determine the most appropriate combination of procedures,” said AABP past president Dr. Nigel Cook with the University of Wisconsin. “They will be updated regularly as scientific evidence emerges so that our recommendations represent the best possible science.”

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