



**Center for Beef Excellence
Beef Bytes
March 27, 2012**

Hello Everyone,

Pink slime has been the lead story in many media outlets over the past few weeks. As a former agriculture teacher and beef producer, I decided to dedicate this week's introduction to a pink slime explanation written by Dr. Bob Mikesell, PSU animal science faculty member and fellow beef producer. Let me know if any further explanation is needed. Other news and legislative issues can be found below in the our weekly letter.

Sincerely,
MeeCee

During carcass fabrication process, there are high-fat trimmings left over that contain some lean meat that cannot be trimmed from the fat with a knife.

These high-fat trimmings are heated (to melt the fat), then centrifuged so that the liquid fat flies away leaving the lean beef.

Because the lean has been subjected to knives, and possibly comes from the exterior of the carcass, it could contain a significant bacterial load.

To kill bacteria, the trimmings are treated with a "puff" of ammonium hydroxide (declared safe by the FDA in 1974 and used in the meat industry since 2001). It works by raising the pH to kill bacteria.

Ammonium hydroxide is used in a number of other food products such as baked goods and pudding.

The process recovers lean meat that would otherwise be wasted. It's estimated that an additional 1.5 million cattle would need to be slaughtered annually to make up the difference.

Robert Mikesell, PhD

Articles of Interest

Pennsylvania News:

[Performance Tested Bull Sale](#)

The Pennsylvania Performance Tested Bull Sale will be held on Friday, March 30 at the Livestock Evaluation Center in State College. There are 138 bulls on test that will be used to select the sale bulls based on performance and reproductive soundness.

[EPA Emissions Rules](#)

The Environmental Protection Agency has proposed new rules regulating sulfur emissions in gasoline. However, studies show that this would significantly increase the cost of production, leading to higher gas prices, while not reducing total emissions.

National News:

[Declining Environmental Interest](#)

A survey of high school seniors and college freshmen shows a decline in concern for the environment and conservation over the past 4 decades. In addition, young people show less interest in government and civic duty compared to past generations.

[Protection from Animal Activists](#)

Iowa became the first state to sign a law preventing animal rights activists from undercover filming of agricultural operations. The law prevents applicants from misrepresenting their intentions during the hiring process. Several animal rights groups have spoken out against the move, but other states are considering similar legislation.

[Factors in Farmland Value](#)

The value of farmland has been on the rise, but a USDA report shows that the gains are not entirely due to high crop and livestock values. Low interest rates are a contributor as well as investment from speculators or non-operators.

[Upcoming Legislation](#)

A bill to resume subsidies for biofuels did not pass and agriculture was granted several exemptions on transportation rules. Changes to regulations on herbicides may be coming, as well as program cuts due to an increasing budget deficit.

[The Ethics of Eating Meat](#)

The New York Times has issued a challenge- to provide an ethical defense for meat eating. Essays will be reviewed by notable anti-meat judges, but this contest provides an opportunity for those in support of livestock production to make their voice heard.

Modifying Consumer Perceptions

With animal agriculture constantly receiving negative media attention, it is important to know how to address consumers and share the truth about food production. This means understanding that the average person has no idea where food comes from, as well as grasping the scope of our industry in order to promote the safety and nutrition of our products.

Global News:

[Touring Foreign Markets](#)

Representatives of the US Meat Export Federation visited South Korea, Hong Kong and China to see the results of work in retail marketing and free trade agreements. The representatives were impressed by the opportunities available for US products.

Cattle Management Articles:

[Replacement Females](#)

With the current low beef herd numbers, there is a high demand for heifers both for use as replacement females and in the feedlot. Managers must determine the cost of raising heifers in order to decide if it makes more sense to retain females from the herd or purchase replacements.

[Weed Control](#)

For producers battling weeds in the pasture it is important to address the problem correctly. This means applying the proper kinds and amounts of herbicides, as well as knowing when to apply based on the weeds that are present.

[Seeding Pastures](#)

Spring is a good time for producers to consider adding new forages to existing fields. Seeding with a legume or grass-legume mix can help to improve the quality of the forages and provide a better grazing mix for cattle.

[Rebreeding Young Cows](#)

First calf heifers take longer than mature cows to return to estrus after calving, and those that calve in poor body condition score are at an even greater disadvantage. Breeding heifers to calve 2-3 weeks before the cows helps to allow extra time to recover before needing to rebreed.

03-27-2012

[EDITORIAL: What's all the fuss about 'pink slime'?](#)

True or false: "Pink slime" is an unappetizing, unhealthy and unsafe filler used in hamburgers. It is helping to make schoolchildren fat and could make those who eat it very sick. Actually, that's false. But some Americans — thanks to an Internet frenzy that went viral, coupled with people's unwillingness to arm... - [Easton Express-Times](#)

03-27-2012

[Tone and texture](#)

We noted with interest last week's story that Giant and Weis Markets were discontinuing the use of finely textured beef - dubbed "pink slime" in an admittedly incendiary bit of slang - from its ground beef. The announcements came after the grocers received what they said were... - [Lebanon Daily News](#)

03-26-2012

[Pink slime: Consumers have a legitimate beef](#)

Practically speaking, every meat eater reading this likely has feasted on something the government and food industry call lean finely textured beef or boneless lean beef trimmings. Innocuous, even appetizing? Consider what those on the inside — processors, food scientists — call it, not without reason: pink slime.... - [Harrisburg Patriot-News](#)

03-26-2012

[Looking Back 1924: Crying over spilled milk in Franklin County](#)

Earlier this year, 77 people in three states got sick from raw milk linked to a Franklin County farm. The illness came from a bacterial infection linked to unpasteurized milk sold by The Family Cow farm near Chambersburg. Though such outbreaks are uncommon nowadays, it wasn't always the case. As... - [Chambersburg Public Opinion](#)

03-25-2012

['Pink Slime' Losing Place on School Lunch Menus](#)

BOSTON — Andy Gomez, a ninth grader at Brighton High School, was not sure why hamburgers and meatballs had disappeared from the cafeteria, but he was not happy about it. "Today I just ate peanut butter and jelly," he said. "I don't like the chicken patty." The absence of ground beef at lunch last week — at Brighton High and 43... - [New York Times](#)

03-25-2012

[Steps Set for Livestock Antibiotic Ban](#)

The Obama administration must warn drug makers that the government may soon ban agricultural uses of some popular antibiotics that many scientists say encourage the proliferation of dangerous infections and imperil public health, a federal magistrate judge ruled on Thursday.... - [New York Times](#)

- 03-25-2012 [Pink slime perspective](#)
A century ago, cautious housewives demanded that the butcher grind their beef in front of them so they could be sure he didn't toss in offal or scraps of lower-quality meat. Not a bad idea for the modern grocery shopper who thinks that the way to get hamburger is to put a fine steak through a grinder. A modern package of... - [Los Angeles Times](#)
- 03-23-2012 [Inside PDA for March 23, 2012](#)
(Press Release)
- 03-23-2012 [Lehigh Valley grocery stores stop selling 'pink slime'](#)
Some of the Lehigh Valley's biggest grocery store chains promised Thursday to stop selling the controversial ammonia-treated beef filler known as "pink slime." Giant Food Stores, Weis Markets, Bottom Dollar Food and Redner's made the pledge in respective press releases, apparently following the cue of... - [Allentown Morning Call](#)
- 03-23-2012 [Giant Food Stores, Weis to stop buying meat containing 'pink slime'](#)
York, PA - After receiving feedback from hundreds of customers, both Weis Markets and Giant Food Stores will no longer buy ground beef containing "finely textured beef," also known as "pink slime." "Customers were expressing concerns, so we will no longer be purchasing... - [York Daily](#)
- 03-22-2012 [Early Spring Sets Much of U.S. Awash in Color and Pollen Dust](#)
ATLANTA — Spring, with its promise of flip-flops and daffodils, can have a dark side. Take this one, which hit so early in many parts of the nation that the headaches are outweighing the sunny benefits. High temperatures and a sudden bloom have turned what some call the Bible... - [New York Times](#)
- 03-21-2012 [Consumer activist group wants local grocers to label beef with 'pink slime' filler](#)
Pennsylvanians for Change at Giant, which has a page on Facebook, sent out a news release Tuesday saying it would like the grocery store chain to label ground beef products sold in its Pennsylvania stores that contain "finely textured beef." In recent weeks, the cheap meat filler, which some have dubbed "pink... - [Harrisburg Patriot-News](#)
- 03-20-2012 [Farm pollution lawsuit spurs public relations battle](#)
By Timothy B. Wheeler, The Baltimore Sun 10:48 p.m. EDT, March 19, 2012 With a catch in her throat, Kristin Hudson talks in a video posted online about her young daughter asking if "they" will take away her daddy's farm. The video, featured on SaveFarmFamilies.org rallied farmers and others... - [Baltimore Sun](#)

Legislative Activity

[SB 1298](#) [Smucker](#) Amends the Pennsylvania Farmland and Forest Land Assessment Act further providing for definitions and for appeals.

Printer Number(s): [P1685](#) [P1864](#)

Bill History: 03-26-12 S Set on the Senate Calendar
03-26-12 S Laid out for discussion
03-26-12 S Third consideration
03-26-12 S Final Passage (Vote: Y: 48/N: 0)

Capitol Review

[Jobless claims in the U.S. hit a four-year low this week](#), with many signs pointing to sustained economic growth throughout the summer. If you happen to be running in the Republican Presidential Primary, this is not necessarily the greatest news, politically speaking, you could have gotten. But take solace, GOP field. Eventually a gallon of gas is going to cost more than the car into which you are putting it.

An environmental group recently claimed that [Pennsylvania ranks seventh in the nation for most toxins in the waterways](#). The Ohio River ranked number one, incidentally, but it still, to our knowledge, has never caught fire like the Cuyahoga River, so we'll just take a bit of pride in that.

Some high-ranking members of the House Republican caucus are starting to feel a little squeamish about the [newly proposed asset test for food stamp recipients](#). They point out, probably correctly, that the asset test really doesn't root out any fraud, and even if it did, the savings would go to Uncle Sugar and not us, so why bother? Are we now in the business of helping Washington, D.C. balance its budget? Good luck with that one, Jack.

Following that revelation, we read that the program [itself is actually a pretty nice economic generator](#). According to reports, for every \$5 in SNAP benefits, \$9 in total community spending is generated in the state. It's billions with a "b". Not too shabby.

Headline of the Week: [Transportation Funding Stuck in Neutral](#). Pretty clever, huh? See how they did that? We'd politely take issue, however, and say that transportation funding seems to be stuck in park with the keys hanging in the kitchen, and nobody seems to want to get off the couch.

Congress dragged some oil executives to southeastern Pennsylvania this week to rake them over the coals about refinery closures on the east coast. At issue is the [potential that motorists in northeastern United States could be in a real pinch](#) if there is no way to actually get the gasoline here. Gasoline sitting in Galveston doesn't do drivers in Philadelphia much good, you see.

In this week's [controversial state budgetary cash diversion](#) (we've previously covered the horse racing fund and farmland preservation for those keeping score) belongs to...the Keystone Parks, Recreation and Conservation Fund! Key '93 (to the cool kids) was established to fund a broad range of...well...parks, recreation and conservation programs back during the Casey Administration. Governor Corbett's budget doesn't just sort of empty it out; it vaporizes the poor bugger.

[68,000 Pennsylvanians are slated to lose cash assistance under DPW's General Assistance Program](#), also slated to be slashed is this year's proposed budget. We're not sure if anyone has any sort of a plan on what to do with these extremely out-of-luck folks, other than maybe buy them bus tickets to Ohio or something.

A bill has surfaced in the PA House that would [allow school districts to lay off teachers for economic reasons](#), which they are currently prohibited from doing by law. We guess if schools are going to continue to be squeezed for funding, we probably should go ahead and

give them the tools they need to try and reverse all that sunny jobless claim nonsense we talked about earlier.

[Governor Corbett this week unveiled a new Innovation Office](#) designed to sift through every state agency and find out if they could be doing business more cheaply and effectively. There will be no shortage of ideas, you can bet. Sometimes the sheer inertia of a large bureaucracy makes it impossible for those on the inside to see that they have fallen behind the times. You know, they are so busy trying to keep the trains running that they don't realize they are still working on IBM typewriters and faxing documents to numbers that no longer exist.

[Student loan debt nationwide has topped one trillion dollars](#), we learned last week, and some experts are pointing to that gargantuan number as a primary reason the housing market isn't recovering as quickly as some thought. When you are stuck paying off your college loans until you are 35 years old, it makes it hard to put a down payment on a house.

Newspapers across the state are slowly coming around to taking a look at a recent [House vote on a bill to reform the state's Redevelopment Assistance Capital program](#), known as R-CAP to people who are actually aware that the program exists. R-CAP is a matching grant fund used to spur large scale redevelopment, and the House recently passed a bit to tighten up the guidelines and drastically reduce the state's debt load. Now, communities who have benefitted from the program are taking notice, and their message is simple: don't throw the baby out with the bathwater.

Some [Harrisburg business have come up with a novel approach to help the city hire more police officers to patrol the city](#) in the wake of a spate of violent crime: raise property taxes. Wait, aren't property taxes the main way the city funds police officers now? Yeah, we thought so. Carry on.

In Other News

03-27-2012

[Codorus saga stars bald eagles](#)

Officials at state park near Hanover see new male bald eagle, after one found dead. It is a story that involves a mysterious death, outdoor adventure and romance. All the ingredients for a classic tragedy or the latest Hollywood blockbuster. It began last month with the discovery of a dead bald eagle on private... - [Hanover Evening Sun](#)

03-27-2012

[Food fight develops in Va. over sale of live animals](#)

By Justin Jouvenal, Published: March 26 The customer seemed like any other when he ordered live bass and red-eared slider turtles from gurgling tanks at Falls Church's Great Wall Supermarket, a grocery that caters to the tastes of Northern Virginia's burgeoning Asian communities.... - [Washington Post](#)

03-27-2012

[Voracious 'Frankenfish' Spotted in Heinz Wildlife Refuge, Delaware County](#)

TINICUM, Pa. (CBS) — The northern snakehead, a predatory fish from China, has been caught at the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge in Tinicum Township (Delaware County). The fish already been found in the Schuylkill and Delaware Rivers, causing ecologists and biologists to worry about the balance of nature in our area.... - [KYW News Radio 1060](#)

03-26-2012

[Better informed than CDC?](#)

How many of you were conned by the slick and deceitful TV ad by the American Lung Association (fightingforair.org)? The ad features an unseen baby in a carriage, coughing in an asthma attack. If you took the bait, you concluded that air pollution from fossil-fuel power plants caused that baby... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)

03-23-2012

[There's a PAC for that](#)

By Al Kamen, Published: March 22 The Supreme Court's blessing of super PACs has flipped political fundraising on its ear, but it's also sparked a wave of creativity, as each PAC tries to separate itself from the rest of the pack. Super PAC monikers run the gamut, from downright bizarre to stirringly... - [Washington Post](#)

03-22-2012

[Statewide project would enable infrastructure to communicate its needs to...](#)

(Press Release)