



**Center for Beef Excellence
News You Can Use
April 2, 2012**

Dear Friends,

There has been much speculation about how early spring arrived this year. Some producers claim we are now six weeks ahead of a typical spring season. On our farm, the crab apple trees are blooming and they typically blossom during the first or second week of May. The recent Professional Crop Producers Conference hosted Dr. Evelyn Browning, acclaimed climatologist. See her thoughts on weather patterns in the attachment.

Following this week, the PA Senate and House will be on recess until after the April primary. Remember to mark your calendars for the April 24th vote. Several veteran legislators will not be seeking reelection including Senators Jeff Piccola, Mary Jo White, Jane Ori, and John Pippy (running for congressional seat). In the House veteran legislators Representative Camille (Bud) George (38 years in legislature) and Ed Staback (28 years in legislature) are both retiring. Representative John Maher, Chairman of the House Agriculture & Rural Affairs Committee is running for Auditor General.

Versant will be closed this Thursday through Monday for Easter break. If assistance is needed, call me at 7178608463 or email me at mbaker@versantstrategies.net. The next edition of the News You Can Use will be sent the week of April 16.

Enjoy the spring season,
MeeCee

Articles of Interest

Pennsylvania News:

[Ag Equipment Laws](#)

A bill that passed in the Senate would change the laws for agricultural equipment dealers, allowing them to stock multiple brands of equipment and providing small business protections.

National News:

[Antibiotics in Livestock Feed](#)

The National Resources Defense Council is working to have penicillin and tetracycline removed from the market for use in animal feed. The Food and Drug Administration is considering the request and may hold hearings in which manufacturers must prove that the products are safe.

[Beef Plant Closures](#)

Three Beef Products, Inc. plants were closed following public outcry against the use of lean finely textured beef, due to the use of ammonium hydroxide in production. This move resulted in the loss of 650 jobs, and the reopening of the plants is uncertain.

[Importance of Biosecurity](#)

Industry experts analyzed the probable effects of an animal disease outbreak on the beef industry, and the potential losses for trade are huge. Not only would current products require disposal, but the reactions from trading partners would result in long term losses.

[Food Labeling](#)

Consumer activist groups are working on legislation to require labeling of foods containing genetically modified crops. Petitions are available at both state and national levels. The USDA maintains that there is no difference between conventional and transgenic foods.

Global News:

[WTO Appeal](#)

The US announced a decision to appeal the ruling by the World Trade Organization against mandatory country of origin labeling. The appeal will review the effects of the law on Canada and Mexico, the two countries that challenged the labeling laws.

[Promoting Beef in Russia](#)

US beef and pork were used in demonstrations and an international cooking competition at an international conference for the hotel and restaurant industry. This event allowed chef to learn about the use of high quality meats in their establishments.

Cattle Management Articles:

[Decline in Crossbreeding](#)

The commercial cattle industry is showing a trend towards using fewer breeds in the herd. Although this results in a loss of heterosis, it makes herds easier to manage and allows for the uniformity demanded by many of today's marketing programs.

[Quality Premiums](#)

With a limited supply of cattle, packers are willing to pay more for high quality carcasses. This may encourage producers to provide more prime quality animals. Even with the recession, consumers are willing to pay for a premium eating experience.

[Profit in Stocker Cattle](#)

Although calf prices are high, there is the potential for earning a profit on a summer stocker operation. Projected prices for cattle this fall remain strong and producers should look at the breakeven cost for their operation to determine if purchasing calves is a wise investment.

[Low Fertility in Cows](#)

Researchers found that cows that don't breed well may have fragments of male DNA. Developing a test for this condition would allow producers to identify subfertile heifers early and prevent them from keeping them for breeding purposes.

[Body Condition Concerns](#)

Keeping cows in good body condition before the spring grasses grow can be a challenge. Producers should continue to provide energy and protein in the form of forages or supplements to ensure that cows maintain their condition in order to rebreed over the summer.

[Spring Pasture Management](#)

Keeping cattle on pasture rotation during the spring can be difficult due to the fast growth of forages. Dropping some pastures from the rotation and saving them for the slower summer months, as well as stocking cattle in smaller pastures at higher densities can help.

- 04-02-2012 [Land of milk and Marcellus](#)
By Steve Ferris HeraldStandard.com | 0 comments A recent study published by Penn State's agricultural sciences department found that counties with Marcellus shale natural gas wells saw declines in dairy cow numbers and milk production between 2007-10, but further studies are needed before any conclusion could be drawn.... - [Uniontown Herald-Standard](#)
- 04-02-2012 [Dismissed Kreider Farms workers 'disappear'](#)
Originally Published Mar 31, 2012 17:29 By Jon Rutter Staff
Writer jrutter@lnpnews.com After an immigration audit by the feds at Kreider Farms in January, about 100 workers were found to have invalid documentation and were terminated. No one seems to have followed where they went.... - [Lancaster Sunday News](#)
- 03-30-2012 [Inside PDA for March 30, 2012](#)
(Press Release)
- 03-30-2012 [Pennsylvania wants manure management plans](#)
Farmer Blaine Hutter believes a manure management plan is valuable, but he doesn't want his Mt. Pleasant dairy operation to become over-regulated by the state. "It's important that you have to have one," he said. "How many regulations are we going to have to abide by?"... - [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#)
- 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](#)

Legislative Activity

[HB 761](#) [Cutler](#) Amends Tax Reform Code, in realty transfer tax, further providing for definitions, for excluded transactions and for acquired company.

Printer Number(s): [P0784](#) [P2590](#)

Bill History: 04-03-12 S Meeting set for 10:00 a.m., Room 8E-B, East Wing
...Senate Finance

Capitol Review

The eyes of the nation were fixed on the U.S. Supreme Court as [The Nine began hearing oral arguments on the constitutionality of Obamacare](#) (that's what the President calls it, so we're all cool here), spurring thousands of people to get all into "demonstrate" mode on the courthouse steps. This is the big show, folks; the fight a lot of people have been spoiling for

since the law passed. The only thing missing was Michael Buffer announcing the combatants.

[Santorumentum was a big hit this week with a new poll](#) being released showing Rick Santorum and Mitt Romney essentially in a dead heat in Pennsylvania, a month after Santorum had opened up a 29-point lead. The last time someone coughed up a lead of that size, Phillies fans knew it as the "Phold of '64". If PA is, in fact, a must-win for Rick, expect the gloves to come flying off in the last three weeks before Primary Day.

In any case, [all the heavy hitters in the GOP field \(no disrespect to Ron Paul\) will be coming to Lancaster County](#) to woo the GOP faithful. As Lancaster County goes, so goes the GOP. Commence woo-pitching.

In related political news, the race for the Republican nomination for U.S. Senate is over, folks. Pack it up. [Some dude named Undecided has over 80% of the vote locked up](#). That's a big number.

[The feds are about to cough up \\$5 million for the retraining of furloughed refinery workers in eastern Pennsylvania](#), we learned last week. Great. That should go far in ameliorating the pain out there. Maybe they can all get a free cheesesteak, too.

The Department of Environmental Protection is holding online information sessions on the impacts of Act 13, the much-debated Marcellus Shale impact fee law. If you have 60 minutes of your life that you don't really have any use for, [follow this link for more information](#).

But before you get too comfy with the ins and outs of Act 13, keep in mind that just yesterday, [seven municipalities went to court to try and get the poor thing overturned](#). They are arguing over local zoning language, mainly. You did not need to borrow your dad's old binoculars to see this move coming.

After 15 years and almost 600 million pierogies, [Pittsburgh denizens welcomed the new North Shore Connector](#) into the family, finally freeing the North Side from exile. The 1.2 mile ride goes under the Allegheny River, which quite frankly makes us a little nervous. Was that water dripping from the ceiling??

Advocates for education and human services got together this week and made the case that [Pennsylvania budget pie isn't quite large enough to feed all the mouths who would like to have some of that delicious pie](#). Closing corporate loopholes and taxing things like tobacco were some of the suggestions these folks made before passing out delicious pies to lawmakers. Mmmmm. Pie...

[The Marcellus Shale drilling industry is giving a serious shot in the arm to the steel industry in Pennsylvania](#). Shale drilling, you see, takes a lot of pipe. When the industry speaks of economic impact, this is what they are generally talking about.

The DPW's proposed new asset test for food stamp recipients just got more controversial, if that is even possible. Despite high-ranking House Republicans coming out against the plan, [the department will also be prohibiting striking union workers from collecting benefits while](#)

[on the picket line](#), which will likely make folks a lot more hesitant to go on strike. Hey, how do we make an already controversial decision easier to swallow? Yeah, let's involve every union in the state! The DPW may want to pump their brakes on this one before the car spins outta control.

[The EPA this week announced new carbon dioxide emissions rules](#) that, if some critics are to be believed, will pretty much ring the death knell for new coal-fired power plants. So yeah, that's encouraging for coal miners. Good thing China will buy the stuff. In any case, it's a good thing we aren't gonna run out of natural gas anytime soon or we'd be powering our homes with...well, nothing. Maybe some new nukes?

[The State Senate this week passed a bill to legalize direct shipments of wine right to your front door](#). Archaic laws and court cases have long conspired to prevent this practice, but momentum is clearly on the side of wine enthusiasts everywhere. The House has not yet indicated it is interested quite yet, as we all know what happens to liquor code bills when they reach the Lower Chamber. Shenanigans!

[A judge this week threw a wrench into Harrisburg receiver David Unkovic's plan](#) to raffle off city assets by granting the Harrisburg incinerator its very own receiver. That's one receiver too many, in Unkovic's eyes. Unkovic then pushed all the chips to the center of the table by asking for an investigation by the Justice Department and the state Attorney General. Things are jumping up a notch on 2nd Street.

Breaking Update: [Unkovic submitted his resignation this morning](#). Ruh-Roh.

[The State Troopers Association this week laid out a pretty grim vision of the future of public safety in Pennsylvania](#). Despite Governor Corbett's best effort to hold State Police funding steady and even hire new troopers, there will be an 800 trooper shortage by 2015. The words "public safety crisis" were uttered, a phrase that does not generally make people all warm and fuzzy, unless you happen to be a planning on committing a major crime in 2015.

[The General Assembly put the final touches on a package of aid for hurricane and flood ravaged areas of the state](#). Last year's summer storms made quite an unprecedented impact on Pennsylvania's infrastructure, so it's good to see those communities will get a helping hand before this summer's storm season arrives. And it's also nice to see that, unlike in Congress, no lawmaker stood up and screamed that we needed to cut the state budget elsewhere to find the money to pay for storm damage.

Finally, a new law is now in effect for motorists, [a four-foot cushion for passing a bicycle on the roadways](#). If your side view mirror is close enough to clip someone on a bike, you will now be breaking the law, in addition to being rude, inconsiderate and dangerous. Four feet, folks. Live it, learn it.

In Other News

03-30-2012

[What should you believe about chemical risks in food?](#)

UNIVERSITY PARK - With so many reports in the news media about the dangers associated with certain food ingredients and packaging materials, the public is now understandably suspicious and distrustful of what they eat, according to a food-safety expert in Penn State's College of Agricultural... - [Shamokin News-Item](#)

- 03-30-2012 [**50-plus banned words on standardized tests**](#)
By Valerie Strauss You might expect a standardized test to avoid using profane words but, it turns out, other words are banned too and they may surprise you: dinosaur and Halloween, rock `n roll and rap music, just to name a few. That, at least, is what New York City education officials recently did when... - [Washington Post](#)
- 03-29-2012 [**Weather Runs Hot and Cold, So Scientists Look to the Ice**](#)
Some people call what has been happening the last few years "weather weirding," and March is turning out to be a fine example. As a surreal heat wave was peaking across much of the nation last week, pools and beaches drew crowds, some farmers planted their crops six weeks... - [New York Times](#)
- 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](#)