



**Center for Beef Excellence
Beef Bytes
April 30, 2012**

Dear Friends,

After a primary that brought defeats of longtime legislators such as Congressman Tim Holden and State Representative Rick Geist, the Pennsylvania Senate and House will be back in session this week. Attention will now turn to budget negotiations as lobbying begins in earnest for limited budget dollars.

Make sure to contact the Versant office for concerns as we plan for a busy couple of months before the summer recess. We will be in touch as well to assess your needs and plan strategy to accomplish your goals.

Have a great week!

MeeCee

Articles of Interest

CBE News:

[New President at CBE](#)

Darwin Nissley was recently elected the next president for the Center for Beef Excellence, with Glenn Binkley as vice president, Jim Hogue as secretary and Cheryl Fairbairn as treasurer. Ann Nogan is serving as the executive vice president and the board consists of an additional 14 representatives from across the state.

Pennsylvania News:

[Pennsylvania Beef Ambassadors](#)

The Pennsylvania Beef Council and Pennsylvania Cattlemen's Association selected the 2012 Pennsylvania beef ambassadors at a statewide competition in March. Zachary Frazier, of Butler, is the senior ambassador while Tanner Rager, of Reedsville, is the first ever junior ambassador.

National News:

[BSE in California Cow](#)

The USDA announced that a dairy cow in California was diagnosed with BSE, the fourth case in the US since 2003. The cow was never set to enter the food chain and the industry precautions paid off in protecting consumers. Cattle futures fell sharply on the news, although the case will not change the status of US beef according to the office of World Animal Health.

[Child Labor Laws Removed](#)

The US Labor Department announced plans to withdraw proposed laws that would limit the involvement of youth in agriculture. The move is a response to concerns from farmers and

agricultural organizations about the possible impact on family farms. Instead, the Department of Labor will work on an educational campaign to educate youth about safety in farm work.

[Facts on BSE](#)

Producers may face questions from the public about the safety of beef, following the announcement of a new case of BSE in the US. It is important to remind consumers that US beef is safe, our safety measures are effective in identifying affected animals, and the risk of BSE in the US is nearly zero.

[Livestock Tracking Debate](#)

The most recent case of BSE has reignited the discussion of a mandatory livestock identification system for the US. Current plans allow for states to determine their own tracking systems, with mandatory tagging required for animals crossing state lines.

[Beef Quality Audit](#)

The results from the National Beef Quality Audit show that food safety is a growing concern in the industry. Retailers, packers and food service representatives all noted the importance of food safety, while also noting the importance of eating quality, animal care and visual characteristics.

Global News:

[Response to BSE](#)

The European Union has confirmed that imports of US beef will not be restricted following the most recent case of BSE. Mexico, Korea and Japan are also continuing to import beef, while Russia and Korea have implemented or are considering temporary restrictions.

[Beef Promotions in Hong Kong](#)

A Hong Kong dining chain concluded a marketing campaign designed to increase sales of chuck steaks from US beef. The US Meat Export Federation partnered in the promotion, which was highly successful and will provide a basis for further steak promotions this summer.

Cattle Management Articles:

[Stocker Cattle Management](#)

Profitably raising stocker calves on grass means choosing a source for calves carefully, providing appropriate vaccinations and deworming, and having adequate nutrition. The goal is to minimize risk by selecting cattle that will grow well and managing them to achieve their full potential.

[Increasing Stocking Rate](#)

Producers looking to increase the number of cows managed on given resources may consider providing supplemental feed. There are different options, including tubs, hand feeding and self feeders. In addition, producers may find alternatives to hay, including straw or cornstalks.

[Breeding Heifers](#)

Heifers should be bred to calve 2-4 weeks ahead of the cows in the herd in order to allow them extra time to recover before rebreeding. Estrus detection as well as timed breeding programs allow producers to find a strategy to get heifers bred early in the season.

04-27-2012

[PA Farm Bureau: Farmers Influence Labor Department Decision to Withdraw...](#)

(Press Release)

04-27-2012

[Inside PDA for April 27, 2012](#)

(Press Release)

04-26-2012

[Dow Corn, Resistant to a Weed Killer, Runs Into Opposition](#)

By ANDREW POLLACK To Jody Herr, it was a telltale sign that one of his tomato fields had been poisoned by 2,4-D, the powerful herbicide that was an ingredient in Agent Orange, the Vietnam War defoliant. "The leaves had curled and the plants were kind of twisting rather than... - [New York Times](#)

04-25-2012

[Farmers encouraged to attend livestock regulation workshop](#)

WAYNESBURG - Farmers in Greene and Washington counties are encouraged to attend a special workshop covering rules and regulations related to raising livestock and growing crops. "Agricultural Laws: Are You in Compliance?" will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. May 12 at the Amwell Township fire hall in Amity.... - [Washington Observer-Reporter](#)

04-25-2012

[Mad cow disease found in one Central Valley bovine](#)

FRESNO — The first confirmed case of mad cow disease in the U.S. since 2006 surfaced in California's Central Valley on Tuesday, triggering concerns about food safety. But health officials stressed that the diseased animal never entered the human food chain and that U.S. beef and dairy... - [Los Angeles Times](#)

04-24-2012

[USDA: Weekly Crop & Weather Roundup for the Week Ending April 22, 2012](#)

(Press Release)

Legislative Activity

[HB 761](#)

[Cutler](#)

Amends Tax Reform Code, in realty transfer tax, further providing for definitions, for excluded transactions, documents & acquired company; and, in inheritance tax, further providing for transfers not subject to tax.

Printer Number(s): [P0784](#) [P2590](#) [P3345](#)

Bill History: 04-30-12 S Set on the Senate Calendar

Capitol Review

Last Tuesday was Primary Election Day in Pennsylvania, and tens of voters flocked to the polls. Oh well, it's only democracy. We're sure the Republic will be just fine if 1 in 5 eligible voters makes the decisions for everyone else. Really, 20%? You could get more people to attend a Yanni concert in Compton. For a quick wrap of a few key points from Tuesday, [check out our analysis](#).

Mitt Romney [walked away with a win](#) in Pennsylvania, to the shock of no one (except perhaps Ron Paul), but failed to crack the 60% mark despite running essentially unopposed (yes, Ron Paul, we hear you already!). The Obama camp seized on this factoid and mocked Romney within nanoseconds of the polls closing, while the Romney camp recycled their prized Obama nugget about PA voters "clinging to religion and guns." Praise the Lord; pass the ammunition.

And we also learned last week, thanks to [Campaign and Elections Magazine](#), that our own Chester County is one of the top ten most crucial counties to win nationwide this fall. Memo to Chester County residents: y'all should either buy earplugs or just go ahead and move. You are about to be seriously annoyed.

Perhaps the biggest winner Tuesday night hasn't been on the ballot in Pennsylvania since 1992. Former President [Bill Clinton went two for two](#), endorsing eventual 12th CD winner Mark Critz and Democratic Attorney General candidate Kathleen Kane, who both overcame pretty big odds to win. The Clinton name still packs quite the wallop with PA Democratic Primary voters.

The state's new Voter ID law [got a trial run Tuesday](#), and a lot of newspapers reported on what impact it may have had, or if any problems arose. After digesting far too many of them, we came to this ironclad conclusion: the new Voter ID law will either cause big problems, or it won't. That's the type of analysis we know you've come to expect from us. Worth noting, however, is that Primary Day was probably not a good indication of what to expect in November, when we are fairly confident that more than 20% of voters will be schlepping to the polls.

Highmark [has found an ally](#) in its long-running battle with UPMC out in western Pennsylvania. SEIU HealthCare Pennsylvania is now weighing in, urging UPMC to come to the table and find an amicable resolution to the current stalemate. It remains to be seen whether or not UPMC is willing to listen when the state's largest health care union decides to team up with their mortal adversary.

The Delaware River Basin Commission has had a moratorium on gas drilling within the watershed in place since 2009 [while it wrestles with fracking water withdrawal guidelines](#). In the meantime, 69,000 written comments have been submitted to DRBC on the issue, representing two times the amount of people who voted in Tuesday's Primary. The Marcellus Shale Coalition is, shall we say, less than amused with the delay.

We were interested to learn this week that a few lawmakers have decided to take [the \\$35 a week food stamp challenge](#), \$35 a week being the average benefit under the SNAP program. We're sure it will be an eye-opening experience; we just hope they don't have too much trouble choosing between rice and, well, rice. We'd also like to have a guest blog from one of these soon-to-be-svelte lawmakers, so if you know anyone who is interested in sharing their thoughts on the challenge, hit us up!

Governor Tom Corbett this week continued to [defend his proposed state budget cuts](#) during a swing through the state this week. The governor has been steadfast in his opinion that the state is broke, and therefore must continue to lop off large piles of cash. The opposition forces (and there are many, trust us), are beginning to rally around the call to forgo another drop in the Capital, Stock and Franchise Tax as a way to inject a little more lucre into the budget. The battle lines have indeed come into focus.

The Department of Agriculture [this week got an earful from animal rights advocates](#) for what those folks see as a general disregard for the state's Dog Law, which many will remember was about as easy to pass through the General Assembly as a baseball-sized kidney stone. Pennsylvania's Dog Law is one of the toughest in the nation, but some folks believe the department is ignoring the enforcement end of the deal. The last thing anyone needs is another Dog Law war; that much is clear.

Staring down the barrel of a \$218 million budget deficit, there is now a plan on the table to essentially [dismantle the Philadelphia School District](#) and start from scratch. Key elements in the plan are widespread closures (40 schools right off the bat), and a massive shift of students to charter schools. Also key to the plan will be the requisite bashing of teacher and school employee salaries, because what would a reform plan be without whacking those folks in the chops? Easiest way to "reform" your school? Lay off the bus driver. Works every time.

After a streak of relentlessly bleak news on the mass transit front, we interrupt our regularly scheduled bemoaning of the system to announce that 48 SEPTA employees are now each about \$3 million richer, thanks to the fact that together they won \$172 million in the Powerball drawing. [Next stop: Easy Street!](#)

Bartender, c'mon down here. One bourbon, one scotch, and one more shot at privatizing the state's liquor stores, please! And put it on the Underhill's tab! We got a [sneak peek at the latest plan](#) to get the state out of the liquor business, and the stakes are even higher. Now, 1,600 licenses will be sold, package reform is included, and the licenses will now be auctioned on a county-by-county basis. Everyone satisfied yet? Good. Make it one for my baby and one more for the road!

Former Harrisburg receiver David Unkovic, whose departure took nearly everyone by total shock, has lawyered up, [we found out this week](#), as everyone now expects he'll soon be in front of the Commonwealth Court to provide a bit of clarification on why the wheels fell off so abruptly. We're sure that won't be a newsworthy event at all. Move along; nothing to see here.

Oh, and Harrisburg Mayor Linda Thompson is [now suing the attorney hired by City Council](#) for damages related to the city's bankruptcy appeal. Super. The only thing missing from this sordid affair thus far has been a lawsuit. That is, if you don't count the first 1,200 or so lawsuits. If you are a lawyer anywhere in this Commonwealth, we advise you to move here immediately if you are short on clients.

An environmental advocacy group has released what it is calling a ["plain language" version of Act 13](#), sort of a Shale Impact Fee Law for Dummies, we assume. For those who have an interest in the new drilling law but have a general distaste for all the "whereas", "shall", "may" and "whereupon" jazz, go check it out. Maybe they'll make it into a short film.

York and Adams County will soon be [home to natural gas refueling stations](#), mainly for fleets on public vehicles. However, if you happen to have a natural gas powered car or truck, you may partake as well. A word of caution, however: no matter how enticing that low, low fill-up price may look, do not try to fill up an internal combustion engine with natural gas.

Finally this week, the Department of Corrections announced [that as many as 1,900 inmates](#) could be out of the system today were it not for a rather clunky and inefficient process of paroling eligible inmates. At \$35,000 per inmate, that is quite a large number of people hanging around, costing taxpayers scads of money for no earthly reason.

In Other News

04-26-2012

[Aq Department: Outdoor Farmers Market to Open May 1 at PA Farm Show](#)

Complex

(Press Release)

04-26-2012

Rep. George: 814 Area code split proposal thrown out by PUC

(Press Release)

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