



**Center for Beef Excellence  
Beef Bytes  
July 24, 2012**

Dear Friends,

As many travel the turnpike this summer, take note of tolls. In 2013, EZ Pass customers will save substantially as compared to cash only travelers. Check out the new turnpike [fees](#).

Ag Progress Days is right around the corner. The event will take place August 14-16 at Rock Springs. Find a program [guide](#) and plan your trip!

Rain or lack of it has affected the Commonwealth. Read what PSU [Professor Greg Roth](#) projects regarding crop yields.

Please let us know how Versant can help.

MeeCee

**Articles of Interest**

**Pennsylvania News:**

[Promoting Gas Drilling](#)

A new campaign was launched in Harrisburg to promote the benefits of natural gas drilling in the state. Business and government leaders are pushing for support to continue investing in the industry for the jobs and income it provides.

**DEP: PENNSYLVANIA SMALL BUSINESS ADVANTAGE GRANT AVAILABILITY**

The Department of Environmental Protection announced the availability of grant funding in the eighth year of the Commonwealth's Advantage Grant Program for small business pollution prevention and energy efficiency projects. An eligible applicant must be a for-profit small business owner whose business or facility is located within the Commonwealth. To obtain an application contact Rhonda Brown at the Office of External Affairs at (717) 772-8909 or visit [www.dep.state.pa.us](http://www.dep.state.pa.us). Technical questions may be directed to [epadvantagegrant@pa.gov](mailto:epadvantagegrant@pa.gov). Applications must be submitted before 4 p.m. on September 26, 2012, or until funds are exhausted, whichever occurs first. <http://www.pabulletin.com/secure/data/vol42/42-29/1347.html>

**National News:**

[Antibiotic Regulations](#)

The American Farm Bureau Federation submitted comments on proposed FDA rules to limit the feeding of antibiotics in livestock production. AFBF argued that the decisions are based on theory rather than scientific evidence that the practice causes human health concerns.

[Animal Housing Battles](#)

The National Pork Producers Council and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association are fighting back against a deal between the United Egg Producers and the Humane Society of the United States which would provide federal regulations for housing laying hens. Agricultural groups fear that this mindset could spread and lead to more laws concerning animal welfare.

#### [Tracking Foodborne Illness](#)

Scientists from several institutions are teaming up to create a database of foodborne pathogens and their genomic sequences. This will allow for easier traceback of contamination when an outbreak occurs and better testing procedures to identify pathogens.

#### [EPA Rule Withdrawn](#)

A proposed rule from the Environmental Protection Agency would have created a public database full of information on all Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations. The National Cattlemen's Beef Association worked to have the rule withdrawn, fearing possible terrorist activity if such information were easily available.

#### [HSUS Lawsuit](#)

The Humane Society of the United States is filing a lawsuit against several large hog operations, claiming environmental violations. Ag supporters feel that this is an attempt to fight back against groups such as the National Pork Producer's Council that oppose HSUS legislation.

#### [Educating Lawmakers](#)

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association and the Nebraska Cattlemen provided an educational series, 'Beef 101,' designed to introduce congressmen to the beef industry. The event covered the makeup of the industry, changes in recent years, producer stories and time for questions.

#### **Global News:**

##### [Strong Dollar Affects Trade](#)

A strong US dollar has led to higher levels of beef imports and lower export levels. Beef imports from Australia, Canada and Mexico are all higher and total exports for the year are expected to be about 7 percent lower than in 2011.

#### **Cattle Management Articles:**

##### [Heat Stress and Breeding](#)

Pregnancy rates for cattle during hot and humid summers can be severely depressed. Research shows that the temperature on the day of insemination and the following day influenced conception rates. Cattle should be allowed access to shade and air flow during breeding season.

##### [Maternal Behaviors](#)

Cows have been selected for calm temperaments but some evidence shows that at the same time there has been an increase in poor mothering among cows. Research from Colorado State University is looking at the link between protective behaviors and other traits in cattle.

##### [Feedlot Losses](#)

2012 could be the worst year on record for cattle feeders. High calf prices and high feed prices combined to give an average loss of about \$250/head. Even well managed feedlots are seeing losses and this will influence calf prices for the season.

### [Entering Carbon Markets](#)

Research from Michigan State University has developed plans for farmers to get paid for reducing the use of nitrogen fertilizers by selling carbon credits into the carbon market. This payment will help to offset lower crop yields from changing nutrients.

### [Benefits of Technology](#)

The use of productivity-enhancing technologies in the beef industry has huge effects on the amount of land and water needed to produce beef. In addition, removing technologies would lead to an increase in the amount of carbon dioxide released and the amount of beef imported from other countries.

- 07-23-2012     [\*\*Sen. Casey: New Assistance to Help Farmers Impacted by Growing Drought\*\*](#)  
(Press Release)
- 07-23-2012     [\*\*USDA - July 1 Cattle Inventory Down 2 Percent\*\*](#)  
(Press Release)
- 07-23-2012     [\*\*Cargill Beef recalls 30,000 pounds of ground beef\*\*](#)  
SCARBOROUGH, Maine — Hannaford Supermarkets is alerting consumers that Cargill Beef is voluntarily recalling 29,339 pounds of ground beef that may contain salmonella... - [AP](#)
- 07-23-2012     [\*\*Tax code change makes keeping family farm in the family easier\*\*](#)  
Thanks to recent changes in the commonwealth's tax code, Pennsylvanians engaged in farming and other agricultural pursuits will be finding it easier to keep their assets in the family. Act 85 extends exclusions from inheritance and realty transfer taxes when... - [Warren Times Observer](#)
- 07-22-2012     [\*\*Dry year proving costly for farmers in Pennsylvania, New Jersey\*\*](#)  
As Ed Gaventa looked out onto the sprawling field of sweet corn on his 200-acre farm in Logan Township, N.J., he said the crop was looking "pretty good" thanks to the overhead watering system he uses to make up for inadequate rainfall. But keeping his crops on track comes at a price. Gaventa, a... - [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)
- 07-20-2012     [\*\*Inside PDA for July 20, 2012\*\*](#)  
(Press Release)
- 07-20-2012     [\*\*USDA: Red Meat Production in Pennsylvania Down 4 Percent in June\*\*](#)  
(Press Release)
- 07-20-2012     [\*\*Three county farmers get funds for improvements\*\*](#)  
Three Lancaster County farmers have received state and federal funds to keep barnyard runoff out of local streams and the Chesapeake Bay. Sam Glick of East Drumore Township received a \$470,542 loan to build a waste-storage facility, rebuild his barnyard to prevent runoff and add... - [Lancaster Intelligencer Journal](#)
- 07-20-2012     [\*\*Widespread Drought Is Likely to Worsen\*\*](#)  
By JOHN ELIGON KANSAS CITY, Mo. — The drought that has settled over more than half of the continental United States this summer is the most widespread in more than half a century. And it is likely to grow worse. The latest outlook released by the National Weather Service on Thursday... - [New York Times](#)

- 07-18-2012 [Heat challenges crops, cattle, farmers](#)  
Farmer Pete Flynn was "lovin' the heat," but now he is a bit worried. With only bits of rain in the forecast, a 101-degree Saturday and high in the 90s all last week and another dry week ahead, Flynn is concerned for his corn which needs rain to pollinate successfully.... - [West Chester Daily Local News](#)
- 07-17-2012 [USDA - Weekly Crop & Weather Roundup for the Week Ending July 15, 2012](#)  
(Press Release)
- 07-16-2012 [Fertilizing the farmers](#)  
THE UNITED STATES has the richest, most productive agricultural sector, and the best-fed population, in the world — perhaps in the history of the world. Boosted by \$136.3 billion in gross sales to other countries, U.S. net farm income hit a record \$98.1 billion in 2011. A new Economist Intelligence... - [Washington Post](#)

## 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:** 09-24-12 H Set on the Tabled Calendar

## Capitol Review

This week, the [Commonwealth Court will begin hearings on Pennsylvania's shiny new voter ID law](#). In light of the recent revelation that some 750,000 registered voters do not possess a driver's license or PennDOT ID, we have a bit of math to lay on you. If the Commonwealth started this week to process 750,000 photo IDs between now and election day, it would have to crank out one photo ID every four or five minutes for every hour of the business day, running five days a week.

[President Obama and Mitt Romney lent their voices of support for natural gas exploration at campaign stops](#). Romney used a western PA drilling support company as a backdrop to highlight the [benefits of spinoff jobs that are created as a result of natural gas drilling](#).

But in launching a [pro-gas industry PR initiative, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce didn't get much love from the Patriot-News](#) for using what it said was bad math in citing job creation numbers. We were as surprised as anyone to learn that "kazillion" is not an actual number.

Staying with jobs and math, this tale can be told by two headlines: ["State Jobless Rate Rises for First Time in a Year"](#) and ["PA Department of Labor and Industry Consolidates 2 Divisions Causing 24 Layoffs."](#) [Unemployment crept up from 7.4 to 7.5 percent statewide in June for the first time since July 2011](#), according to the U.S. Department of Labor. It's not much but it's real and, if the Keystone Research Center (a progressive, Harrisburg-based think tank) is correct, [it's due in large part to reduced government spending leading to government layoffs](#) (hence the L&I headline above).

This week we caught another glimpse into the popularity of tolling. Not only do average motorists and truckers not like tolls, the federal government may not be too keen on them either. The Government Accountability Office says it's probing toll increases enacted by the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and Delaware River Port Authority to [determine whether they "are remaining accountable to their congressionally approved compact."](#)

Now for our regular weekly feature, "What are those wild and crazy people in Bellevue, PA, doing." Last week, Bellevuers were up in arms over a borough council ban on backyard barbecue grills. This week, council has confused thirsty residents with a new ruling prohibiting alcoholic beverages at outdoor tables at BYOB restaurants. [You can still imbibe indoors at a "bring your own bottle" establishment but not at an outdoor table.](#) Further complicating the situation, Bellevue is a "dry" community – there is a ban on establishments licensed to sell alcoholic beverages in the borough. The borough lacks an "open container" ban, so conceivably, you could walk down Lincoln Avenue chugging an Iron City brewsky and walk past a thirsty and envious al fresco diner with his tongue hanging out.

Speaking of beverages and municipal law, kudos to Doylestown borough, on the opposite side of the state. A borough councilman there is proposing a Breastfeeding Rights ordinance, which would penalize establishments of public accommodations (restaurants, for instance) that [discriminate against breast-feeding moms.](#) The state already has a law providing for public breast feeding but, according to Doylestown Council's president, it lacks an enforcement mechanism. No word on whether it differentiates between full-service and BYOB establishments.

Did someone mention pensions? Did someone reference debt? It reminds us to mention that one of the big three financial ratings services, Moody's, [this week downgraded the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's credit rating from a stellar Aa1 to Aa2](#) – citing the state's [looming and unaddressed debt for public employee pensions.](#) Gov. Tom Corbett saw the opportunity to use the news to leverage legislative attention on the on-going pension funding crisis. Maybe the bad news will bring the executive and legislative branches to focus on a joint solution – something that hasn't happened at the municipal level in Harrisburg or Scranton. One other footnote: Of the three ratings agencies, Moody's Investor Services has been the most volatile in evaluating Pennsylvania's public debt. Over the past two or three years, it's vacillated between Aa1 and Aa2 more than a dozen times, depending on the state agency issuing the debt. Meanwhile, evaluations have been more stable at Standard and Poor's and Fitch's.

Seems like only last month that we were saying goodbye to one of the General Assembly's outstanding young leaders when state Sen. John Pippy announced his resignation to take up the cause of advocating or "big coal" in Pennsylvania. [This week, state Rep. Mike Gerber announced that he would end his legislative career at the close of the current session](#) in order to become a senior vice president at a Philadelphia investment firm. Pippy, of suburban Pittsburgh, was an extremely popular Republican with a reputation for working well with members of both parties. Gerber, from Montgomery County, was an extremely popular Democrat with a reputation for working well with members of both parties. Both will be missed.

That wraps us this week's commentary. Have a good one!

***In Other News***

- 07-23-2012 [\*\*Pa. Turnpike Commission OKs 2013 Toll Increase Effective Jan. 6, 2013\*\*](#)  
(Press Release)
- 07-22-2012 [\*\*Searching for Clues to Calamity\*\*](#)  
SO far 2012 is on pace to be the hottest year on record. But does this mean that we've reached a threshold — a tipping point that signals a climate disaster? For those warning of global warming, it would be tempting to say so. The problem is, no one knows if there is a point at which a climate system... - [\*New York Times\*](#)
- 07-20-2012 [\*\*Pa. officials to unveil new voter-ID card\*\*](#)  
HARRISBURG - The details aren't final yet. But Pennsylvania election officials will soon unveil a photo-identification card intended to make it easier for voters to comply with the state's new voter-ID law. The card is to be formally announced in the next few weeks and will be... - [\*Philadelphia Inquirer\*](#)
- 07-19-2012 [\*\*DEP Declares Drought Watch for 15 Western Pennsylvania Counties\*\*](#)  
(Press Release)
- 07-19-2012 [\*\*Method may reverse egg allergies\*\*](#)  
First peanuts, now eggs... - [\*AP\*](#)
- 07-18-2012 [\*\*Rep. Curry: FDA bans BPA in baby bottles\*\*](#)  
(Press Release)
- 07-18-2012 [\*\*Chairman Markosek: Untangling PA Budget Revenue & Expenditures\*\*](#)  
(Press Release)