

President's Letter
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May, 2012

In the last couple of issues of the Udder Report, I have been talking about education and the media. Last month, as I am sure you all know, USDA found a BSE infected cow on a random test from a rendering plant in California. I know when I heard the news, I cringed. First things that came to my mind were that both the milk and beef prices were going to crash and that there would be a media frenzy. Much to my surprise, the media seemed to cover it in the best way they could have – by emphasizing that it was an “atypical” case and reassuring the public that it would not have entered the food stream as beef and that BSE is not found in milk. I also tried to watch the export market to see if countries would back off their imports of U.S. beef and dairy products. I can also say that I was pleasantly surprised that there were no major episodes.

Farm Bill 2012?

One of the hot topics right now in Washington is the Farm Bill. Just the name in itself to me is a misnomer. Over the past few months, there have been political debates on what is included in the farm bill. Depending on which side of the fence you are sitting on, criticism flies about money that is used to subsidize farmers across the nation or that the majority of the farm bill is used for subsidizing something other than farms. I have read that depending on the bill anywhere between 75% and 85% of the funds are used for programs that do not include farms. So this is named the Farm Bill because???? Personally I think that this is a crime and that it is giving agriculture in general a bad name. It makes it seem that agriculture is taking so much in government subsidies when in fact the vast majority of the bill is going somewhere else.

One farm related program that is included in the bill is the Dairy Security Act. This is something that we all hope will help the industry take some of the volatility out of the markets. As we have all seen in the past, what goes into Congress and what comes out of Congress can be two very different things with the same name. So please contact your Senators and Representatives and ask them to support the Dairy Security Act without payment limitations. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the office.