

## **Cattlemen Applaud USDA Efforts to Move Towards Fairness and Transparency**

Kansas cattlemen are pleased with the newly proposed USDA antitrust rules. For two years, Kansas Cattlemen's Association worked extensively with over 100 other groups to create the first ever livestock title in the 2008 Farm Bill. USDA's proposed rules stem from that Farm Bill and would protect from unfair practices, retaliations, and fraud.

"All producers should be very happy that USDA has proposed rules that would provide more fairness to all producers. In recent years there's been an argument for a free market system. That is a great opportunity. But for whom? If a free market system allows for discrimination, for coercion, and for manipulation, tactics prohibited by law according to the Packers and Stockyards Act, then a free market system only benefits those in power capable of discrimination, coercion, and manipulation. A free market system is only a great opportunity if it is also a fair. That is all the producers want. Fairness and transparency has been a goal of KCA since we were founded in 1998. Our goal has always been to keep the industry alive the thriving. USDA's proposed rule is a step in that direction," stated KCA Executive Director Brandy Carter."

In the last 20 years, the number of livestock operations in the industry have dwindled, big businesses have gotten bigger, vertical integration have increased, and consolidation has allowed big business to exude power over smaller segments of the industry.

USDA's rules provide clarification and definition to what is currently vague language relating to unfair practices and discriminatory actions. USDA is also providing protections for producers and ensuring that producers are not required to relinquish their rights. Transparency is another aspect of USDA proposed rule. Most importantly, the proposed rule will allow for better enforcement of the P&S Act.

"It is nice to have clarification of the standing rules which should result in actual enforcement of the regulations already in place," remarked KCA President Perry Owens.

"The Packers and Stockyards Act was put in place in 1921 to provide the very protections that USDA is proposing now. USDA is simply providing definitions and expanding on protections as the industry has changed over the last 90 years. The P&S Act has been virtually ineffective because of the vagueness in the language, the lack of enforcement, and the ability to circumvent the law because of it. This is a great opportunity to stand behind the law and do what is right for the entire industry," Carter continued.

KCA encourages every producer to submit their comments to USDA. Comments will be accepted by GIPSA through August 23, 2010. Comments can be sent via email to

[comments.gipsa@usda.gov](mailto:comments.gipsa@usda.gov) or by mail to Tess Butler, GIPSA, USDA, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 1643-S, Washington, D.C. 20250-3604.