

# Rule changes animal disposal

By PAULA MOHR

FOR the past several months, state livestock officials and leaders have been working relentlessly to inform producers about a new FDA dead cattle rule that they expect will have a negative effect on how farmers dispose of carcasses.

The rule takes effect April 27. It says cattle over 30 months of age cannot be rendered for animal feed unless their brains and spinal cords are removed first. There is no grace period, and the supply chain must be

## Key Points

- Rule prohibits use of rendered brain and stem tissue.
- Renderers might stop hauling away some dead cattle.
- Farmers might be forced to compost dead cattle.

cleared of prohibited materials before that date. Once removed, prohibited material must be dyed. Renderers and their suppliers must keep records proving compliance. Also, tallow fed to ruminants must have less than 0.15% impurities.

The FDA regulation was passed to prevent the spread of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or BSE.

State officials are concerned that farmers, faced with either increased disposal fees or no dead animal removal service, may drag animals into the woods or back fields, and either bury them or let them decompose in the open.

"This is a huge issue," says Curt Zimmerman, Minnesota Department of Agriculture livestock development specialist. The agency believes livestock producers may see rendering

impacts as early as March 1. By that time, renderers would have made the decision whether or not to pick up a farm's dead cattle older than 30 months. Renderers say that the special handling of these animals to remove brains and spinal cords will add to their cost of business. Rather than invest in equipment, they may simply stop accepting the cattle.

MDA formed an ag rendering study group to examine the potential impact of the rule on rendering services in Minnesota. The group includes farmers, renderers and processors.

Recommendations are being made to the ag commissioner on how to proceed.

Central Bi-Products, the rendering division of Farmers Union Industries LLC, Redwood Falls, announced last month that it will continue to pick up dead animals over 30 months of age in current service areas for an additional \$35 per animal. The fee will cover the additional expense to properly remove and process FDA-prohibited animals. The company will issue more details about the new fee schedule this month and implement changes April 1.

# Schuster receives MCIA Achievement Award

By PAULA MOHR

THE Minnesota Crop Improvement Association honored Ken Schuster, a second-generation seed grower from Argyle, with its 2009 Achievement in Crop Improvement Award. The award, sponsored by *The Farmer*, was presented at MCIA's dinner banquet in January.

Schuster grew up on a family farm on the North Dakota banks of the Red River. After graduating from high school, he held a variety of jobs, including worker at a sugar processing plant, a warehouse foreman for the Minuteman missile project and a skyscraper welder.

In 1966, he and his father-in-law built a seed conditioning plant on the family farm and later purchased a former GTA



JUDY AND KEN SCHUSTER

elevator at Argyle, 13 miles east of the farm and 60 feet higher in elevation. Their product brand name: La Riviere Rouge, which is French for "the Red River."

In 1970, they built a pelleting plant for grain byproducts. Since that time, processed grain screening products have been shipped to many states,

including Texas, Oklahoma, California, Colorado, Nebraska, Montana and Wyoming, as well as the Dakotas and Minnesota. In addition, Schuster has been active in various bison grower meetings across the U.S.

"One of the greatest rewards in the business has been building our plants and putting out a finished product," Schuster says. "We did a lot of the construction work ourselves."

After 42 years in the seed business, Schuster retired from Rivard's Quality Seeds at the end of January.

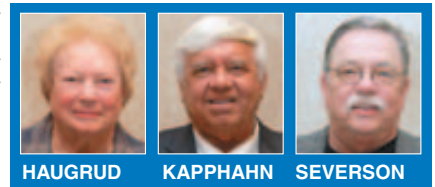
Other MCIA award winners were:

■ *Helen Ann Haugrud and John Kapphahn, Premier Seedsman Awards.* Haugrud, Haugrud Seed Plant, Rothsay, developed an interest in

the seed business in the late 1950s after marrying her husband Harlan. She earned the nickname "Seed Inspector General" as she checked seed plants for cleanliness. The Haugruds have been MCIA Foundation Seed producers for many years.

Kapphahn, Elbow Lake, started raising seed in 1973 to produce better seed for his family's farm. Since 1984, he has been a MCIA member, producing certified edible beans, barley, soybeans and wheat seed.

■ *Russ Severson, Honorary Premier Seedsman Award.* Severson is the regional Extension educator-crops in the



HAUGRUD

KAPPAHN

SEVERSON

Crookston office. Besides conducting educational events and research plots, Severson has served as West Polk County Crop Improvement Association secretary. He organizes the seed distribution committee.

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## Contact us:

Editor: Paula Mohr  
pmohr@farmprogress.com  
18725 St. Francis Blvd., Anoka, MN 55303  
Phone: 763-753-4388. Fax: 763-753-4136

## Contributing Editors:

Tom J. Bechman, Dan Crummett, Pam Golden, Alan Newport, John Otte, J.T. Smith, Arlan Suderman, Lon Tonneson, John Vogel

Executive Editor: Frank Holdmeyer

Corporate Editorial Director: Willie Vogt, 651-454-6994, wvogt@farmprogress.com

Sales: Scott Harrison, 651-451-9693, and Steve Keppy, 715-224-2103

Subscription questions: Call 800-441-1410. For additional sales and company information, see the last page of Marketplace section.

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# State soybean leaders help form U.S. Soybean Federation

By PAULA MOHR

A NEW national soybean farm group was formed last month after actions taken by the American Soybean Association.

The U.S. Soybean Federation was organized with one main mission: to represent all soybean farmers through advocacy and policy.

"We need an organization like USSF that will have no other focus than to fairly, vigorously and effectively represent the voice of all U.S. soybean farmers in the federal legislative process," says Lance Peterson, newly elected USSF president, Underwood.

Recent actions taken by the ASA triggered the need for a new organization, says Peterson, former Minnesota Soybean Grower Association president and an ASA board

director. Last month, ASA petitioned USDA for an audit and investigation of the United Soybean Board and U.S. Soybean Export Council. ASA alleges that the two organizations have mismanaged and misspent soybean checkoff dollars. USB and some state organizations deny the accusations, calling them sensational and unfounded. Some state soybean growers say that the two organizations have had disagreements for several years on key issues. They agree with the USDA audit, but not with how ASA has handled the issue in the media.

## Board organization

USSF will be comprised primarily of existing state soybean associations or new state soybean federations. USSF will not serve as a member organization; rather it will serve as a

coordinating entity to ensure focused U.S. soybean farmer representation on Capitol Hill.

In its first board meeting, USSF founding state organizations were accepted, founding officers were elected and the board of directors was confirmed. The founding organizations are the Minnesota Soybean Growers Association and the Missouri Soybean Association. Officers are President Lance Peterson; Vice President Warren Stemme, Chesterfield, Mo.; and Secretary/Treasurer Jerry Slocum, Coldwater, Miss. Other founding directors are Larry Muff, Mark Brown and Bob Wirth, Minnesota; and Greg Sharpe, Kelly Forck and Brooks Hurst, Missouri.

USSF will be governed by a delegate body with a board of directors and officer team. After affiliation is accepted,

each state will be allowed 10 farmer-delegates. Of those farmer-delegates, three will become directors of the USSF board.

## ASA: 'ill-conceived'

ASA called the USSF's formation "illogical" and the result of "a few disgruntled checkoff and state leaders [who are attempting] to ... undermine ASA's efforts for an audit and investigation of the national soybean checkoff."

"At ASA, we believe the action proposed by a few farmers to establish a soybean federation is a radical and ill-conceived move," says ASA President Johnny Dodson, Halls, Tenn.

As of mid-January, Minnesota and Missouri were still members of ASA.

Sources: USSF and ASA press releases.