



03-13-09

Cattlemen's group plans new anti-ethanol-subsidy strategy

By Agri-Pulse Staff

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In an abrupt course change, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) announced Friday that "as part of a revamped strategy to eliminate government intervention in the renewable energy market, it is withdrawing as a member of the Food Before Fuel Coalition."

"The Food Before Fuel Coalition has been a good partner in our efforts to raise awareness about the harmful impacts of the government's excessive subsidization of the ethanol industry," says Gary Voogt, President of NCBA and rancher from Marne, MI. "As the Coalition's work broadens, however, we remain focused on a single goal: ensuring a level playing field for our cattle producers."

"Soaring feed costs and government payments to the ethanol industry are hurting small businesses and family ranches," Voogt explains. "Cattle producers don't ask for subsidies, just equal footing."

NCBA says it is working to "level the playing field for America's cattle producers" by reducing or eliminating the three government interventions for the ethanol industry: the renewable fuels mandate, the blender's tax credit, and the import tariff. NCBA continues to support a market-based approach for the production and usage of ethanol, explaining that "Our members and producers know that the marketplace offers many adequate risk management tools to utilize when building an industry. Government interventions via mandates and subsidies are never substitutes for good business practices. . . We support the development of alternative and renewable energy sources that do not compete with livestock for feed."

"After 30 years of support, corn-based ethanol is still reliant on government subsidies to be commercially viable," Voogt says. "It is time to stop propping up this industry at the expense of cattle producers."