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NCBA, PLC Welcome EPA Decision to Retain Current Dust Standard

— Groups Still Support Legislation to Prevent Future Threats

WASHINGTON (Oct. 17, 2011) – The [National Cattlemen's Beef Association](#) (NCBA) and the [Public Lands Council](#) (PLC) welcomed news from Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Lisa Jackson that the decision has been made to retain the current coarse particulate matter (dust) standard. This decision is subsequent to the onslaught of pressure from NCBA, PLC and several members of Congress to convince EPA not to regulate farm dust at levels twice as stringent as the current standard. According to Bill Donald, NCBA president and Montana rancher, the groups maintain that no science-based evidence exists that would justify the burdensome, costly regulation that would have resulted in farmers and ranchers being fined for working in dusty environments in rural America.

“This is refreshing news. The consequences of EPA regulating farm dust at levels twice as stringent as the current standard would have undoubtedly forced many farmers and ranchers into nonattainment, which would have resulted in enormous fines and would have jeopardized the future of many farms and ranches,” said Donald. “While we are pleased with Administrator Jackson’s decision to lean on common sense and science, this issue is far from resolved.”

Donald said the fact that family farmers and ranchers are subject to a federal dust standard in the first place is unreasonable. NCBA and PLC are still concerned that EPA could consider imposing unmanageable dust regulations on farmers and ranchers in the future. This is why NCBA and PLC continue to support legislation, Farm Dust Regulation Prevention Act, proposed by Senator Mike Johanns (R-Neb.) and Congresswoman Kristi Noem (R-S.D.). NCBA and PLC were joined by 124 other organizations in a [letter](#) to the House Subcommittee on Energy and Power supporting H.R. 1633, the dust prevention bill. This legislation would essentially exempt farmers and ranchers from the federal regulation of dust as long as it is regulated at the state or local levels of government.

John Falen, PLC president and Nevada rancher, said dust is a reality in rural America and a state approach makes much more sense than the “one-size-fits-all approach” by the distant federal government.

“The fact is there is no science showing that farm dust is a health risk at ambient levels. It’s amazing to think that one agency’s heavy hand could have such a wide-reaching and devastating impact on so many farming and ranching families across the country,” said Falen. “In the short-term, livestock producers have scored a victory but we all need to be aware that this issue could come back to in the future. We must rally together and support legislative action to prevent the future threat of unreasonable dust regulation.”