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THE HOT BLOG

Saturday, May 03, 2008

## Perry: Ethanol Messes with Texas [Drew Thornley]

Responding to soaring food prices, Texas Governor Rick Perry last week asked the feds for a 50-percent waiver from the federal renewable fuel standard (RFS) mandate for grain ethanol.

The artificial demand for grain-derived ethanol is devastating the livestock industry in Texas and needlessly creating a negative impact on our state's otherwise strong economy while driving up food prices around the world. . . . Texas plays a significant role in feeding and fueling the nation. Not only is our state the nation's largest beef producer, Texas also ranks in the top 10 states in poultry/egg and dairy production, which rely heavily on corn-based products for feed. . . . According to the USDA, two-thirds of the 149,000 cattle producers in Texas have fewer than 50 head of cattle. Granting this waiver will provide all Texans much needed relief at the grocery store, and it will enable the Texas livestock industry to continue providing its significant share of our nation's food supply.

Perry's request was greeted with enthusiasm by Kathleen Hartnett White, former chairwoman of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and the current director of the Center for Natural Resources at the Texas Public Policy Foundation (where I work). White praised Perry "for recognizing the damage caused to Texas consumers and businesses by the mandatory federal renewable fuel standard for grain-based ethanol" and referred to a "growing mountain of evidence reveals the economic and environmental folly of federal ethanol policy."

Much has been posted on Planet Gore about ethanol's shortcomings and its role in the current global food-price increases. It's high time a high-level policymaker called out Washington for its misguided and destructive energy course, and more need to add their voices. In the meantime, sorry about your overpriced tortillas and ground beef and corn syrup and . . .

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