

## News 9

### **Oklahoma Cattlemen Oppose Cow Flatulence Fee**

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**By Jennifer Pierce**

Cattlemen say a "cow gas tax" could put some of them out of business after the Environmental Protection Agency began cracking down on harmful gases emitted not only from cars and factories, but farmland.

"It's a naturally-occurring thing," argues Scott Dewald of the Oklahoma Cattleman's Association. "It's going to happen whether you tax it or not."

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, the gas cow emit is linked to global warming, which is a notion the Oklahoma Cattleman's Association isn't buying.

"That is completely erroneous," Dewald said.

What Dewald can prove is that a livestock tax would make a huge impact on one of Oklahoma biggest industries.

He argues the tax could cost producers about \$88 per head.

"In a good year, we may make \$50 to \$100 per head profit, and you add the gas tax, which is completely ridiculous to put that in the clean air act, would devastate our producers and put them out of business," Dewald said.

Scott and other cattle producers have taken their concerns to Congress.

Congressman Frank Lucas wants to stop the EPA from classifying cows as dangerous biological factories, which is why he recently filed a bill on the subject.

"I filed my bill basically to say, 'Hands off. Cattle are not factories. Cattle are in a different category. Cattle should be left alone,'" Congressman Lucas said.

The bill did get the attention of the EPA, but Congressman Lucas says the fight isn't over yet.

"Until this is over with, we're not safe," Congressman Lucas said. "I think we are in a better footing now than we were before because we've got the EPA's attention."

The American Farm Bureau Federation fears the EPA could place a fee on cattle producers who have more than 25 dairy cows, 50 beef cattle or 200 hogs.

The EPA has officially denied it's considering a proposed fee on farm animals, but Congressman Lucas says it is still an issue given the energy tax bill the President is pushing.