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Cattlemen's Determination Pays Off as Department of Labor Halts Efforts to Impose More Regulations

Last year when the Department of Labor proposed a rule that would prohibit youth from working on family owned farms, Kansas Cattlemen's Association along with many other organizations and legislators publicly denounced the rule and defended the values, experiences, and opportunities that agriculture provides to young people.

Not only did KCA publicly denounce these rules, KCA also contacted the Department of Labor, submitted public comments, and utilized relationships in Washington D.C. to make sure legislators understood the negative impact this rule had on family farms. With all of the efforts, the Department of Labor announced last week that it has withdrawn its proposed rule.

A Department of Labor statement released last week said, "The decision to withdraw this rule - including provisions to define the 'parental exemption' - was made in response to thousands of comments expressing concerns about the effect of the proposed rules on small family-owned farms. To be clear, this regulation will not be pursued for the duration of the Obama administration."

Kansas Cattlemen's Association is pleased with this announcement. Many farms and ranches are family owned and passed down through generations. Multiple family members come together to manage and operate the family farm, and often teenagers and youth assist and work with extended family to accomplish everyday tasks. Those youth experiences, working alongside their elders, build character, create bonding time, and teach responsibility. This proposed rule would have stifled many of those opportunities for youth.

This proposed rule would have also impacted 4-H and FFA members. 4-H prepares young people to step up to the challenges in their community and the world. Through practical, hands-on programs and experiences, including livestock handling, 4-H youth develop the skills to become leaders. Even more, research shows that young people involved in these hands on experiences, achieve higher grades in school, are more likely to attend college, and contribute to their communities at higher rates than their peers.

Although this potential regulation has been retracted, KCA will continue to monitor the Obama administration and work to ensure unrealistic and cumbersome regulations are not imposed on producers and rural communities.