

By: Guillen, Gonzalez Toureilles

H.C.R. No. 120

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, South Texas is on the front line of the battle
2 against the fever tick, a pest that threatens to inflict
3 catastrophic losses on the beef industry should it continue to
4 spread beyond a permanent quarantine zone established along the Rio
5 Grande in 1943; and

6 WHEREAS, Historically, the fever tick ranged across the
7 entire southeastern United States, reaching as far north as
8 Maryland and Pennsylvania; the tick can carry and transmit a
9 parasite that causes cattle tick fever, which kills up to 90 percent
10 of infected cattle; in 1893, the Texas Animal Health Commission was
11 founded to fight this scourge, and in 1907 the United States
12 Department of Agriculture established the National Cattle Fever
13 Tick Eradication Program; by then, the tick had already caused
14 direct and indirect economic losses estimated to equal more than \$1
15 billion in today's dollars; and

16 WHEREAS, The eradication program had successfully contained
17 the fever tick to an 852-square-mile quarantine zone by 1943; the
18 tick was never eliminated in Mexico, however, and personnel from
19 the USDA Tick Force have maintained a high level of vigilance to
20 fight continuous reintroduction; after the pest was detected beyond
21 the zone in 2007, five temporary preventive quarantine areas were
22 established, covering more than one million acres in Starr, Zapata,
23 Jim Hogg, Maverick, Dimmit, and Webb Counties; and

24 WHEREAS, In March 2008, the Texas Department of Agriculture

1 requested some \$13 million to fight the spread of fever ticks; the
2 USDA released \$5.2 million, and in January 2009 it committed
3 another \$4.9 million in emergency funds, but sustained funding over
4 the long term is essential; moreover, the National Fever Tick
5 Eradication Strategic Plan, developed and approved by the USDA in
6 2006, has never been implemented and funded, and Dr. Bob Hillman,
7 the state veterinarian and executive director of the Texas Animal
8 Health Commission, has warned that fever ticks are a national
9 livestock threat that requires an all-out assault; and

10 WHEREAS, The fever tick has gained substantial ground in this
11 state, but the Texas Department of Agriculture, the Texas Animal
12 Health Commission, and the USDA Tick Force continue working
13 diligently with cattle owners to save a key component of the Lone
14 Star State's agricultural economy and prevent the battlefront from
15 extending to other states; if the fever tick is not contained, the
16 cost to the cattle industry could easily approach \$1 billion a year
17 and lead to rising food costs for consumers; now, therefore, be it

18 RESOLVED, That the 81st Legislature of the State of Texas
19 hereby memorialize the Congress of the United States to make
20 eradication of the fever tick in South Texas a priority and continue
21 to provide appropriate funding and resources for this effort; and,
22 be it further

23 RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official
24 copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to
25 the speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the
26 senate of the United States Congress, and to all members of the
27 Texas delegation to Congress with the request that this resolution

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1 be officially entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to
2 the Congress of the United States of America.