

PROTECT GAINS



NCBA unveils top policy priorities for 2020.

Compiled by Shauna Hermel, editor

The Executive Committee of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) approved the organization's top 2020 Policy Priorities Feb. 5 at the annual Cattle Industry Convention in San Antonio, Texas.

Similar to last year, NCBA's top policy priorities include issues related to international trade, proper regulation of fake meat, and regulatory reform. After a series of significant policy victories in 2019, this year's priority list is focused on implementing and protecting those gains while further advancing progress into new territory.

For example, NCBA efforts helped secure bilateral trade deals with Japan, China and the European Union, as well as the ratification of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) in 2019. In 2020, NCBA's focus will turn to implementing those deals and expanding access in those markets,

as well as newly changed markets like the post-Brexit United Kingdom.

Likewise, after securing proper regulatory oversight of fake meat by the USDA and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), NCBA in the coming year will work to build on that successful regulatory framework while advancing bipartisan legislative efforts like the *Real MEAT Act* in the U.S. House and Senate to end deceptive labeling of plant-based fake meat.

"America's cattle producers have made tremendous and historic progress on the policy front over the past year," said NCBA President Jennifer Houston. "Now

it's time to implement and defend those gains and to keep pushing for policies that will help improve conditions for cattle producers so they can better provide the nation and the world with delicious and nutritious U.S. beef."

This year's priorities include an issue that was a late addition to last year's list after Congressional introduction of the so-called *Green New Deal: climate policy*. NCBA plans to "continue to push back against misguided climate policies while advancing the U.S. cattle industry's tremendous environmental record, upholding the U.S. cattle industry as the global model for sustainable beef production."

In the year ahead, NCBA also plans to prioritize the importance of cattle markets — specifically promoting "policy that creates markets free from unfair practices and manipulation both in the fundamental markets and the cattle futures markets."

The association will aggressively pursue final rules on key regulatory issues and defend victories on issues like the *Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) / Navigable Waters Protection Rule*, *2020 Dietary Guidelines*, *Endangered Species Act* modernization, electronic logging devices, and comprehensive reform of the *National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)*.

"NCBA is a true member-driven organization, and these policy priorities reflect a lot of hard work, debate and study by a lot of grassroots-level cattle producers who have chosen to get involved in the policy process," Houston said. "Some folks will always be content to throw stones from the sidelines. NCBA members choose to fight — and win — on the front lines."

For a fact sheet on NCBA's 2020 Policy Priorities, visit <http://bit.ly/NCBA-P1>. To read NCBA's full 2020 Policy Book, which includes all of the organization's detailed policy positions, visit <http://bit.ly/NCBA-P2>.

Continued on page 94

Smith elected president of NCBA

Fifth-generation Florida rancher Marty Smith was elected president of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) at the annual Cattle Industry Convention Feb. 8. He succeeds Jennifer Houston of Sweetwater, Tenn.

Smith operates Smith Brothers-Wacahoota LLC, a cow-calf operation in central Florida that has been in continuous operation since 1852. It retains ownership through feedyards in Texas, Kansas and Iowa.

Smith graduated from the University of Georgia (UGA) with a bachelor's degree in ag economics and animal science. While at UGA, he was on the livestock judging team and served as president of Ag Hill Council. He was also active in Alpha Gamma Rho and AGHON, the highest honor a UGA student of agriculture, forestry, veterinary medicine or engineering can attain.

He graduated from the University of Florida College of Law and was admitted to the Florida Bar in 1984.

"It's a tremendous honor to lead the oldest and largest national organization representing America's cattle producers," Smith said. "We have a great product with a great story, and I'm looking forward to helping tell that story without apology during the year ahead as president of NCBA."

Smith was formally elected at a meeting of NCBA's board of directors, who also set the rest of the officer team for the coming year:

- ▶ Jerry Bohn of Kansas was named president-elect;
- ▶ Don Schiefelbein of Minnesota was elected vice president;
- ▶ Todd Wilkinson of South Dakota was elected chairman of the NCBA Policy Division;

- ▶ Wyoming rancher Mark Eisele was elected policy vice chairman of the NCBA Policy Division;
- ▶ Buck Wehrbein of Nebraska was elected chairman of the NCBA Federation Division; and
- ▶ Scott McGregor of Iowa was elected vice chairman of the NCBA Federation Division.

NCBA's Board of Directors meeting and the selection of a new slate of officers capped a huge week in San Antonio, where more than 8,000 people met for the annual Cattle Industry Convention and NCBA Trade Show.

Convention attendees heard from speakers like U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue, who also greeted visitors on the Trade Show floor Wednesday afternoon. Participants received updates about how their beef checkoff dollars are being used to promote

beef consumption, set public policy priorities for the coming year, and honored Blackbeard's Ranch in Myakka, Fla., as the winner of the 2019 Environmental Stewardship Award Program (ESAP). The Convention ended Friday, Feb. 7, with the 2020 NCBA Professional Bull Riding (PBR) Invitational competition at the Alamodome.

"I want to thank everyone who took time away from their operations to join us in San Antonio this week," Smith said. "I know that getting involved in promoting our industry or pushing for better public policy is often a sacrifice, but our grassroots members of NCBA are always willing to do what it takes to get the job done."

The 2021 Convention will be Feb. 3-5 in Nashville, Tenn. ■