

Convention Tackles Tough Issues

Approximately 6,500 cattlemen from across the nation gathered Feb. 2-5 in San Antonio, Texas, for the 2005 Cattle Industry Annual Convention & Trade Show — an event featuring meetings by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association

(NCBA), the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion & Research Board (CBB), the American National CattleWomen (ANCW), National Cattlemen's Foundation (NCF) and Cattle-Fax. While the following overview contains basic convention news,

interested producers can visit www.4cattlemen.com — Angus Production Inc.'s (API's) real-time Web site — for more detailed convention coverage including audio recordings; proceeding papers; PowerPoint® presentations; and

summaries of Cattlemen's College® sessions, industry forums, panels, lectures and award ceremonies.

Addressing concerns

At the top of the agenda for attendees, and at the heart of many presentations, was the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) plans to open live cattle and beef trade, with few exceptions, from Canada. Highlighting the issue was the much-anticipated report presented by NCBA's delegation of U.S. producers that completed a fact-finding mission to Canada. The nine-member delegation delivered its findings regarding the country's fed-cattle supply, expanded harvest capacity and export projections during a Beef Industry Issues Forum Feb. 3. The group also reported on Canada's bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) surveillance program and feed manufacturer compliance.

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns also tackled trade concerns during his address to convention goers Friday morning. In his first speech outside of Washington, D.C., as Agriculture Secretary, Johanns voiced his views regarding live cattle and beef trade with Canada as well as barriers with Japan.

Besides Canadian trade concerns, national animal identification (ID), overseas trade barriers, market forecasts, animal health and beef safety concerns were among other hot topics discussed during the four-day event, which also featured the popular Cattlemen's College. University researchers and industry experts presented their latest findings and offered cattlemen advice during Pfizer Animal Health's educational sessions Feb. 2.

Committee and council meetings also played integral roles at the event, where NCBA members passed policy renewals, resolutions, amendments and directives. During the NCBA Annual Membership Meeting Feb. 5 decisions were made and policy was set for the future of the industry. The meeting also served as an avenue for honoring industry leaders.

Former NCBA president Jan Lyons was honored with *BEEF* magazine's 2004 Trailblazer Award, while Frank "Sonny" W. Williamson Jr. and Frank "Wes" Williamson III, of Williamson Cattle Co., Okeechobee, Fla., accepted the Environmental Stewardship Award Program (ESAP) national title.

Jim Schwertner of Capital Land and Livestock in Schwertner, Texas, was honored with the national Beef Industry Vision Award, presented by the NCF, and 20 students were recognized for winning \$1,500-scholarships provided by the Chicago Mercantile Exchange Inc. (CME) and the NCF. Alan Kelley, a cow-calf producer from Saint Cloud, Fla., received the Max Deets Leadership Scholarship, also presented by the NCF (further award information is available online or in Association Link on page 6).

For a complete list of winners as well as complete convention coverage, visit www.4cattlemen.com, sponsored by Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica, Inc.