Feeding the World

2013 ILC continues to focus on meeting the challenge of feeding a growing world population.

by **SHAUNA ROSE HERMEL,**
editor

Livestock industry stakeholders gathered in Denver, Colo., Jan. 15 for the International Livestock Congress–USA 2013 (ILC). Attended by nearly 200 industry representatives, the congress addressed the theme, "Feeding the World II: Meeting the Challenge."

It has been projected that the world population will grow to around 9 billion people by the year 2050. In order to meet this daunting challenge, we will need to double the current production of food. The 2013 ILC provided an opportunity to learn more from both domestic and international industry experts about the challenges the industry will face with respect to meeting the demand for beef in the future.

Gary Smith keynoted the Congress with a review of how the technologies implemented during the past 50 years have helped get the beef industry to where it is today and a look at the role of technologies in moving our industry into the future. Smith also addressed the importance of telling the beef story and becoming more transparent for today's consumers (see "Telling the Beef Story," page 82).

It is a well-known fact that the success of the beef industry today, and in the future, will be dependent upon meeting the demands of our consumers. John Lundeen, executive director of market research with the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), discussed the latest market research focused on identifying the drivers of beef demand both domestically and internationally (see "What Are Our Consumers Telling Us?" page 84).

The global beef industry has changed significantly during the past several years and there will be many changes ahead for the beef industry. An international panel moderated by Phil Seng, CEO of the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) discussed current issues affecting the beef industry worldwide and what the future might hold (see "Beef Industry Worldwide," page 86).

Sustainability is a buzzword among consumers and in the ag industry. Meeting the challenge of feeding the world will be dependent upon the ability of our industry to become more sustainable moving forward, but what is sustainable? Panelists Cameron Bruett, JBS Swift; Cristain Barcan, BASF; John Pollak, U.S. Meat Animal Research Center (USMARC); and Kim Stackhouse, NCBA, provided multiple perspectives (see "Sustainability," page 88).

The USDA announced a nationwide animal identification system for disease traceability on Dec. 20, 2012. Published in the *Federal Register* Jan. 9, the final rule will take effect 60 days later, March 11. Where does that put the beef industry? Leann Saunders, Where Food Comes From Inc., moderated a panel consisting of Mark Gustafson, JBS; Rick Scott, AgriBeef; and John Butler, Beef Marketing Group, to answer that question (see "Traceability: Where Are We Now?" page 90).

Russell Cross, head of the Department of Animal Science at Texas A&M University, discussed a lack of funding for animal-related research as well as a lack of lobby efforts to rectify the situation. The National Association for the Advancement of Animal Science was created in the summer of 2012 to fill the void and to advocate for increased federal investment in animal science to support future animal-related research (see "Science Does Matter," page 92).

Sustainability may well hinge on the industry's ability to communicate with consumers. Darren Williams, NCBA, provided an update on the Masters of Beef Advocacy Program, which to date has trained more than 4,000 spokespersons for the beef industry (see "Ready to Advocate," page 97). Students from Texas A&M University shared how they organized the "Farmers Fight" effort to train students to communicate with their non-agricultural peers about all facets of agriculture (see "Farmers Fight," page 94).

Expanded coverage will be provided in the *Angus Journal*.

Editor's Note: *This article was put together using a news release about the congress.*

Telling the Beef Story

Gary Smith addresses meeting the challenge of feeding the world.

by **KASEY MILLER,**
associate editor

By now, most people understand the challenge that American farmers and ranchers will have to produce more food in the next 50 years than they have in the last 10,000 years with the same amount (or less) arable land, but what is the game plan for achieving that? Gary Smith, emeritus distinguished professor at Colorado State University, told participants of the 2013 International Livestock Congress in Denver Jan. 15 that 70% of the answer would be in technology.

> **The use of technologies may make sense to cattle producers, but do the consumers understand?**

To feed more people, there are three options, Smith said. The first is to increase the amount of arable land. The second is to increase grazing, but not arable, land. The third, and most realistic, is to increase efficiency of production on arable and grazing lands.

Smith cited a 2009 Iowa State University study reported by John Lawrence that indicated that in the cow-calf sector, eliminating the use of growth-promoting implants, dewormers and fly control would increase the breakeven price by 47%, a value of $274 per calf. In the stocking sector, removal of growth-promoting implants, ionophores, antimicrobial therapy, dewormers and fly control would increase the breakeven price by 13%, a value of $95 per calf. Lastly, in the feedlot sector, removal of growth-promoting implants, ionophores, antimicrobial therapy, beta-agonists and dewormers would increase the breakeven price by 13%, a value of $155 per calf.

The use of technologies may make sense to cattle producers, but do the consumers understand?

"Do, in fact, try to be transparent on the use of technologies, because we are seeking trust," he reminded. It is far easier to stay out of trouble than to get out of trouble, he added. The industry must be transparent enough to stay out of trouble.

Trust is what the beef industry craves from its consumers, and the way to gain that trust is to use confidence (show that producers have similar values to that of consumers), competence (scientific data) and influential others (like the American Medical Association agreement on not labeling GMO foods), he explained. These three things lead to trust, which then becomes social license and freedom to operate.

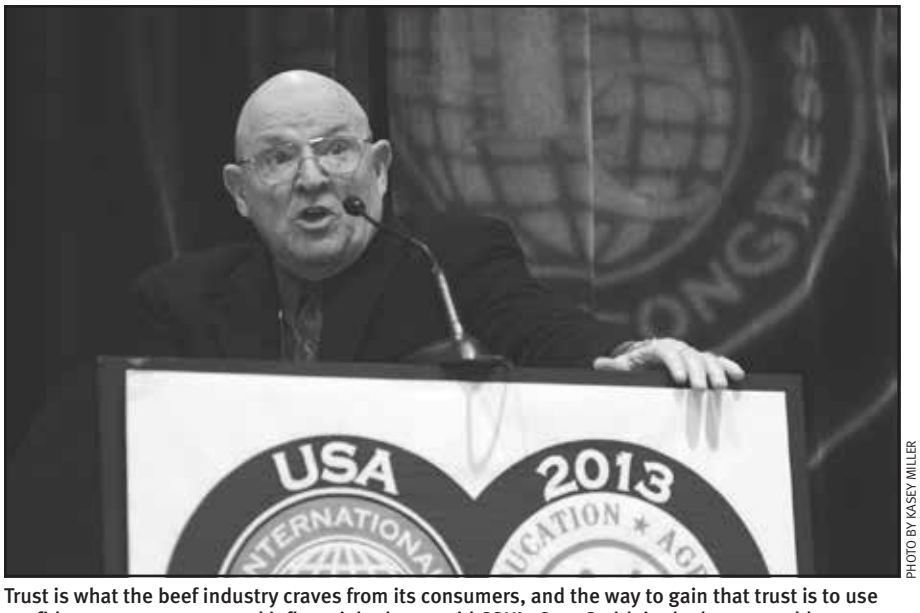

PHOTO BY KASEY MILLER

Trust is what the beef industry craves from its consumers, and the way to gain that trust is to use confidence, competence and influential others, said CSU's Gary Smith in the keynote address.

Of these three, he noted, confidence, or values, is three to five times more resonant with consumers as competence or science.