

International Livestock Congress Wrap-up

CSU's Smith urged attendees to go home thinking about what they could do to help feed the world.

by **KINDRA GORDON,**
field editor

John Paterson, executive director of producer education for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), invited Gary Smith, emeritus distinguished

professor from Colorado State University (CSU), to surmise the remarks and purpose of the International Livestock Congress hosted Jan. 15 in Denver.

The event was attended by nearly 200 industry representatives from the cow-calf, stocker, feeding and packer sectors to allied industry, college students, and university faculty and researchers.

"The purpose of this conference today was to share information about feeding the world," Smith responded. "I hope all of you can go home thinking about what you can do."



Gary Smith, emeritus distinguished professor, Colorado State University

PHOTO BY KASEY MILLER

Smith added, "We need technology." He also noted that young people — the next generation — will be essential to addressing beef's challenges of the future, particularly with carrying messages to consumers.

With regard to transparency, Smith noted it is also needed for the future to "explain why we do what we do" and what the effect is on people and animal well-being.

As an example of this, Smith noted that his CSU colleague Temple Grandin, who is highly regarded on animal-welfare practices, has often called for buildings with "glass walls" so the public can see how animals are cared for. CSU is currently building a new livestock facility that will include observation windows to address that issue.

Smith cautioned that transparency comes with a risk.

"There are people who want to see and others who react. That is the risk," he said. "If we don't have trust [from the consumer] we don't have anything."

With that, Smith also said that in communicating with consumers, "The belief that we can solve all these problems with science is wrong. We need a mixture." He suggested the industry present both science and a message focused on the fact that we care and are working to improve.

"We have to do everything we can to get others to understand," he concluded. "I hope we leave this room thinking, 'What is it I can do as a person of the beef industry to help make sure we can feed the world, be as transparent as possible and do it in the right way?'"