



Tom Jones took the reins as president of the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board Saturday morning.

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# Members Take Action

*Industry organizations elect officers, approve policy resolutions directing staff as to policy positions.*

Story by

**TROY SMITH**

The 2011 Cattle Industry Convention in Denver concluded Saturday with a joint meeting of the Cattlemen's Beef Board (CBB) and the board of directors for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), followed by the annual NCBA membership meeting. While in joint session, CBB and NCBA directors unanimously approved a new Long-Range Plan (see page 49), which establishes the following core strategies and goals:

- Improve domestic consumer preference for beef, with a goal of increasing the Consumer Beef Index preference measure from 28% to 31%.
- Capitalize on global growth

opportunities, with a goal of increasing value of U.S. beef exports by 25% per head.

- Strengthen the image of beef and the beef industry, with a goal of establishing a benchmark measure of public perceptions of beef and beef production.
- Protect and enhance freedom to operate, with a goal of developing an index to measure and track freedom to operate.
- Improve industry trust, openness and relationships, with a goal of establishing a benchmark of industry stakeholder perceptions of unity and trust.
- Position the U.S. cow herd for growth, with a goal of increasing bred heifer

retention to 18% while stabilizing U.S. beef production at a minimum of 26 billion pounds (lb.) annually.

CBB directors seated Arkansas cattleman Tom Jones as chairman; Wesley Grau of New Mexico as vice chairman; and Weldon Wynn, also from Arkansas, as secretary-treasurer.

Advancing through the chairs of leadership were Montana rancher Bill Donald as president of NCBA and Nebraska cattle feeder J.D. Alexander as president-elect. Members elected Wyoming dairy and cow-calf operator Scott George as vice president. David Dick of Missouri was chosen to succeed George as chairman of the Federation of State Beef Councils (Federation Division)

and Texan Bob McCan was named chairman of NCBA's Policy Division.

"It is a great honor to be elected to lead NCBA for the next year. There is tremendous opportunity out there for U.S. cattlemen and women, and we plan to make every opportunity a reality," Donald said. "We're a diverse outfit. NCBA represents the entire industry — from packers to cow-calf producers and everyone in between — but to be profitable it takes all of us working on the same issues."

Directors representing the Federation Division adopted a 12-point Charter of Principles, which clarifies its role within the NCBA framework as separate and distinct from that of the Policy Division, whose lobbying activities are funded through NCBA dues. The

## Ag Policy Committee Discusses 2010 Farm Bill, Border Security

Farm Bill discussions in Washington, D.C., will likely kick off this summer, reported Kristina Butts, NCBA executive director of legislative affairs as she addressed the NCBA Ag Policy Committee Feb. 4 in Denver. Butts encouraged NCBA membership to share their input on provisions within the bill.

She shared that, on behalf of the cattle industry, NCBA is currently reviewing guiding principles in preparation for the Farm Bill discussion. Presently, NCBA's top priority is to eliminate or reduce the livestock title, provisions or directives in the next Farm Bill. Colin Woodall, NCBA vice president of government affairs, explained that the livestock title within previous farm bills is where issues such as country-of-origin labeling (COOL) and the Grain Inspection, Packers & Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) were created.

"In our view the Farm Bill is not meant for marketing issues," Woodall stated.

With specific regard to marketing, NCBA's stance is that farm policy that guarantees profit, restricts the operation of the competitive marketplace, or dictates who can or cannot own cattle should be discouraged.

Butts clarified that taking out the livestock title would not affect research and conservation programs that have traditionally been in the Farm Bill.

- Supporting a reduction of the federal deficit while assuring funding for Farm Bill priorities, without agriculture bearing a disproportionate share of the reductions;
- Minimizing direct federal involvement in agricultural production methods;
- Preserving the individual's right to manage land, water and other resources;

- Providing an opportunity to compete in foreign markets; and
- Supporting equitable funding for farm programs to ensure funding is not disproportionately reduced.

Additional NCBA priorities with regard to the Farm Bill include:

The committee also spent considerable time discussing an interim policy that was initially put forth at the 2010 Cattle Industry Summer Conference by the Arizona Cattle Growers Association regarding border security. Discussion was conducted about the challenges and dangers border ranchers are facing in several border states. Arizona has formulated an 18-point "Restore Our Border" plan that they'd like to see the NCBA organization support as they seek legislative changes on this issue. (More information about the plan can be found at [www.restoreourborder.org](http://www.restoreourborder.org)). A resolution was passed by voice vote to have NCBA support action in securing the international border from California to Florida.

Several expiring resolutions were renewed by the committee, including continuing NCBA's opposition to legislation preventing horse harvesting and/or processing, and opposing any abolishment of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) or combining NRCS under the Farm Service Agency (FSA).

NCBA members attending the committee meeting were also encouraged to contribute to the organization's PAC (political action committee) fund. Ag Policy Committee Chairman Tim Munns from Nevada emphasized that this funding is used on cattlemen's behalf to create awareness for ag policy issues.

Charter affirmed the Federation's ability to make decisions independently with regard to investment beef checkoff resources contributed by qualified state beef councils. The Charter also calls for the appointment of a senior executive officer for the Federation Division and a compliance officer.

### Addressing policy

Several 2011 policy resolutions were approved, including policy on immigration, food safety, marketing, cattle health, and federal lands.

The policies established are driven by grassroots cattlemen and women, said 2010 NCBA President Steve Foglesong, emphasizing that members decide the organization's policy positions. "Our members chart the course for our organization and for the entire beef industry. This organization is producer-owned and member-driven," said Foglesong.

**Border security.** NCBA members adopted a resolution related to border security and federal lands designations. The resolution supports authority for federal agencies as well as state and local authorities to secure the border with Mexico, and requests suspension of all pending legislation and funding for federal-land designations along the border.

The resolution states that federally owned lands along the border with certain designations such as "wilderness areas" provide unfettered access for illegal cross-border activities by restricting the motorized access of federal agents responsible for patrolling the land.

**Eastern's bankruptcy.** In response to the Eastern Livestock Co. bankruptcy and resulting financial losses suffered by cattle producers and Eastern's service providers, NCBA members directed staff to work aggressively with members of Congress and appropriate federal agencies to make funds available at low interest or no interest to assist producers and firms that were directly affected. Staffers will also work with the relevant congressional committees to seek a congressional oversight hearing into the Grain Inspection, Packers & Stockyards Administration's (GIPSA's) audits and bonding of all cattle auction markets and dealers.



Nebraska cattle feeder J.D. Alexander was named president-elect of NCBA.

**Disease traceability.** In other action, members approved a resolution calling for NCBA to be at the forefront of discussions on any animal disease traceability program requiring animal identification (ID). NCBA maintains that any associated costs to producers be minimized and paid through federal or state funds if possible. Additionally, the resolution stipulated information relative to animal ID should remain under control of state animal health officials and be kept confidential and protected from disclosure.

Furthermore, any such program must operate with the speed of commerce and producers must be protected from liability for acts of others after cattle are no longer under said producers' control.

**Cattle health.** The membership called for NCBA staff to urge the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Congress to provide full funding for purposes of indemnification for brucellosis, tuberculosis, foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) and emergency diseases.

Another resolution recognized the role that pooled Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) testing plays in the control of the reproductive cattle disease trichomoniasis and called for further education and research of pooled PCR testing for the beef industry.

**Food safety.** New policy was adopted in support of a collaborative and multidisciplinary approach to the identification and development of interventions along the entire food chain and that support research to determine critical virulence factors for non-O157 shiga-producing *E. coli* toxins.

Additionally, NCBA continues to

support collaborative food safety research to make beef an even safer product.

Members renewed existing policy opposing any legislation or regulations that limit methods for marketing cattle, including value-added systems or strategic alliances.

"This is the bread and butter of our organization. This is truly where the magic happens, so-to-speak," said Colin Woodall, NCBA vice president of government affairs. "Our members take the time away from their operations and their families to travel here and debate

important issues affecting the U.S. beef cattle industry. They then put it on paper. When we are fighting for U.S. cattlemen and women in Washington, D.C., we use these policy positions as our roadmap." Policy established in Denver will now be mailed to the entire membership for a vote. Once the vote is certified this spring, it becomes official.



**Editor's Note:** For more coverage of the 2011 Cattle Industry Convention and NCBA Trade Show, visit the newsroom at [www.4cattlemen.com](http://www.4cattlemen.com).

## Long-Range Plan Discussed

*Policy Division Forum takes a look at proposed industry plan.*

During an early session of the 2011 Cattle Industry Convention in Denver, attendees were presented with a summary of a proposed Long-Range Plan for guiding the U.S. beef industry during the next three years. Later, during the convention's Policy Division Forum, cattlemen learned the details from Barry Carpenter of the National Meat Association and Homer Buell, a Nebraska cow-calf producer. Both men were among the 23 members of a task force representing multiple beef industry organizations, which drafted the plan.

According to Carpenter and Buell, the Long-Range Plan pursues a stated mission: "To provide the safest, highest-quality, most consumer-friendly beef and beef products in an environmentally and economically sustainable manner." In tag-team fashion, the pair explained the plan's core strategies and goals for accomplishing that mission.

"The task force saw the need to focus on core strategies to move forward during the next three years," said Carpenter. "And we wanted to have measureable goals."

Those core strategies and respective goals are as follows:

- ▶ Improve domestic consumer preference for beef, with a goal of increasing the Consumer Beef Index preference measure from 28% to 31%.
- ▶ Capitalize on global growth opportunities, with a goal of increasing the value of U.S. beef exports by 25% per head.
- ▶ Strengthen the image of beef and the beef industry, with a goal of establishing a benchmark measure of public perception of beef and beef production.
- ▶ Protect and enhance our freedom to operate, with a goal of developing an index to measure and track freedom to operate.
- ▶ Improve industry trust, openness and relationships, with the goal of establishing a benchmark of industry stakeholder perceptions of unity and trust.
- ▶ Position the U.S. cow herd for growth, with a goal of increasing bred heifer retention to 18%, while stabilizing U.S. beef production at a minimum of 26 billion pounds annually.

"Task force members believe there are two factors critical to the plan's success," said Buell. The first is the development of a resourcing plan to achieve desired outcomes of the plan, he said.

"We need to increase both [national beef] checkoff resources and non-checkoff resources," he said.

Second, he added, "The industry also needs to adopt a practical and effective industry-wide animal disease traceability program."

After being presented and discussed in several other forums, the Long-Range Plan was subsequently adopted during the Convention's business meeting Feb. 5.

— by Troy Smith

**Editor's Note:** The task force was comprised of Charles Miller, C&J Cattle Co., co-chairman; Robert Rebholtz, Agri-Beef, co-chairman; Ron Bryant, Intervet/Schering-Plough; Jack Cowley, cow-calf; Robert Fountain, cow-calf; David Kent, Kroger; Mark Mackey, Livestock Marketing Association; Joe Schechinger, Wendy's QSCC; Don Stewart, Stewart-Miller Inc.; Homer Buell, Shovell Dot Ranch; Mark Eganhouse, Wendy's QSCC; Ted Greidanus, Caltech Corp.; Leo McDonnell, U.S. Cattlemen's Association; Billy Perrin, Livestock Marketing Association; Don Schiefelbein, Schiefelbein Farms; Mark Van Buskirk, Kroger; Barry Carpenter, National Meat Association; Mike Engler, Cactus Feeders; Paul Heinrich, Sysco Corp.; Charlie Mostek, Tyson; Homero Recio, U.S. Meat Export Federation; Todd Schroeder, Albers Feedlot; and Bob Young, American Farm Bureau Federation.



NCBA and CBB members conduct the official business of the organizations during the closing session.