

Policy, education to highlight convention

More than 5,000 cattle industry participants are expected at the 2006 Cattle Industry Annual Convention & Trade Show, which will be hosted Feb. 1-4 by five organizations, including the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), the

Cattlemen's Beef Promotion & Research Board (CBB), American National CattleWomen Inc. (ANCW), National Cattlemen's Foundation (NCF) and Cattle-Fax. Most events will take place at the newly expanded Colorado Convention

Center in downtown Denver. The theme for the convention and trade show is "Cowboy Up!"

Cattlemen's College®, sponsored by Pfizer Animal Health, leads off the week's educational offerings on Wednesday,

Feb. 1. These sessions will be at Denver's National Western Stock Show (NWSS) Complex. A demonstration on low-stress cattle handling will be featured in the morning. One-hour afternoon breakout sessions will enable participants to customize a full day of education to their specific needs. Breakout session topics include animal identification (ID), weaning strategies, live cattle and feeder cattle contracts, and a guide to conservation programs.

The Cattle-Fax Outlook Seminar will be Wednesday afternoon.

Critical policy issues will be discussed throughout the convention, with international trade, testing and regulatory policy for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), animal ID, environmental issues, and property rights to take center stage. The convention provides opportunity for NCBA members to determine the organization's policy direction in both the legislative and regulatory arenas.

"It's really important for members to participate, because NCBA has a process where every member's opinion and vote does count," said Jim McAdams, a Texas cattle rancher and 2005 NCBA president. "We're going to make crucial decisions on many issues, and we need input from everyone."

Checkoff-funded programs will be reviewed during the convention, with Friday's committee meetings featuring discussion of industry efforts focused on promotion, education, nutrition, beef safety and new product development. Convention attendees will review and take action on the beef industry's new Long Range Plan, which is available in draft form at <http://longrangeplan.beef.org>.

The NCBA Trade Show opens with a Wild, Wild West Welcome Reception on Wednesday, Feb. 1, and continues through Friday, Feb. 3. More than 250 exhibitors are expected.

Barry Ausmus of the National Center for Policy Analysis will be the keynote speaker at the opening general session Thursday, Feb. 2. Ausmus brings expertise in management, marketing and entrepreneurship.

On Friday, the NCBA Political Action Committee (NCBA-PAC) will hold a team penning competition and barn dance at the NWSS Complex, sponsored by Fort Dodge Animal Health. Saturday's grand finale evening event is a ranch dance sponsored by Fort Dodge, Schering-Plough, Purina Mills and U.S. Premium Beef. Mark Powell and Lariat will provide an evening filled with western swing and contemporary music.

For more information about the 2006 Cattle Industry Annual Convention & NCBA Trade Show, contact NCBA's Convention Department at (303) 694-0305 or visit www.beefusa.org/annualconvention.aspx.