

# Ag Advocacy on the Main Stage

2011 Miss America Teresa Scanlan used the national stage to promote American agriculture.

by  
**KASEY BROWN**, associate editor

People need to understand the great privilege of a safe food supply. In developing countries, there is a direct correlation between agriculture's infrastructure and their economic prosperity, 2011 Miss America Teresa Scanlan told the more than 500 attendees of the 23rd Range Beef Cow Symposium (RBCS) hosted in Rapid City, S.D., in December.

Scanlan shared her experience as Miss America, which provided a national stage for her platform of agriculture.

Scanlan is the middle child of seven siblings from Gering, Neb. She was home-schooled and decided she wanted to go to law school. Naturally, with seven children, her dad told her she would need scholarships to do so, and that's how she started with the Miss America contest. You can compete for seven years, from age 17 to 24. She won at 17, the youngest ever, and said that her entire undergraduate degree and part of law school were completely paid for through her involvement in the Miss America competition.

What she enjoyed most about her involvement with the competition was having a platform and a microphone with which to speak. Being from a small town, she said she often lacked the credibility to really be heard. After winning the Miss America competition, more people cared about her thoughts, and she had many more opportunities to speak.

Scanlan's platform included three strategies to protect American agriculture:

- raising the next generation of farmers and ranchers, and involving younger generations,
- informing and educating the public on agriculture as a whole, and
- creating informed agricultural policy.

What struck her the most during her extensive travel was the lack of understanding and appreciation of agriculture. Americans spend 9.6% of their disposable income on food. The next closest country is Canada, with 16%, but affordable food is often taken for granted, she said.

## Consumer connection vital

It is important that agriculture enhance its connection with consumers, Scanlan emphasized. She gave an example that the first

camera was added to a cell phone in 2004, which increased the amount of photos by tenfold. Ironically, the company that actually invented the digital camera filed for bankruptcy recently.

"I say this to show what happens when companies can't keep up with change and connect with their consumers," she noted.

American agriculture has the technology to meet the growing population challenge. However, reaching out to consumers and politicians is equally as important. Her experience in Washington, D.C., and interest in politics revealed to her that many politicians are well-meaning, but uninformed. Unfortunately, that results in unnecessary regulations.

"We need vocal advocates in Washington, and we need to support the groups who do advocate on agriculture's behalf," Scanlan recommended.

Reaching out to consumers

and younger generations will also secure a strong future for American agriculture by helping to change the many misconceptions about agriculture. Firsthand experience on a farm or ranch makes a bigger impact than solely speaking, she noted from her experience, but any type of conversation is beneficial.

Visit the Newsroom at [www.rangebeefcow.com/2013](http://www.rangebeefcow.com/2013) to listen to Scanlan's presentation.



**Editor's Note:** The RBCS is a biennial educational symposium offering practical production management information. It is sponsored by the Cooperative Extension Service and animal science departments of the University of Wyoming, South Dakota State University, Colorado State University and the University of Nebraska. Comprehensive coverage of the symposium is available online at [www.rangebeefcow.com](http://www.rangebeefcow.com). Compiled by the Angus Journal editorial team, the site is made possible through sponsorship of LiveAuctions.tv and the cooperation of the host committee.



PHOTO BY TROY SMITH

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## Ignore the Impossible

"Realize it is amazing what you can do when you just ignore the impossible," Dane Rauschenberg told those attending the 2013 Range Beef Cow Symposium in Rapid City, S.D., Dec. 4.

In 2008 Rauschenberg did what many would consider impossible: He ran 52 marathons on 52 consecutive weekends. Today, he continues to run long distances — 350 miles in seven consecutive days, as an example — and for the last several years he has been an advocate of lean beef as part of a healthy diet.

"I love steak," he told the audience.

Sharing how he became an athlete, Rauschenberg said he originally had a love for swimming, then started running track in high school. He called himself an average runner. In college, his dream was to play football. When that didn't happen, he changed course and played rugby.

After college, he went on to law school and decided his sports career was over. As his fit body turned to flab, he decided to start running. Early on, he made various attempts at running marathons, without great success. Eventually he was running longer distances and trying more outlandish things, which eventually led to his goal of running 52 marathons in 52 weeks.

When he completed the last race of his one-year mission, before he even rested up from the marathon, he did an interview with BBC in which he was asked, "What's next?" Since then, he has really tried to savor "what's right now," he said. "We are often looking too far ahead instead of living in the present."

Serendipity intervened with Rauschenberg's

life after 2008 when he met Darren Williams with the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA). Williams asked Rauschenberg if he'd be willing to be a spokesperson for beef, and he has been doing so ever since.

Rauschenberg shared, "All the time I'm asked what do you eat? How do you stay uninjured?" Rauschenberg credited his health and ability to several things, including what he eats.

"My diet is high in lean beef," he said. "It's one of the things I eat constantly."

He added, "The silent majority of athletes eat beef, but they let the vegans talk." He is trying to counter some of that by being a voice for beef.

Much of Rauschenberg's recent efforts combine running events with stops at schools to talk about eating well. He said he aims to continue sharing his message.

He also encourages others to think positive, promoting the thought, "I get to," as opposed to, "I have to."

He gave the example that some people might say, "I have to go for a run." Rauschenberg prefers to look at it as, "I get to go for a run." He suggested it's not just with athletics. He concluded by encouraging the audience to look at all aspects of their life from the "I get to" perspective.

Rauschenberg spoke Wednesday at RBCS XXIII. Visit the Newsroom at [www.rangebeefcow.com/2013](http://www.rangebeefcow.com/2013) to listen to his presentation.

— by Kindra Gordon, field editor