

Saddle up for the R-CALF USA Convention

The Ranchers-Cattlemen Action Legal Fund United Stockgrowers of America (R-CALF USA) will meet in Denver, Colo., at the Doubletree Hotel Jan. 18-21 for the organization's annual convention.

Cattle producers can take part in two and a half days of informative speakers, industry experts, a tradeshow, evening entertainment, an awards banquet and policymaking.

R-CALF USA's convention agenda opens with officer and committee reports to bring attendees up to speed on a busy year. Periodic breaks in the morning and afternoon will give convention-goers a

chance to visit the tradeshow and bid on silent auction items.

A panel discussion about country-of-origin labeling (often referred to as COOL or COL) will follow the committee meetings. Industry experts and agency representatives will discuss the workability of the law, as well as cost and benefits to producers and consumers.

A trade panel will discuss upcoming and recently passed free-trade agreements (FTAs), as well as R-CALF USA's fact-finding trip to Central America.

Attendees will hear updates on animal identification (ID), what producers can do to direct their industry and new findings regarding bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE). Directors, committee chairpersons and speakers will be available for question-and-answer sessions.

In the evenings, attendees will relax with a cowboy social, awards banquet and entertainment.

A place to be heard

Regional caucuses will be conducted to organize and inform members about recruitment, fundraising, policy development and directorship nominations. Each day, attendees will roll up their sleeves to hammer out policy proposals for the year's ballot, which will be mailed following the convention.

One of the foundational tenants of R-CALF USA is its one-member-one-vote policy. Cattlemen can make their voices heard by proposing and developing policy at the national convention. Those who can't attend, but who have a resolution to put forward, are encouraged to contact the national office at (406) 252-2516 to request staff present the legislation.

Having completed their terms, Region I Director Leo McDonnell, Region II Director Kathleen Kelley and Region III Director Herman Schumacher will be stepping down in 2006. Nominations to these seats will be taken at the 2006 national convention.

The directorships are three-year terms. Region I consists of Washington, Alaska, Oregon, Idaho and Montana. Region II consists of Wyoming, Utah, Colorado and New Mexico. Region III includes North Dakota, South Dakota and Nebraska.

Preregistration prior to Jan. 10 is \$50; registration Jan. 10 and thereafter is \$60. For more information about the convention, contact the national office or visit the organization's convention Web site at www.r-calfusa.com/Events/2006_convention.htm. Reservations at the Doubletree Hotel Denver may be made by calling (303) 321-3333.