

Cattle Industry Conference Wraps Up

Cattlemen establish policy direction, adopt long-range plan and set new committee structure at summer conference.

More than 600 cattlemen and women gathered in Denver, Colo., mid-July to discuss the policy priorities for the cattle industry for the upcoming year. Various committees reviewed expiring policies and discussed proposed policy brought forward from National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) state affiliates.

"The Cattle Industry Summer Conference is the time when our producer members are able to gather and tackle the business of the association," said Philip Ellis, NCBA president and Chugwater, Wyo., cattleman. "From continuing and renewing current and expiring policy, to discussing and passing policy to tackle the upcoming and emerging issues, this is our chance to work together to ensure NCBA remains on the forefront representing our membership."

The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* process continues with Congressional oversight. NCBA members remain committed to working with the administration and Congress to ensure the final guidelines reflect the highest-quality science and the role of lean beef in a healthy diet.

The EPA has finalized its "waters of the United States" (WOTUS) rule. NCBA's membership stands firmly opposed to this

land grab by the administration. NCBA continues to work with Congress to rein in the administration's regulatory onslaught and has joined with other land-use groups in litigation against the agency.

NCBA members continue their strong support of trade, which adds value to our cattle and returns more than \$350 for each head of cattle sold. With the passage of Trade Promotion Authority (TPA), NCBA supports finalization and passage of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and other pending free-trade agreements. With preferential trade agreements currently in place, and other countries actively negotiating, the United States cannot afford to fall behind in this critical area. While country-of-origin labeling (COOL) has for many years been a cost to the industry without benefit to producers or consumers, the NCBA urges the Senate to act quickly in passing repeal language following the strong bi-partisan action in the House.

Although USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) finalized its import rules for Northern Argentina and a region in Brazil, these rules were pushed through without the necessary risk assessments and jeopardize the health of our domestic herd. NCBA

will continue to work with Congress and the administration to ensure the proper process is followed before allowing inspection and exports from these areas with a history of foot-and-mouth disease.

NCBA continues to work with the state and federal governments to ensure multiple uses on public grazing lands. Ranchers are closest to the lands and the best stewards of the natural resources, ensuring productive use, maintaining open space, and mitigating fire hazards. NCBA will continue to ensure these uses are accounted for in future range-management plans and wildlife-habitat decisions.

New long-range plan

During the summer conference, 16 beef industry leaders representing every link in the beef value chain presented a plan for meeting aggressive goals to strengthen the beef industry from 2016 through 2020. The Beef Industry Long-Range Plan Task Force has been meeting since December 2014.

"While the beef industry has faced many challenges, the future holds tremendous promise for the industry," according to Don Schiefelbein, owner/operator of Schiefelbein Farms and task

force co-chair. "The task force took a research-based approach to not only determine where the industry is and how we got here, but also at the trends and issues potentially impacting the beef community so that we can be most successful moving forward."

The task force defined the mission of the U.S. beef industry as, "a beef community dedicated to growing beef demand by producing and marketing the safest, healthiest, most delicious beef that satisfies the desires of an increasing global population while responsibly managing our livestock and natural resources."

In addition, the task force agreed the single-most-important strategic objective the industry should pursue is increasing beef demand. The task force established a specific objective to "increase the wholesale beef demand index by 2% annually over the next five years," which will require resources be committed in four core strategies:

- **Drive growth in beef exports**, a strategy that focuses on gaining access to key markets and promoting the unique attributes of U.S. beef to foreign consumers.

- **Protect and enhance the business and political climate for beef**, which begins with motivating stakeholders to become more engaged in policy concerns to improve the industry's effectiveness in managing political and regulatory issues that threaten the overall business climate of beef production, including assuring beef's inclusion in dietary recommendations, exploration of new production technologies, crisis-management planning, developing the next generation of beef industry stakeholders and other initiatives.

- **Grow consumer trust in beef and beef production**, including a critical focus on antibiotic stewardship, the implementation of a certification/verification program and continued investment in beef safety initiatives. The task force said the entire beef community must be engaged and collaborate with a broad group of industry partners to protect beef's image.

- **Promote and strengthen beef's value proposition**, a strategy designed to revolutionize beef marketing and merchandising; invest in research that allows the industry to communicate beef's nutritional benefits; capitalize on media technologies to communicate beef's value proposition; and respond to consumer-based market signals with product improvements and increased production efficiencies.

"The overall vision of our Task Force has been straightforward," said John Butler, CEO of Beef Marketing Group, a task force co-chair. "Recognizing the growing demand among the world's

Regional environmental stewardship winners named

Seven families were honored July 16 for their outstanding land-management practices during the 2015 Cattle Industry Summer Conference. The Environmental Stewardship Award Program (ESAP) honors the efforts of farmers and ranchers who are dedicated to maintaining

ESAP celebrates 25 years of resource management excellence.



and improving their lands to ensure that they are productive for future generations. ESAP is celebrating its 25th anniversary during the year ahead. Regional and national award recipients serve as role models among their peers in the farming and ranching community, ensuring that innovative conservation practices are widely adopted by other land managers.

Cattlemen and women are America's original stewards of the land and the ESAP award honors their ongoing efforts to protect the environment. The program is sponsored by Dow AgroSciences, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Tyson Foods, National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) and the National Cattlemen's Foundation.

The 2015 regional winners are:

- Valley View Farms, Harrisonburg, Va.;
- Bull Hammock Ranch, Fort Pierce, Fla.;
- Glenn and Bev Rowe, Lorimor, Iowa;
- 6666 Ranch, Guthrie, Texas;
- American Fork Ranch, Two Dot, Mont.;
- Maggie Creek Ranch, Elko, Nev.; and
- Kopriva Angus, Raymond, S.D.

"The cattlemen and women who we honor here this evening represent the very best traditions of American agriculture's commitment to protecting and improving the environment for this and future generations," said NCBA President Philip Ellis. "These men and women understand the importance of protecting our nation's land, air and water resources. They know first-hand that implementing the practices [that] improve habitat also benefit the bottom line of individual operations."

For the past quarter century the ESAP has honored one operation from each of seven regions spanning the United States. Recipients of regional awards are then forwarded for consideration for the National Environmental Stewardship Award, which is announced during the Annual Cattle Industry Convention. This year's national award winner will be announced in San Diego, Calif., Jan. 27, 2016, in conjunction with the Environmental Stewardship Award Program's 25th anniversary celebration.

Editor's Note: This article is provided by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association.



middle class for high-quality protein, we want the U.S. beef industry to responsibly produce the most trusted and preferred protein in the world. At this pivotal point in the U.S. beef industry's history we need to focus our energies and limited resources on those areas that can provide our industry the best results."

Support for the long-range planning process was provided through the Policy and Federation divisions of NCBA and the Cattlemen's Beef Board.

For the complete *Beef Industry Long Range Plan 2016-2020* report or the summary, go to www.beefusa.org.

New committee structure

Subsequent to adoption of the new 2016-2020 Beef Industry Long-Range Plan, the National Beef Checkoff Program transitioned its committee structure to reflect the consumer demand drivers critical to the success of that long-range plan.

"Our checkoff committees align directly with the core strategies of the current long-range plan to make certain that our checkoff investments are tightly focused on the most important goals for the industry as a whole," said Beef Board Chairman Jimmy Maxey, "so we felt it necessary to realign our committee structure with that new long-range plan."

Federation of State Beef Councils Chairman Jennifer Houston explained further: "Checkoff committee deliberations are a key element in how programs are identified, and this new blueprint for our committee structure will go a long way toward focusing our checkoff efforts."

The five new checkoff committees, which comprise members of the Beef Board and the Federation in recommending programs for funding with the Beef Board budget, include:

● **Safety Committee.** Beef safety research and communication at all levels will be the focus of this committee, including how producers improve the safety of their product and how to best share safety information with beef community stakeholders, consumers and influencers.

● **Nutrition and Health Committee.** This committee will focus on beef nutrition and health research and communication, including how producers might improve and share beef's nutrition and health benefits with beef community stakeholders, consumers and influencers.

● **Innovation Committee.** This committee will focus on innovation in both beef products and beef product marketing in the channels. That is based on the fact that consumers, processors, retailers, foodservice operators, and other beef community stakeholders want new, fresh ideas for beef in the retail meatcase and on consumers' plates.

● **Export Growth Committee.** Given that export markets offer opportunity for unparalleled growth for U.S. beef, this committee will focus on growing value and volume of exports through management of access issues

originating within the market itself, as well as aggressive and effective in-country product marketing in those countries offering excellent opportunity for U.S. beef.

● **Social Responsibility Committee.** With a great story to tell, this committee will focus on building and maintaining consumer trust by using research to pursue continual improvement, with an

eye toward long-term sustainable and profitable beef production, and better consumer communications.

In addition to the five committees, the two organizations voted for continuation of the checkoff's Market Research Working Group and Investor Relations Working Group (formerly the Producer Communications Working Group).

For Summer Conference committee

recaps, and to learn more about your beef checkoff investment, visit www.mybeefcheckoff.com.



Editor's Note: This article is compiled from multiple news releases from NCBA and the Beef Board.