

BEEF BUSINESS

by Julie Mais, editor

In this month's "Beef Business," we present industry news about cattlemen stepping into new leadership positions and convention news.

USDA Secretary at CattleCon

U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue foresees a generally bright future for U.S. farmers and ranchers. Perdue made an appearance during the Feb. 5, opening general session of the Cattle Industry Convention in San Antonio, Texas. In a question-and-answer session with National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) President Jennifer Houston, Perdue said a decline in total cattle numbers and strong product demand are good for beef and cattle prices.

"There are challenges, of course, but I'm optimistic," Perdue said. "I'm bullish on agriculture in general."

Commenting on advancement of foreign trade, the USDA secretary called the bilateral trade agreement with Japan a "big deal" for beef producers in particular. The new agreement significantly reduces tariffs on chilled and frozen beef exported to Japan — the largest foreign market for U. S. beef. Noting the phase one implementation of a trade agreement with China, Perdue said that country is a hugely promising market. The Trump administration has predicted that U.S. beef sales to China could reach \$1 billion annually.

Asked to share his perspective on the sustainability of agriculture, Perdue said sustainability rests

on three pillars. Practices must be both environmentally and socially acceptable, but also economically sound. Perdue praised agricultural producers for their application of technology and modern methods of production that have allowed them to "do more with less."

Acknowledging the abundance, safety and affordability of the U.S. food supply, Perdue said U.S. consumers spend only 6% of their disposable income on food. He contrasted that with France, where food purchases claim 13% of disposable income. Perdue said the difference, some \$830 billion, is an example of what U.S. agricultural producers give back to U.S. consumers.

Asked if so-called fake meat represents a significant threat to beef producers, Perdue expressed doubt that plant- or cell-based protein products would move far beyond a niche market.

"I don't think beef producers have anything to fear," Perdue said. "Most Americans are carnivores and will continue to be carnivores."

Perdue said cattle folk and other agricultural producers need to step up their efforts educate consumers about how they do what they do. "We all need to do a better job of telling our story," he said.

by Troy Smith, field editor

New CBB officers

Cattle producers Jared Brackett, Hugh Sanburg and Norman Voyles, Jr. are the new leaders of the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion & Research Board (CBB). This officer team is responsible for guiding the national Beef Checkoff throughout 2020.

Brackett, Sanburg and Voyles were elected by their fellow Beef Board members during the 2020 Cattle Industry Convention in San Antonio on Friday, Feb. 7, 2020. Brackett, the 2019 Vice Chair, will now serve as the CBB's Chair, while Sanburg will transition from his role as the 2019 Secretary-Treasurer to become the 2020 Vice Chair. Voyles is the newest member of the officer team, taking on Sanburg's former responsibilities as Secretary-Treasurer.

2020 Chairman Jared Brackett is a fifth-generation cow-calf producer from Filer, Idaho. Brackett is a Texas A&M University alumni and die-hard Aggie fan with a degree in agricultural economics. A past president of the Idaho Cattlemen's Association, Brackett continues to serve on a number of other livestock committees and boards in addition to his responsibilities with the Beef Checkoff.

Vice Chair Hugh Sanburg hails from Eckert, Colo., where he and his brother are managing partners of their primarily horned Hereford cow-calf operation, accompanied by

a registered Hereford operation to complement the commercial herd. Sanburg graduated from Colorado School of Mines with a degree in mining engineering in 1983 before moving back to the home ranch in western Colorado. For the past 30-plus years, Sanburg has been an active member of the Colorado Farm Bureau serving on various boards. He is also a member of the Colorado Cattlemen's Association and serves as chairman of the Gunnison Basin Roundtable.

Secretary-Treasurer Norman Voyles, Jr. owns and operates a seventh-generation grain and livestock farm near Martinsville, Ind., with his brother Jim and son Kyle. Voyles received a bachelor's degree in animal science from Purdue University and a master's degree in ruminant nutrition from the University of Nebraska. Voyles is a member of the Morgan County (Ind.) Beef Cattle Association and the Indiana Cattlemen's Association. He's a past member of the Farm Service Agency board of directors and the Morgan County Fair board.

Source: CBB

Smith elected NCBA president

Fifth-generation Florida rancher Marty Smith was elected president of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) at the annual Cattle Industry Convention on Feb. 8. He replaces Jennifer Houston of Sweetwater, Tenn., who served as the 2019 NCBA president.

Smith operates Smith Brothers-Wacahoota LLC, a cow-calf operation in central Florida, that has been in continuous operation since 1852. It retains ownership through feedyards in Texas, Kansas and Iowa.

Smith graduated from the University of Georgia (UGA) with a bachelor of science and arts degree in agricultural economics and animal science. While at UGA, he was on the livestock judging team and served as president of Ag Hill Council. He was also active in Alpha Gamma Rho and AGHON, the highest honor a UGA student of agriculture, forestry, veterinary medicine or engineering can attain. He graduated from the University of Florida College of Law and was admitted to the Florida Bar in 1984.

Smith was formally elected at a meeting of NCBA's Board of Directors, who also set the rest of the officer team for the coming year. Jerry Bohn of Kansas was named president-elect, Don Schiefelbein of Minnesota was elected vice president, and Todd Wilkinson of South Dakota was elected chair of the NCBA Policy Division, while Wyoming rancher Mark Eisele was elected policy vice chair. Buck Wehrbein of Nebraska was elected chair of the NCBA Federation Division and Scott McGregor of Iowa was elected vice chair.

Source: NCBA

Fake meat consumer research shows confusion

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) released survey results Feb. 7, that show widespread consumer confusion regarding the ingredient composition and purported benefits of plant-based fake-meat products.

In an online survey of more than 1,800 consumers, less than half of the respondents understood the labeling term "plant-based beef" was intended to describe an entirely vegetarian or vegan food product.

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PROFIT = Pounds Carcass Premiums Buy Semen and Embryos Early



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One major source of confusion uncovered by NCBA's research is that approximately one-third of surveyed consumers believed that plant-based fake-meat products contained at least some real beef in them.

When asked to evaluate specific product labels and marketing materials from some of the leading plant-based fake beef products currently on the market, the results include:

Nearly two-thirds of respondents believed the fake-meat products produced by Beyond Meat, Impossible Foods and LightLife contained real beef or some form of animal byproduct;

32% of consumers who were shown a package of Beyond Meat's "Beyond Burger®" plant-based patties (which features a cow icon) told researchers that they thought the patties contained at least small amounts of real meat;

37% of consumers who were shown a package of Lightlife's "Gimme Lean®", which features the word "Beef" highlighted in a red box, said the product contained at least some real beef. Neither product contains any real beef.

When asked to rank plant-based fake meat versus beef on a host of food attributes, the results include:

44% of consumers believed plant-based products were lower in sodium, when leading plant-based fake beef is anywhere between 220-620% higher in sodium than the same size serving of real ground beef.

24% of respondents correctly identified beef as being lower in sodium. Scientifically speaking, beef is considered to be an unprocessed or minimally processed food, whereas plant-based fake-meat products are classified as an ultra-processed food product.

34% of respondents believed plant-based fake meat to be less processed, and another 34% believed fake and real beef products were equivalent on the food processing scale. On the broad category of healthfulness, more than half of consumers believed plant-based meat was better for them.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has the power to prevent this sort of consumer confusion. In 2020, NCBA said it hopes there will be an opportunity to work with the Agency to end inappropriate use of the word "beef" on all non-meat product labels.

For more detailed information about the survey methodology and results, visit www.ncba.org

Source: NCBA

NFU convention speakers

National Farmers Union's (NFU) 118th Anniversary Convention will bring together members, industry professionals, policy-makers and reporters for educational sessions, award presentations, the organization's signature grassroots policy adoption process, and an election for its next president.

During the three-day event, farmers and ranchers will hear from speakers on the important issues, including the farm economy, climate change and mental health. Matt Paul, a nationally recognized expert in local, state and federal public affairs, will headline the general session, along with remarks from U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue, a discussion about black land loss and NFU President Roger Johnson's retirement address. Following the general session, attendees will have the choice of several breakout sessions that explore new and burgeoning corners of the industry, such as precision agriculture,

regenerative farming, farm to table and hemp production.


The 118th Anniversary Convention will be hosted at the Hyatt Regency Savannah, 2 W Bay Street, Savannah, GA 31401, March 1-3, 2020.

Source: NFU

Online BQA modules

Building on its updated National Manual launched in Summer 2019, the Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) program has updated its online training modules to make them more realistic and useful. The new modules are now available to those who are first becoming BQA certified online and those who are getting recertified as required after three years.

First launched in 2017, the online training modules have been embraced to date by more than 100,000 in the cattle industry. BQA certifications are also available at in-person training events offered through state beef councils, cattlemen's affiliates, extension programs and other local efforts throughout the country. Funded by the Beef Checkoff, the BQA program touches more than 85% of beef produced in the United States today.

"The new online modules maintain the program's integrity and make its lessons more real-life and user-friendly," says veterinarian Bob Smith, chair of the BQA Advisory Board. "They incorporate a wealth of input from people who use the practices every day, as well as experts in the field, and share them in a way that is practical and understandable. We believe the improvements will make this successful program more enjoyable and an even better learning experience." 

Source: BQA