

# NCA Working to Increase Profitability

The National Cattlemen's Assn. is on the move—taking steps to help increase profitability in the cattle business, NCA executive vice president said recently.

Speaking at the 1983 NCA convention, W.T. Berry Jr., spelled out ways in which NCA is and will be working on issues and problems of importance to cattlemen's success. At the same time, he pointed out conditions in the industry definitely are improving and "there is justification for your continued faith in our industry."

"We will develop greater unity within this very complex and segmented business," Berry said, "and most certainly we will be creating more daring association programs and business systems, which can lead us to

more consistently profitable years in the future."

Reviewing recent NCA actions, Berry cited two special projects that have been of value to the industry generally and to individual cattlemen. The NCA analysis of "The Future for Beef" and the first National Beef Profit Conference provided cattlemen with management tools which can pave the way to better returns. Beef Profit Conference II is planned for June 1984.

Another service of continuing value to cattlemen, Berry pointed out, is Cattle-Fax, the market information service which can professionally analyze and help evaluate short and long-term alternatives for its clients. Cattlemen who are not now members were urged to consider joining Cattle-Fax.

Still another NCA project—the first beef industry tour for food editors—gave a dozen national food communicators information which will help assure a more accurate perception, by millions of consumers, of beef and its values. "We plan two orientation tours per year for food editors and other opinion influencers during the next three years with the next tour scheduled for early June," Berry said.

The NCA executive vice president went on to cite several opportunities for service in 1983. For example, in the tax area, the NCA watchword will be to "keep what we've got and see that any changes are productive."

"The 1981 personal and business tax reductions must not be tampered with," he declared. "We will monitor the tax situation closely, and we will take steps to protect the interests of cattlemen as well as the private economy generally."

The burden of big government is being eased, Berry continued, but most of the relief so far has come in the regulatory area. He

said NCA must also push for legislative changes, such as new food safety legislation, which will permit free enterprise cattle business to operate more efficiently and profitably. Opportunities in foreign trade and in natural resource areas were among the 1983 priorities mentioned.

Berry also reviewed several areas where "because of lack of agreement, availability of research, confusion about impact and shortages of funds, answers haven't been found. But, NCA continues to concentrate on them—working toward acceptable solutions."

One example is cattle futures markets. The Cattle Futures Market Surveillance Committee and the futures subcommittee have provided valuable work, and NCA helped win Congressional reauthorization of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission as well as CFTC approval of a certificate of delivery system for live cattle contracts. However, among some cattlemen, there is still dissatisfaction with the futures and all

those in NCA who are involved will place even more attention on seeking suitable solutions to the problems, Berry said.

In the beef grading area, he cited work on yield grading, and he noted that, in 1983, the Beef Grading Committee will completely evaluate all new ideas about beef classification and will work toward an industry consensus, before making any further recommendations.

Commenting on diet-health concerns, Berry pointed out NCA shares responsibility in this area with the Beef Industry Council of the Meat Board. "We are improving our capabilities and stepping up our efforts in areas related to consumer attitudes about beef," he said. NCA will add a staff person with scientific and communication skills in human nutrition, enabling the association to do a better job in advocating the industry's position to government and in communicating with the news media.

Pointing out there is reason for faith in the industry's future, Berry cited signs of im-

provement in the general economy and called attention to improvement in cattle prices and prospects for higher average prices in 1983 in all segments of the industry. "The outlook for our industry is better than it has been for three years," he observed.

Berry cited "the extra shot of confidence in the future" which is provided by young cattlemen who have participated in NCA's annual tours for young cattlemen. "From time to time," he said, "we enjoy periods of profitability and success and we struggle with problems during the tougher times. And just about the time that our faith is shaken, the youngsters, the future leaders, come along and help us get back on top of things."

The next Young Cattlemen's Council Tour is scheduled for July 16 through 22. Berry said the "infusion of enthusiasm, courage and innovative ideas of our up and coming young cattlemen" will be a stimulus to the industry and NCA in developing and carrying out programs which will assure a brighter future. **AJ**