

# Facing the Challenge of Change NCA Convention Draws Record Crowds

## Officers Elected

Jo Ann Smith, Micanopy, Fla., was elected president of the National Cattlemen's Assn. (NCA) during the final business session of the group's annual convention in Phoenix in late January. Smith, the first woman to hold national office in NCA, is active in her family's cattle and farming business in north central Florida.

Don Butler, Tucson, Ariz., was named president-elect of NCA, the national spokesman for the beef cattle industry, representing 230,000 cattlemen. Butler owns and operates Colorado Cattle Co., a cattle feeding business. John R. (Jack) Dahl, Gackle, N.D., has been elected first vice president of NCA. A cattle rancher during his entire business career, Dahl's family operation includes a commercial beef cow herd, a purebred business and a backgrounding feedlot.

Frances Owen, Lubbock, Texas, was elected president of the American National CowBelles. Betty Besgnes, Buffalo, Wyo., became president-elect; and Gerda Hyde, Chiloquin, Ore., is first vice president.

## Challenge of Change

Some 5,000 people or more attended the NCA annual convention which centered around a theme of "Facing the Challenge of Change." Much of the program focused on social, economic and industry changes which cattlemen face.

John Weber, winding up a year as president of the influential group, spoke on the industry's priority issues and reviewed the steps NCA has been taking to improve its performance on behalf of the cattle industry.

"If government agencies and health organizations feel obligated to issue dietary advice, then they also are obligated to clear up misconceptions about meat—to help consumers translate recommendations into sound nutrition. They are obligated to not let media people, unaware of the true facts, go on misinterpreting government reports. With its superior nutrition content, beef belongs in most diets," he said.

Another major issue mentioned by Weber was credit and interest rates. He also pointed out that NCA was involved in formulation of farm policy; told how



Top officers of the NCA were elected at the annual convention in Phoenix. They include President Jo Ann Smith (center), Micanopy, Fla.; President-Elect Don Butler (right), Tucson, Ariz.; and First Vice President Jack Dahl, Gackle, N.D.

the association had been restructured and reorganized during the past year; and noted that a new membership structure had been developed. All of this, he said should improve relations with affiliated associations, should improve government affairs and other services to the industry and should give the association more members and more clout.

## Major Awards Presented

Three major cattle industry awards were presented during NCA's annual convention. John Armstrong, Kingsville, Texas, was named Cattle Businessman of the Year; Johnny Green, Franklinton, La., received the special breed award for innovative application of new technology in beef cattle production; and Dr. Keith Gregory, Hastings, Neb., was awarded the research award in beef cattle production.

All three NCA awards are being sponsored by national agribusiness firms associated with NCA. In addition to individual awards, each firm presented a \$10,000 contribution (in the name of the recipient) to the National Cattlemen's Foundation Inc., which sponsors research and education activities.

Armstrong is a director and executive vice president of King Ranch Inc. and, with his wife Henrietta, runs some 1,000 cows on their own John B Ranch. Widely respected in industry and business circles, Armstrong has demonstrated outstanding business management practices, and was also cited for his leadership and public service contributions to the industry. The Cattle Businessman of the Year award is sponsored by Ralston Purina Co.

Green is president of Heyward Green Farm in northeastern Louisiana and has been an innovator in the area of forage management. He was also one of the first producers in his state to effectively use performance-testing records to improve his commercial cow herd, and now uses a computerized system to track his animals through slaughter to analyze cutability and red meat yield. The Green farm has been a leader in on-farm non-surgical embryo collection and transfer. Green's award is sponsored by the IBP Foundation Inc.

Gregory is research leader for production systems at the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center, Clay Center, Neb. Among his contributions to the industry is service as first director of MARC. He is perhaps best known for his extensive crossbreeding research which identified how best to achieve heterosis. His award is sponsored by Cutter Animal Health, Bayvet Division, Miles Laboratories Inc.

## Spader Notes Optimism

NCA's Cattle-Fax seminar presented a positive outlook for the industry, predicting a decrease in cattle numbers and beef supplies during the next few years, and corresponding increases in cattle and beef prices.

And the message seemed even brighter for Angus breeders, reports Dick Spader. He mentions that several speakers, including Robert T. Pras, executive vice president of Marriott Corp., emphasized the important role brand name, quality products will play in the red meat industry. Increased support and demand for such products should translate to a boost for Certified Angus Beef.

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