



Angus Stakes

► by **Shauna Rose Hermel**, editor

Backing it up

A lot of energy is now being poured into ag advocacy — speaking up for agriculture in a national conversation that has tended to have a negative tone if not an all-out ag bash. Kudos to those encouraging ag advocacy. Double kudos to those supplying information to our fledgling advocates so they can advocate accurately. And triple kudos to those who go a step further — who make sure we are beyond reproach.

Taking action

Such was the case in mid-May when more than 800 beef industry stakeholders delved into the topic of animal welfare at the International Symposium on Beef Cattle Welfare hosted by the Beef Cattle Institute on campus at Kansas State University (K-State). This meeting was not about bashing those who would point fingers; it was about improving beef cattle welfare — by accurately defining what beef cattle welfare is and sharing techniques to improve it.

Twenty industry experts delivered messages ranging from keeping cattle out of the mud to handling cattle in emergency situations to humane euthanasia. We share summaries of two presentations in this issue — Frank Mitloehner's presentation on how shade affects animal well-being and performance (page 50) and Tom Noffsinger's on caregiver responsibility (page 52).

You can find more session summaries online at www.api-virtuallibrary.com. Field editors Troy Smith and Kindra Gordon helped Mathew Elliott, Linda Robbins and

me provide comprehensive coverage of the meeting. You can find speaker biographies and information about the Beef Cattle Institute and the symposium at www.isbcw.beefcattleinstitute.org/.

New commission

At the outset of the meeting, coordinator Dan Thomson of K-State introduced the newly formed North American Food Animal Well-Being Commission. The group's mission is to be "an independent voice to advance evidence-based and practical improvements in the care and well-being of North American beef cattle."

Members of the commission, many of whom were speakers, are: Bob Smith, Veterinary Research and Consulting Services LLC, Stillwater, Okla.; Carolyn Stull, University of California-Davis (UC-Davis); Dan Thomson, K-State; Dave Sjeklocha, Academy of Veterinary Consultants; Dee Griffin, University of Nebraska; Frank Mitloehner, UC-Davis; Gatz Riddell, American Association of Bovine Practitioners

(AABP); Guy Loneragan, West Texas A&M University; Hans Coetzee, K-State; Jan Shearer, Iowa State University; Janice Swanson, Michigan State University; Ron Gill, Texas A&M University; Temple Grandin, Colorado State University; Tom Noffsinger, beef cattle handling expert, Benkelman, Neb.; Joseph Stookey, University of Saskatchewan, Western Veterinary College; Jeff Rushen, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; Karen Schwartzkopf-Genswein, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; Jennifer Woods, livestock handling expert, Blackie, Alta., Canada; and Terry Mader, University of Nebraska.

I predict we will be hearing many good things from this commission in the future as we count on it to provide more information to arm our ag advocates.

BIF coverage online

As I write this we are preparing to attend the Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) Symposium June 28-July 1 in Columbia, Mo. Themed "Gateway to Profit," this year's symposium promises to take a more practical, producer-friendly approach to topics at the heart of improving beef production.

By the time you get your magazine, we should have meeting coverage posted to www.BIFconference.com. The site is made possible through cooperation with BIF and sponsorship by BioZyme Inc. through its significant gift to the Angus Foundation. Visit www.BIFconference.com to access session summaries, PowerPoints, proceedings and audio — not to mention coverage of the tours and award winners!

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