

Producer Education

Cattlemen's College® opens Cattle Industry Convention.

Two days of robust producer education set the tone for the 2016 Cattle Industry Convention Jan. 26-27. Cattlemen's College®, sponsored by Zoetis Animal Health, is known as one of the most thorough and beneficial educational events in the country designed specifically for cattlemen and women. Celebrating its 23rd year, the event had a crowd of more than 900 attendees.

"This educational program provides an impressive diversity of topics to beef producers," said Josh White, NCBA executive director of producer education. "We have producers speaking to producers about real life ranch issues, industry partners presenting consumer expectations and academic leaders providing the latest findings in cattle research. The best of the best in the cattle industry are selected to speak at Cattlemen's College to help producers propel the beef industry forward."

A "Whole Herd Makeover" discussion kicked off the event Tuesday night (see page 208), highlighting perspectives about what the U.S. cow herd should look like in the future. Five industry experts shared their perspectives about what the cattle herd should look like in the next five years, commenting on



PHOTO BY TROY SMITH

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genetics, land prices, health protocols and beef marketing.

Cattlemen's College started back up Wednesday morning with a keynote address from Robert Fraley, executive vice president with Monsanto, who is a respected leader in agriculture biotechnology.

Throughout the day, attendees chose from a total of 18 classes within the topics of Healthy Cattle — Healthy Ranch, Advances

in Cattle Nutrition, Industry Hot Topics, Your Business — Our Industry, Evolving Beef Production, and Creating the Future. The range of informative hands-on workshops was created for cattle operations of every size and sector. Cattlemen and women of all age groups were in attendance, but young beef producers especially made a strong showing.

"We had more than 140 collegiate students preregister to attend Cattlemen's College this year," said White. "As we think about the future of our industry, it is encouraging to see young people keen to learn and get involved. Students absorb a lot of high-quality education over several days, as well as make important connections in the industry."

Audio presentations from the 2016 Cattlemen's College will be available online following the Cattle Industry Convention & NCBA Trade Show. Cattlemen and women who were unable to attend the event in San Diego can take advantage of this online option at www.beefusa.org.



Editor's Note: This article is adapted from a news release provided by the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board.

Using Technology to Feed a Growing World Population

Robert Fraley, executive vice president and chief technology officer at Monsanto Co., wasted no time in laying out the challenges that lie ahead for agriculture as he presented keynote remarks kicking off the 23rd Annual Cattlemen's College® hosted by Zoetis Jan. 26-27 in San Diego, Calif. Fraley pointed out an often-cited statistic: The population is projected to grow from the current 7.3 billion to 10 billion by 2050 — a span of just 34 years.

With that, Fraley noted that the world will experience double the current demand for food by the year 2050 amidst a plethora of changes — a rise in the number of people in the global middle class, changing economies and diets, demand for healthier options, decreasing water availability, evolving ag policies and declining availability of arable land.

"We will have to produce more and waste less to get there. These are the challenges," Fraley remarked. "I absolutely believe that we have the tools and technology to address them."

Regarding technology, he stated, "This isn't about us, but about leaving a legacy [addressing food security] for our children and grandchildren."

From a beef perspective, Fraley noted, "tremendous demand exists and is growing." He added, "Animals are the largest consumers of row crops. That makes us partners in advancing GMOs (genetically modified organisms) ... To increase beef production, we must also increase ag production."

As an example of the need for increased production, Fraley shared that in 2015, 2.0 billion bushels (bu.) of corn were produced. By 2050, it is estimated 2.8 billion bu. of corn will be needed to raise enough beef to meet the growing demand.



Looking to the past, he noted that annual corn production has gone from averaging 75 bu. per acre to 170 bu. per acre, and said, "That's been achieved through technology."

With 2016 marking the 20th anniversary since GMO crops have been grown, Fraley reported that the technology is being used to grow crops in 30 countries.

"These crops are the most thoroughly studied in our food system, and as a result, they are the safest," he said.

"We have 20 years of experience with GMOs in our food and feed supply and not one single food or feed safety issue."

That said, Fraley acknowledged that his company and the agriculture industry must do more to bridge the understanding gap between science and society.

"There's clearly a gap between what science can do and what the average person believes can be done and feels comfortable with," he said.

He concluded, "We need to reach out ... We need to listen and engage. Just as important as the work you do is teaching others about what you do."

For more information about GMOs visit <https://gmoanswers.com>, www.americasfarmers.com, discover.monsanto.com. Follow Fraley on Twitter @Robb Fraley.

— by Kindra Gordon, field editor

Editor's Note: Kindra Gordon is a freelancer and cattlemaster from Whitewood, S.D. This article was written as part of Angus Media's online coverage of the Cattle Industry Convention & NCBA Trade Show. For additional coverage, visit the Newsroom at www.4cattlemen.com.