



# Cattlemen Convene

## Producers Gather in Nashville, Tenn., for the 2007 Cattle Industry Annual Convention and Trade Show.

**M**ore than 6,000 cattle producers from across the nation descended on Nashville, Tenn., for the U.S. cattle industry's largest meeting, the Cattle Industry Annual Convention and NCBA Trade Show, Jan. 31-Feb. 3. The convention is hosted by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), the Cattlemen's Beef Board, American National CattleWomen, the National Cattlemen's Foundation and Cattle-Fax.

Wednesday's Cattlemen's College® featured a full day of hands-on instruction and producer education. Sponsored by Pfizer Animal Health, this year's session featured 18 breakout workshops on a wide range of production and management topics.

Wednesday afternoon, the cattle industry's largest trade show opened a four-day run, featuring more than 270 exhibitors. For the first time ever, the trade show included a day that was free and open to the public.

Wednesday's general session featured Kevin Freiberg, who discussed unconventional business practices and how entrepreneurs can use unique strategies to gain a competitive edge. The session also provided a preview of NCBA's *Cattlemen to Cattlemen* weekly television program that was to make its debut Feb. 6 on RFD-TV.

Cattle-Fax kicked off an information-packed Thursday schedule with its annual outlook seminar. Afterward, NCBA Beef Industry Issues Forums offered insights on animal identification (ID), natural and organic beef, the effect of ethanol and biofuels on the livestock industry, facts about foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), and recent task force recommendations for enhancing the Beef Checkoff Program.

Friday's keynote speaker was U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns, who presented his comments on the Farm Bill and USDA efforts to expand foreign market access.

Friday featured committee meetings in which NCBA members debated specific policy issues. Separate committees governing checkoff-funded programs received program updates and evaluated the progress toward this year's program goals. The committee meetings laid the groundwork for Saturday, when the convention concluded with meetings of

the Cattlemen's Beef Board and the NCBA Board of Directors.

"I'm glad to see so many cattlemen bringing energy and enthusiasm to the annual convention," said 2006 NCBA President Mike John, a cattleman from Huntsville, Mo. "It tells me that despite some difficult challenges, U.S. cattlemen want to play an active role in shaping their business climate and take charge of their future."

Angus Productions Inc. (API) is providing coverage of the event online at [www.4cattlemen.com](http://www.4cattlemen.com). Go to the newsroom to see highlights of the convention and trade show.

With the event so near March issue press deadlines, only a sampling of API coverage is provided on the following pages of the *Angus Journal*. See "NCBA Members Approve Policies" for an overview of policy adopted at the NCBA business meeting. Summaries of the issues forums begin on page 410, and summaries



► The American Angus Association, Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) and Angus Productions Inc. (API) shared a booth during the four-day trade show, which featured more than 270 exhibitors.

of the Cattle-Fax outlook begin on page 414. Several Angus members received awards at the event (see page 418).

The *Angus Journal* will provide additional coverage as space allows in the April issue. Meanwhile, visit the newsroom at [www.4cattlemen.com](http://www.4cattlemen.com) to read proceedings of Cattlemen's College sessions, to listen to Cattlemen's College presentations and issues forums, to read summaries of many of the discussions, and to view products featured in the trade show. Materials will continue to be posted to the site as they are presented and prepared.



► Tom Field of Colorado State University presented results of a survey to help establish priorities for the commercial cattle industry. See stories beginning on page 234 and 241 for more details.

## NCBA Members Approve Policies

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) hosted its regular annual board and membership meetings Feb. 3, concluding the 2007 Cattle Industry Annual Convention and NCBA Trade Show in Nashville, Tenn. More than 6,500 cattlemen from across the nation attended the four-day event.

Renewable energy was arguably the hottest topic of the four-day convention, due to the surging demand for ethanol and its effect on feedgrain prices. Rapidly increasing prices for corn and other feedgrains have raised operating costs for cattle feeders during the past four months, which in turn has contributed to lower calf and feeder-cattle prices.

The policy brought forward Friday by the NCBA Agriculture Policy Committee was approved in large part by NCBA members Saturday, with modest modifications in the policy resolution language. The resolution voiced support for the nation's commitment to reduced dependence on foreign energy, including efforts to develop renewable energy. But cattlemen called for transition to a market-based approach to renewable energy production, which would help level the playing field for cattle producers and other feedgrain users.

The resolution supports the "sunsetting" of fuel-blending tax credits and tariffs on imported ethanol, as these policies were primarily designed to boost the initial development in renewable fuel production and technology.

With alternative fuel production now growing at an astounding pace, cattlemen do not consider it appropriate for Congress to renew these mechanisms in their present form when they expire near the end of the decade. The 54¢-per-gallon tariff on imported ethanol is set to expire in 2009, while the 51¢-per-gallon fuel-blending tax credit expires in 2010.

NCBA members also called for greater policy emphasis to be placed

on development of cellulosic fuels. Production of these fuel types does not rely on feedgrains and would have a much smaller effect on grain prices.

NCBA members also approved policy with regard to live cattle trade with Canada. Currently, cattle and beef imports from Canada are limited to cattle 30 months of age or younger. A pending USDA proposal would allow beef from Canadian cattle of any age, and live cattle up to eight years of age.

Cattlemen did not reject the USDA proposal, but adopted a policy voicing concerns about its possible effect. The policy resolution approved by NCBA members demands permanent identification (ID) of all live cattle imported from Canada through harvest, and calls for USDA to develop an orderly market transition plan before expanding the scope of cattle and beef imports from Canada.

"NCBA believes in treating our trading partners as we would like to be treated," incoming NCBA President John Queen said. "But we want free, fair and reliable trade. USDA must look at the big picture and take steps to ensure that U.S. cattlemen are rewarded — not penalized — for opening our market to a wider range of imports."

Cloning was also a topic of discussion at the convention, primarily because of the draft risk assessment announced by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in December. FDA's initial findings state that meat and milk from cloned animals and their offspring pose no health risk to consumers.

Cattlemen adopted a policy supporting the further development of cloning as one of many reproductive technologies that can be used to enhance the beef industry. But they also urged all technology companies and owners of cloned animals to voluntarily keep these animals

and their offspring out of the food supply until FDA makes a final decision on its risk assessment.

NCBA members also proceeded with caution with regard to any changes in the Beef Checkoff Program. An industry-wide task force recently advanced a slate of recommendations for enhancing the checkoff, including an increase in the \$1-per-head checkoff rate (contingent on a producer referendum). But the policy resolution adopted by cattlemen seeks greater input and discussion on these task force recommendations before giving them renewed consideration at next year's convention.

### New slate of officers

Queen, Waynesville, N.C., leads a full slate of new officers elected by NCBA members during the Saturday membership meeting. He succeeds Missouri cattleman Mike John as president. Guymon, Okla., cattle feeder Paul Hitch is the new president-elect, while Andy Groseta of Cottonwood, Ariz., was chosen as vice president.

Illinois cattleman Steve Fogelsong will chair the NCBA Policy Division in 2007, with Montana rancher Bill Donald serving as vice chairman.

Gary Voogt of Michigan now chairs the Federation of State Beef Councils, with Iowa cattleman Alan Albright serving as vice chairman.

All policy adoptions and officer elections are now subject to approval by approximately 28,000 NCBA members nationwide. Convention results become official only after the ballot process is completed.

— Joe Schuele

