

Members Take Action

Industry organizations elect officers, approve policy resolutions directing staff as to policy positions.

by **Troy Smith**

The 2011 Cattle Industry Convention, in Denver, concluded Saturday with a joint meeting of the Cattlemen's Beef Board (CBB) and the board of directors for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), followed by the annual NCBA membership meeting. While in joint session, CBB and NCBA directors unanimously approved a new Long-Range Plan (see page 193), which establishes the following core strategies and goals:

- ▶ Improve domestic consumer preference for beef, with a goal of increasing the Consumer Beef Index preference measure from 28% to 31%.
- ▶ Capitalize on global growth opportunities, with a goal of increasing value of U.S. beef exports by 25% per head.
- ▶ Strengthen the image of beef and the beef industry, with a goal of establishing a benchmark measure of public perceptions of beef and beef production.
- ▶ Protect and enhance freedom to operate, with a goal of developing an index to measure and track freedom to operate.
- ▶ Improve industry trust, openness and relationships, with a goal of establishing a benchmark of industry stakeholder perceptions of unity and trust.
- ▶ Position the U.S. cow herd for growth, with a goal of increasing bred heifer retention to 18% while stabilizing U.S. beef production at a minimum of 26 billion pounds (lb.) annually.

CBB directors seated Arkansas cattleman Tom Jones as chairman; Wesley Grau of New Mexico as vice chairman; and Weldon Wynn, also from Arkansas, as secretary-treasurer.

Advancing through the chairs of leadership were Montana rancher Bill Donald as president of NCBA and Nebraska cattle feeder J.D. Alexander as president-elect. Members elected Wyoming dairy and cow-calf operator Scott George as vice president. David Dick of Missouri was chosen to succeed George as chairman of the Federation of State Beef Councils (Federation Division) and Texan Bob McCan was named chairman of NCBA's Policy Division.

"It is a great honor to be elected to lead



▶ Tom Jones took the reins as president of the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board Saturday morning.

PHOTOS COURTESY ZIMMCOMM NEW MEDIA LLC

NCBA for the next year. There is tremendous opportunity out there for U.S. cattlemen and women, and we plan to make every opportunity a reality," Donald said. "We're a diverse outfit. NCBA represents the entire industry — from packers to cow-calf producers and everyone in between — but to be profitable it takes all of us working on the same issues."

Directors representing the Federation Division adopted a 12-point Charter of Principles, which clarifies its role within the NCBA framework as separate and distinct from that of the Policy Division, whose lobbying activities are funded through NCBA dues. The Charter affirmed the Federation's ability to make decisions independently with regard to investment beef checkoff resources contributed by qualified state beef councils. The Charter also calls for the appointment of a senior executive officer for the Federation Division and a compliance officer.

Addressing policy

Several 2011 policy resolutions were approved, including policy on immigration, food safety, marketing, cattle health, and federal lands.

The policies established are driven by grassroots cattlemen and women, said 2010 NCBA President Steve Foglesong, emphasizing that members decide the organization's policy positions. "Our members chart the course for our organization and for the entire beef industry.



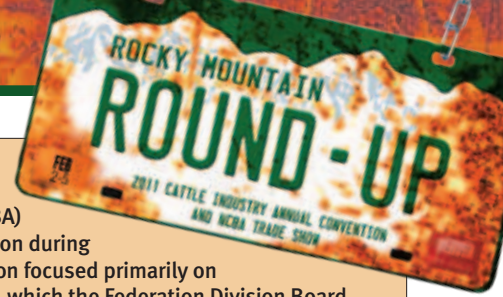
▶ Nebraska cattle feeder J.D. Alexander was named president-elect of NCBA.

This organization is producer-owned and member-driven," said Foglesong.

Border security. NCBA members adopted a resolution related to border security and federal lands designations. The resolution supports authority for federal agencies as well as state and local authorities to secure the border with Mexico, and requests suspension of all pending legislation and funding for federal-land designations along the border.

The resolution states that federally owned lands along the border with certain designations such as "wilderness areas" provide unfettered access for illegal cross-border activities by restricting the motorized access of federal agents responsible for patrolling the land.

Eastern's bankruptcy. In response to the Eastern Livestock Co. bankruptcy and resulting financial losses suffered by cattle producers and Eastern's service providers,



NCBA members directed staff to work aggressively with members of Congress and appropriate federal agencies to make funds available at low interest or no interest to assist producers and firms that were directly affected. Staffers will also work with the relevant congressional committees to seek a congressional oversight hearing into the Grain Inspection, Packers & Stockyards Administration's (GIPSA's) audits and bonding of all cattle auction markets and dealers.

Disease traceability. In other action, members approved a resolution calling for NCBA to be at the forefront of discussions on any animal disease traceability program requiring animal identification (ID). NCBA maintains that any associated costs to producers be minimized and paid through federal or state funds if possible. Additionally, the resolution stipulated information relative to animal ID should remain under control of state animal health officials and be kept confidential and protected from disclosure. Furthermore, any such program must operate with the speed of commerce and producers must be protected from liability for acts of others after cattle are no longer under said producers' control.

Cattle health. The membership called for NCBA staff to urge the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Congress to provide full funding for purposes of indemnification for brucellosis, tuberculosis, foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) and emergency diseases.

Another resolution recognized the role that pooled Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) testing plays in the control of the reproductive cattle disease trichomoniasis and called for further education and research of pooled PCR testing for the beef industry.

Food safety. New policy was

Federation Forum

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) Federation Forum was conducted Thursday afternoon during the Cattle Industry Convention in Denver. Discussion focused primarily on consideration of a Federation Charter of Principles, which the Federation Division Board of Directors proposed as a means of ensuring the Federation's ability to operate with a measure of independence, while maintaining the synergies and efficiencies afforded by existing under the umbrella of NCBA.

Federation Chairman Scott George explained that the Federation of Qualified State Beef Councils (or Federation Division of NCBA) has responsibility for directing investment of funds received from state beef councils toward programs for beef promotion, research and education. These funds are derived from that portion (one-half) of the dollar-per-head beef checkoff collections that each state beef council is allowed, by law, to retain and use to fund state promotion programs, or to contribute in support of national programs. Chairman George said the Federation also receives some funding from the Beef Promotion Operating Committee of the Cattlemen's Beef Board for specific national programs.

George said there has been concern that decisions made by the Federation Division or Policy Division might be influenced by the other. There also may have been concern that funds derived from the checkoff might be used to influence government policy rather than for beef promotion.

Included in the proposed Charter Principles is language stating that Federation directors will not vote on matters related to policy and Policy Division directors will not vote on checkoff-related matters. Charter Principles also restate that, according to the Act and Order that established the checkoff, no checkoff funds may be used to influence policy.

The Charter Principles also call for selection of a Federation Executive Committee empowered to exercise the authority of the Federation when it is not in session, and appointment of a staff member as Senior Executive as point person for the Federation. A staff member would also be appointed to monitor compliance with Charter Principles.

"Everything called for in the proposed Charter Principles is already allowed by existing NCBA bylaws," said George, "but the Federation board of directors believe adoption of the Charter Principles will help strengthen confidence that the Federation can make decisions independently and still exist within the NCBA framework."

George encouraged producers present to become familiar with the proposed Charter Principles and provide input prior to the proposal's being considered for adoption by Federation directors during the meeting scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 5.

adopted in support of a collaborative and multidisciplinary approach to the identification and development of interventions along the entire food chain and that support research to determine critical virulence factors for non-O157 shiga-producing *E. coli* toxins.

Additionally, NCBA continues to support collaborative food safety research to make beef an even safer product.

Members renewed existing policy opposing any legislation or regulations that limit methods for marketing cattle, including value-added systems or strategic alliances.

"This is the bread and butter of our organization. This is truly where the magic happens, so-to-speak," said Colin Woodall, NCBA vice president of government affairs. "Our members take the time away from their operations and their families to travel here and debate important issues affecting the U.S. beef cattle industry. They then put it on paper. When we are fighting for U.S. cattlemen and women in Washington, D.C., we use these policy positions as our roadmap."

AJ

Editor's Note: For more coverage of the 2011 Cattle Industry Convention and NCBA Trade Show, visit the newsroom at www.4cattlemen.com.



► NCBA and CBB members conduct the official business of the organizations during the closing session.