

# Feeding the World

2013 ILC continues to focus on meeting the challenge of feeding a growing world population.

by *Shauna Rose Hermel, editor*

Livestock industry stakeholders gathered in Denver, Colo., Jan. 15 for the International Livestock Congress—USA 2013 (ILC). Attended by nearly 200 industry representatives, the congress addressed the theme, “Feeding the World II: Meeting the Challenge.”



It has been projected that the world population will grow to around 9 billion people by the year 2050. In order to meet this daunting challenge, we will need to double the current production of food. The 2013 ILC provided an opportunity to learn more from both domestic and international industry experts about the challenges the industry will face with respect to meeting the demand for beef in the future.

Gary Smith keynoted the Congress with a review of how the technologies implemented during the past 50 years have helped get the beef industry to where it is today and a look at the role of technologies in moving our industry into the future. Smith also addressed the importance of telling the beef story and becoming more transparent for today’s consumers (see “Telling the Beef Story,” page 278).

It is a well-known fact that the success of the beef industry today, and in the future, will be dependent upon meeting the demands of our consumers. John Lundeen, executive

director of market research with the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA), discussed the latest market research focused on identifying the drivers of beef demand both domestically and internationally (see “What Are Our Consumers Telling Us?” page 279).

The global beef industry has changed significantly during the past several years and there will be many changes ahead for the beef industry. An international panel moderated by Phil Seng, CEO of the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) discussed current issues affecting the beef industry worldwide and what the future might hold (see “Beef Industry Worldwide,” page 280).

Sustainability is a buzzword among consumers and in the ag industry. Meeting the challenge of feeding the world will be dependent upon the ability of our industry to become more sustainable moving forward, but what is sustainable? Panelists Cameron Bruett, JBS Swift; Cristain Barcan, BASF; John Pollak, U.S. Meat Animal Research Center (USMARC); and Kim Stackhouse-Lawson, NCBA, provided multiple perspectives (see “Sustainability,” page 282).

The USDA announced a nationwide animal identification system for disease traceability on Dec. 20, 2012. Published in the *Federal Register* Jan. 9, the final rule will take

effect 60 days later, March 11. Where does that put the beef industry? Leann Saunders, Where Food Comes From Inc., moderated a panel consisting of Mark Gustafson, JBS; Rick Scott, AgriBeef; and John Butler, Beef Marketing Group, to answer that question (see “Traceability: Where Are We Now?” page 284).

Russell Cross, head of the Department of Animal Science at Texas A&M University, discussed a lack of funding for animal-related research as well as a lack of lobby efforts to rectify the situation. The National Association for the Advancement of Animal Science was created in the summer of 2012 to fill the void and to advocate for increased federal investment in animal science to support future animal-related research (see “Science Does Matter,” page 282).

Sustainability may well hinge on the industry’s ability to communicate with consumers. Darren Williams, NCBA, provided an update on the Masters of Beef Advocacy Program, which to date has trained more than 4,000 spokespersons for the beef industry (see “Ready to Advocate,” page 287). Students from Texas A&M University shared how they organized the “Farmers Fight” effort to train students to communicate with their nonagricultural peers about all facets of agriculture (see “Farmers Fight,” page 286).



**Editor’s Note:** This article was put together using a news release about the congress.