



# NCBA, CBB Leadership Welcome

Leaders urge organizations to work together within new committee structure to set priorities for the coming year.

**D**uring the opening general session Feb. 6, leaders of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) and Cattlemen's Beef Board (CBB) welcomed beef producers to Tampa, Fla., for the 2013 Cattle Industry Convention. NCBA President J.D. Alexander of Pilger, Neb., and CBB Chairman Wesley Grau of Grady, N.M., urged representatives of their respective organizations to work together in setting priorities for the coming year.

Grau reminded the audience that this convention offers the first opportunity for the CBB and delegates from the Federation of State Beef Councils to meet jointly under a new beef checkoff committee structure. He noted how reduced cattle numbers have further impacted an already tight checkoff budget, but said producer volunteers must focus their efforts on prioritizing checkoff investments.

"Our new committee structure was developed to help the checkoff better respond to its mission and the industry's long-range plan," said Grau, urging the audience to resist making comparisons between the new structure and the old committee system.

"It was reorganized to improve effectiveness and efficiency. Realize that it may take a little time to become accustomed to the new committee structure," he advised. "Treat each other with the utmost respect. We're here to mold the future of our industry. Together is the only way it can happen."

Alexander allowed that he had heard it said that if something can't be legislated, regulate it. He added that NCBA members and staff have seen ample evidence of that through government's attempts to apply burdensome regulations. Cited examples included attempts to restrict the ability of youth to work on farms and ranches, proposed EPA dust regulations, the Renewable Fuels Standard and proposed rules that would require commercial driver's licenses for drivers of many farm vehicles.

"NCBA has fought each of those unjust and unreasonable regulations," stated Alexander. "We also had success in eliminating trade barriers that will allow more U.S. beef to be exported. We maintained the \$10 million exemption (per couple) on the federal estate tax."

Alexander said there are more battles to fight, and the preparation takes place at this convention.

In closing, Alexander echoed Grau's earlier remark, saying, "All comers have a seat at the table. Together we can succeed."

— by Troy Smith, field editor



PHOTOS BY TROY SMITH

► J.D. Alexander, 2012 NCBA president, said that a great deal of work will happen at the convention, but there are plenty of opportunities to play.



► CBB Chairman Wesley Grau reminded the audience that the convention offered the first opportunity for the CBB and delegates from the Federation of State Beef Councils to meet jointly under a new beef checkoff committee structure.

## Make a Difference

"You can make a difference," Leigh Anne and Sean Tuohy told the more than 5,000 cattlemen and women during the general session opening the 2013 Cattle Industry Convention and National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) Trade Show Feb. 6 at the Tampa Convention Center.

Their lives were chronicled in the Hollywood blockbuster film *The Blind Side*, which tells the story of Michael Oher, a homeless teenager the couple adopted and, with their love and support, became a first-round draft pick in the NFL. Oher has played for the Baltimore Ravens for the past five years and was part of the team that won the

Super Bowl just days before the convention.

Still giddy from the big win, Leigh Anne said, "We won the Super Bowl!" as she arrived on stage.

The husband-and-wife team shared many stories of their life during the past eight years with their two biological children and their adopted son, Michael. They noted that



# Cattlemen to 2013 Convention

neither adopting Michael — nor his NFL achievements — was planned.

“Michael’s coming into our lives — we call it one of God’s miracles,” Sean said.

Before they met Michael as a teenager, he was simply a kid falling through the cracks, Sean said. “Imagine who else is falling through the cracks.”

He added, “I could go anywhere and find a family 50 times better than ours. . . . There are so many of you doing wonderful things. This isn’t about us or who we are or what we do; we aren’t unique. It happened to be us. Yes, you can make a difference.”

The couple encouraged those in the audience to value other people and get to know them.

“If you simply smile, you may change their day,” Leigh Anne said. “Get to know them, and you may change their life.”

Sean added, “You don’t have to adopt or cure cancer, just make a difference.”

Today, Leigh Anne wears a bracelet inscribed with the words “Turn Around” because in meeting Michael that is what they did. When they saw Michael walking along the side of the road on the day before Thanksgiving, Sean admits he would have kept driving, but Leigh Anne said, “Turn around.” From that encounter, their journey to eventually becoming Michael’s adoptive parents began.

Leigh Anne shared, “When you walk past someone you are often sizing them up in

your head and making judgments, but we say instead, “Turn around.”

In concluding, she said, “We gave Michael a house and some hope, and he became the person he was supposed to.”

She also shared an analogy of a little boy walking on the beach with his grandfather. Thousands of starfish were lying on the beach, and the little boy was throwing as many as he could back into the water to save them.

His grandfather said, “There are thousands of them. You can’t make a difference.”

The little boy threw another one back into the ocean and said, “I made a difference to that one.”

Sean and Leigh Anne now have a book of their own out — with the last chapter titled “Turn Around.” The book is titled *In a Heartbeat: Sharing the Power of Cheerful Giving*. They also have a foundation. Learn more at [www.makingithappenfoundation.com](http://www.makingithappenfoundation.com).

— by Kindra Gordon, field editor

## Plain Talk About the Economy

Has the financial culture of the United States changed? Speaking before the second general session at the 2013 Cattle Industry Convention, economist, financial journalist and Fox Business Network personality Stuart Varney said a shift in the financial culture followed in the wake of the financial crisis of 2008. Now, said Varney, the country is all about government, all of the time.



► General session keynoter Stuart Varney says the country is now all about government, all of the time.

Varney said the mainstream media played a role, negatively portraying capitalism as the greedy pursuit of profit. Admitting his own part in it, Varney said the media harped constantly about extravagant spending among executives of failed and failing companies.

It gave corporate America a black eye and stirred anger among the people, he explained.

They wanted government to fix it. According to Varney, that’s reflected in the intensive policy approach of the Obama administration and many members of Congress. They think the answer is regulation and that much more regulation is needed.

“Obamacare is an example. In effect, it nationalizes 15% of the U.S. economy,” said Varney. “But their watchword is ‘fairness,’ and they think it must be controlled through regulation.”

Consequently, added Varney, the U.S. as a country is looking much more like Europe.

“I hate to say it, but slow (economic) growth, high unemployment and massive debt — that’s Europe,” warned Varney.

— by Troy Smith, field editor



**Editor’s Note:** These articles are part of the event coverage posted to [www.4cattlemen.com](http://www.4cattlemen.com) by the Angus Journal. Visit the newsroom at [www.4cattlemen.com](http://www.4cattlemen.com) for comprehensive coverage of the event. For Angus Journal coverage of other industry events, visit [www.api-virtuallibrary.com](http://www.api-virtuallibrary.com).



Sean and Leigh Anne Tuohy encourage cattlemen to turn around — get to know people, give, make a difference.