

Karl Rove Addresses Convention

Former White House chief of staff advises cattlemen to get involved in reclaiming the country and fixing its problems.

by *Troy Smith and Kindra Gordon*

Thursday morning brought nearly 5,000 people together to hear columnist, commentator and political pundit Karl Rove address the 2011 Cattle Industry Convention in Denver. The former senior advisor and White House chief of staff for President George W. Bush was the keynote speaker during the convention's second general session.

With quips like, "I'm Karl Rove, and I'm a recovering government bureaucrat," he mixed levity with his commentary on serious and often discouraging subject matter.

Rove poked fun at the signature ponytailed hairstyle of incoming NCBA President Bill Donald, but aimed his sharpest barbs at Washington politicians.

He opined on the current state of government affairs, noting troubling trends toward overspending; overregulation; and overconfident, even arrogant, behavior of too many government officials, both elected and appointed.

Rove shared stories ranging from that of pioneering cattlemen Charles Goodnight and Oliver Loving to those of modern military personnel who have demonstrated the tenacity and perseverance that have personified America.

But there is "a nanny-state a-comin'," he lamented, which threatens to stifle the American spirit that made this country. It's being pushed by bureaucrats who think



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► "We are at a crossroads these next couple years," Karl Rove told cattlemen. "Do we — the United States — want to be a shining light to the world; a source of big dreams and innovation, or do we want to be a place where dreams are constrained and our vision is cramped?"

Americans can't or shouldn't have to take care of themselves.

"There are too many nutty professors who don't understand how the real world works, and they're in charge of the regulatory process," said Rove. "If you mishandle your land, you pay a price. That doesn't sink in with people in Washington who think they know more than you."

In turn, Rove targeted the economic stimulus bill, health care legislation and continued deficit spending by government.

Working through the challenges

NCBA President-elect Bill Donald, a cattleman from Montana, set the tone for the second general session of the 2011 Cattle Industry Convention by emphasizing the need for teamwork and being involved. Using the analogy of an old-time wagon train depicted in a painting by Montana friend and artist David Hodges, Donald talked about the importance of each part and player.

The people in the painting, he said, represent the membership. The horses represent the staff; the wagon, the issues and programs. The harnesses represent the policies and bylaws that hold it all together.

Donald also referred to the



► "We may not agree on every issue, but we've got to find common ground," said Bill Donald, who took the reins as president later in the week.

position of the freight wagon, emphasizing the importance of taking the high road so as not to get bogged down in the muck.

"We're a diverse outfit," he said. "We cover every segment of the industry, and I don't apologize to anybody about that ... Yeah, we've got packers who serve on the board of this outfit. And we've got retailers and we have importers and cow-calf guys and stocker guys and feedlot operators. Because that's what it takes for all of us to be profitable — all of us to be in the same room working on the same issues."

He added, "We may not agree on every issue, but we've got to find common ground."

— by *Kindra Gordon*



He noted how the stimulus was supposed to remedy unemployment, but unemployment has increased. Rove cited growing opposition to supposed health care reform, particularly among health care professionals, and explained how insurance premiums are rising. The costs of stimulus and health care legislation plus more unbridled government spending has the country swimming in red ink.

“There never has been a country in the history of the world that has spent its way to prosperity,” stated Rove, warning that the United States appears to be following in the path of Greece toward economic ruin. It’s time, he said, to remember the country we once were.

Calling for increased trade, Rove said, “We need to sell what we grow, produce, manufacture and create — all around the world,” adding that consumers abroad still want American quality and innovation. “America can compete anywhere in the world, as long as the rules are fair and the playing field is level.”

Rove said the United States can again be a country of liberty, freedom and responsibility, unless its people are willing to just accept what government sends their way. He advised the audience to get involved in reclaiming the country and fixing its problems.

“People also have to make a decision if they are going to be part of [the solutions],” he said. “I know you want a role and have a voice to shape the future,” he told cattlemen.

Specifically to the beef industry, Rove said, “I encourage your membership to contribute to your PAC (political action committee). That is a tool to help elect people who understand your problems.”

Secondly, Rove encouraged getting involved, saying, “More important than writing a check, you need to be personally involved.” He shared the example of how people talking to people can help inform, educate and influence public opinion. “That’s what you can do if you get involved and stay involved.”

“Will we prevail? I think so,” Rove said of his desire to turn Washington around and bring back fiscal responsibility. “We need to remember what it is to be an American. We have a responsibility to love our country, serve and put the country in the right direction. You represent those values, and it’s time for all of us to stand up for those values,” he concluded.



Editor’s Note: For additional coverage of the 2011 Cattle Industry Convention and NCBA Trade Show, visit www.4cattlemen.com, Angus Production Inc.’s online coverage site for the event.

Long-Range Plan Discussed

Policy Division Forum takes a look at proposed industry plan.

During an early session of the 2011 Cattle Industry Convention in Denver, attendees were presented with a summary of a proposed Long-Range Plan for guiding the U.S. beef industry during the next three years. Later, during the convention’s Policy Division Forum, cattlemen learned the details from Barry Carpenter of the National Meat Association and Homer Buell, a Nebraska cow-calf producer. Both men were among the 23 members of a task force representing multiple beef industry organizations, which drafted the plan.

According to Carpenter and Buell, the Long-Range Plan pursues a stated mission: “To provide the safest, highest-quality, most consumer-friendly beef and beef products in an environmentally and economically sustainable manner.” In tag-team fashion, the pair explained the plan’s core strategies and goals for accomplishing that mission.

“The task force saw the need to focus on core strategies to move forward during the next three years,” said Carpenter. “And we wanted to have measureable goals.”

Those core strategies and respective goals are as follows:

- ▶ 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 the 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 perception of beef and beef production.
- ▶ Protect and enhance our freedom to operate, with a goal of developing an index to measure and track freedom to operate.
- ▶ Improve industry trust, openness and relationships, with the 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 annually.

“Task force members believe there are two factors critical to the plan’s success,” said Buell. The first is the development of a resourcing plan to achieve desired outcomes of the plan, he said.

“We need to increase both [national beef] checkoff resources and non-checkoff resources,” he said.

Second, he added, “The industry also needs to adopt a practical and effective industry-wide animal disease traceability program.”

After being presented and discussed in several other forums, the Long-Range Plan was subsequently adopted during the Convention’s business meeting Feb. 5.

— by Troy Smith

Plan Vision
**An industry united
around a common goal
of being the world’s
most trusted and
preferred source of
beef and beef products.**

Editor’s Note: The task force was comprised of Charles Miller, C&J Cattle Co., co-chairman; Robert Rebholtz, Agri-Beef, co-chairman; Ron Bryant, Intervet/Schering-Plough; Jack Cowley, cow-calf; Robert Fountain, cow-calf; David Kent, Kroger; Mark Mackey, Livestock Marketing Association; Joe Schechinger, Wendy’s QSCC; Don Stewart, Stewart-Miller Inc.; Homer Buell, Shovell Dot Ranch; Mark Eganhouse, Wendy’s QSCC; Ted Greidanus, Calftex Corp.; Leo McDonnell, U.S. Cattlemen’s Association; Billy Perrin, Livestock Marketing Association; Don Schiefelbein, Schiefelbein Farms; Mark Van Buskirk, Kroger; Barry Carpenter, National Meat Association; Mike Engler, Cactus Feeders; Paul Heinrich, Sysco Corp.; Charlie Mostek, Tyson; Homero Recio, U.S. Meat Export Federation; Todd Schroeder, Albers Feedlot; and Bob Young, American Farm Bureau Federation.