



► **Above:** Joshua Brannon competes in the prepared speaking contest.



PHOTOS BY KASEY BROWN



► "Facebook is the ultimate leader in social media. The Angus breed is the ultimate beef breed and Association," said Alexis Koelling in her winning Junior A speech.

► **Below:** Will Pohlman took top honors in the senior division of both the prepared speaking and the extemporaneous speaking contests.

# Speak Up

NJAA members exhibit poise during prepared public speaking.

compiled by *Kasey Brown*, associate editor

**M**any former National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) members will say that they use the communication skills learned during their NJAA tenure daily. The winners of the NJAA Prepared Public Speaking Contest are certainly preparing for adult life's communication needs. They competed during the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) in Tulsa, Okla., July 12-18.

Junior and intermediate division contestants could speak on any subject pertaining to Angus cattle or the beef industry. Exploration of any and all phases of the industry were encouraged, with the topic prompts of current affairs, policies and trends. Senior division contestants were asked to address how producers maintain

a profitable and successful operation with increased environmental regulations.

Speeches in the junior division were to be between 4 and 6 minutes in length, and intermediate and senior division speeches were to be 6-8 minutes long.

This year's winners were Alexis Koelling, Laddonia, Mo., junior A division; Mardee Sadowsky, Eagleville, Mo., junior B division; Allyson Sellers, Vilonia, Ark., intermediate A division; Sydney Thummel, Sheridan, Mo., intermediate B division; and Will Pohlman, Prairie Grove, Ark., senior division.

Pohlman won a \$1,000 scholarship from the *Angus Journal* for his senior division win. The winners of the younger divisions each won \$125.

# #Angus ... #leadingtheway

by **Alexis Koelling**, junior A winner

It was a typical Friday night at my dad's, and I was — dare I say the forbidden word? — bored. If only I could “waste” time like everyone else in the world and get on Facebook.

I sent the text: “Mom, can I please get Facebook?”

The instant response: “No, Lexi. It is not appropriate for a 10-year-old.”

Defeated. I knew if I had any chance of ever convincing my mom that I needed to be on Facebook, I had better have some very good reasons why.

Knowing that Google has all the answers, I went to work. Everyone knows Facebook is a way to share photos and videos, but what most kids do not know is Facebook can also

be a place to advertise their business. Google says that some businesses, like news channels and even the American Angus Association, have pages to post current news the very second it happens. Because of Facebook, people no longer have to wait to get home to watch the news or wait for the monthly issue of the *Angus Journal* to know what's happening.

Facebook changed the way we interact and has made our world full of statuses, hashtags (#) and followers. But Facebook isn't a follower ... nope, it is the leader of social media. In school, we learned about similes, or descriptors. Facebook is to social media what Angus cattle is to the beef industry ... the #leaders. Jackpot.

## Leadership

After my mom hears this, she will see it just makes sense for me to have Facebook. I mean, if I can talk to other Angus people and sell my cattle ... #duh! Just like Facebook has transformed the Internet, Angus cattle have led the beef industry. Angus cattle lead the way as the ideal commercial cow and beef carcass, and as a vehicle for its members to become leaders. As a 10-year-old just beginning my Angus business, even I can see the difference Angus makes.

Junior nationals — the highlight of my summer. From the time I turn my calendar from April to May, my countdown begins. Hundreds of people from coast to coast come together like a small community. We eat together, laugh together, compete together, but we are all different with different experiences.

This is way more than just another cattle show. It's contests, making friends and fun! Last year was my first experience at junior nationals. At the mentoring meeting I was introduced to the green jackets of the junior board and met NJAA Chairman Cory Watt.

I didn't know Cory well, but I noticed he was different. I noticed that he had had surgeries, but you couldn't tell by his spirit. After that meeting, my friend shared with me his life struggles. I admire Cory. He lived a life of challenges but was firm in his belief and faith in God. He believed in living God's purpose and God's plan. He not only inspired me, but almost everyone that knew him. In fact, when the NJAA announced his funeral arrangements on their Facebook wall, that post had over 900 likes. Cory Watt was a leader, and his influence is around each of us.

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## PREPARED PUBLIC SPEAKING

The National Junior Angus Association Prepared Public Speaking Contest is designed to equip members with the abilities of communication required to succeed in the beef industry and in life. In this contest, juniors prepare a speech in advance and are judged on both the content of the speech and their delivery.

The *Angus Journal* sponsors the senior division and awards monetary prizes to the winners. For their topic, contestants this year were asked to answer the question, “With increased environmental regulations, how do producers maintain a profitable and successful operation?”



► Winning the junior A division are (from left) **Kelsey Theis**, Leavenworth, Kan., second; and **Alexis Koelling**, Laddonia, Mo., first.



► Winning the junior B division are (from left) **Eric Schafer**, third, and **Lizzie Schafer**, second, both of Owaneco, Ill.; and **Mardee Sadowsky**, Eagleville, Mo., first.



► Winning the intermediate A division are (from left) **Allyson Sellers**, Vilonia, Ark., first; **Nicholas Pohlman**, Prairie Grove, Ark., second; and **Madison Weaver**, Ephrata, Pa., third.



► Winning the intermediate B division are (from left) **Sydney Thummel**, Sheridan, Mo., first; **Keegan Cassidy**, Normal, Ill., second; and **Sydni Lienemann**, Princeton, Neb., third.



► Winning the senior division are (from left) **Es-ther McCabe**, Elk City, Kan., third; **Cooper Sadowsky**, Eagleville, Mo., second; and **Will Pohlman**, Prairie Grove, Ark., first.

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Angus is the tie that binds us together. No matter if you are competing in NJAA contests, participating in the LEAD (Leaders Engaged in Angus Development) conference, or participating in an Angus breeders' scholarship program, this breed has the vision needed to be successful.

**Black cows**

Every year, we run cows on our neighbors' cornstalks. When harvest is complete, Frank always tells us, "You can turn out those black cows."

The black Angus cow. She is the most recognizable beef cow and easily the No. 1 choice for cattlemen. Like choosing teams on the playground, she is always the first pick. Why? She is more profitable.

She has big bold eyes, a round nose, big

cheeks, a round belly, medium-sized udder, with a passion for grass! This means she is stouter, requires less feed but doesn't get skinny, and she still raises a big, heavy calf. Not only does the Angus cow look good, but she is the real deal when put to work. She is known to produce cattle that are small at birth, but are some of the fastest growing with muscle of any other breed.

Many breeds have tried to copy her, almost like kids at school trying to copy off the "smart kid's" paper; but she has never been duplicated. Angus calves make the commercial cattleman happy when sold at weaning or at the feedlot. They actually earn more money because of the *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) program.

Not only do cattlemen love Angus cattle grazing in their pastures, but the folks who

eat beef love Angus beef on their plate! We all know the real reason we raise cattle is for us to eat! Angus beef is extremely tender and has more flavor than the other breeds, too. Doesn't your heart swell with pride when you hear the *Certified Angus Beef* commercials for Schnucks? As cattle farmers, we put healthy, delicious meals on American family tables.

Facebook is the ultimate leader in social media. The Angus breed is the ultimate beef breed and Association. We are leading the way in leadership, commercial cows and quality beef. With the record-low cattle numbers, demand for beef has never been greater, and Angus leads the way for the producer and the consumer. Everyone recognizes the famous blue icon on the iPhone, and every good cattleman recognizes the iconic black Angus cow. #leadingtheway

# Beef, It's What's for Dinner!

by *Mardee Sadowsky, junior B winner*

**'S**aturated fat." For over 40 years this animal fat has been considered the artery-clogging, obesity-causing poison. Beef is high in saturated fat, and because of this, it has been pushed out of human diets since 1970. The government public health policy has made society leery of one of the most nutrient-dense forms of protein.

As beef producers, it is our job to make more people say, "Beef. It's what's for dinner!" To properly advocate for the consumption of beef, we must explain why we should eat beef, why we aren't eating beef and encourage beef in human diets. After uncovering the real truths of beef, you'll be ready to bring beef back to the dinner table. After all, it's good for you!

**Benefits of beef**

Why should we eat beef? Beef is the most nutrient-dense form of protein. One 3-ounce serving of lean beef contributes less than 10% of calories to a 2,000-calorie diet, yet it supplies more than 10% of the daily value for nine essential nutrients. Based on a 2,000-calorie diet, a serving of beef is an excellent source of protein, zinc, phosphorus, iron and four B-complex vitamins.

Additionally, research has shown that animal fats are beneficial to human health. Conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) is a fatty acid found naturally in beef. According to

*BEEF Bytes*, recent research indicates that CLA may play a role in cancer prevention by inhibiting tumor growth and development.

CLA can also affect body composition by decreasing body fat and increasing lean muscle mass.

While beef is high in saturated fat, the bottom line is this: Fat doesn't make you fat. To be healthy, you need a diet with a high-fat-to-low-carb ratio. With conclusions based on her nine-year investigation, Nina Teicholz, author of the New York Times Best Seller *The Big Fat Surprise*, backs up these facts. Her investigations revealed that everything we've been told about fat for the last 40 years is false. Animal fats and saturated fats can actually help reduce obesity, diabetes and heart disease.

**Fibbed about fat**

Beef and saturated fats have been avoided due to weak science that created a bad image for saturated fats. It began in 1970 when *The Seven Countries Study* was originally published. The study sought a correlation

between saturated-fat intake and heart disease. The study tested 12,763 men from seven countries where it was believed that

a negative correlation was found. So the American government followed the study by making the supposed correlation between the relation of saturated fat intake and heart disease a matter of public health policy.

However, according to *Greatist* writer Nick English, the study was deeply flawed. It didn't take into account factors such as smoking rates, sugar consumption and exercise. Additionally, it left out data that

contradicted the favored response. The study had access to 22 countries' data, but they only used seven. This was done because some populations followed diets with high levels of saturated-fat intake, yet these populations had records of low heart disease.

For example, the Kenyan Masai eat only blood, meat and milk. They have little to no heart disease, and 50% lower body weights and blood pressure of their citizens in comparison to their American counterparts. The Masai aren't the only ones eating the

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“shunned” animal fat. The Artic Inuit and Polynesian Tokelau are also enjoying eating meat and remaining heart healthy.

However, the United States instead formed the Food Pyramid of the 1990s, which recommends multiple servings of carbohydrates, fruits and vegetables, but little protein and less fat. The result? The United States has dropped fat consumption by 10% in the past 30 years. Yet, obesity has doubled and heart disease has remained our country’s No. 1 killer. Why are we not eating steak?!

According to modern society, there is one more reason to avoid beef. Multiple organizations have environmental concerns regarding beef production. However, this is a separate issue from a healthy diet. The vegetarian or animal-rights movement will tell you that a pound of beef requires more resources to produce than the resources required to produce a pound of tofu. Therefore, we should instead eat a pound of tofu. That would be a fair argument if one pound of tofu were more nutritious than one pound of beef.

The USDA Nutrient Database for Standard Research reports 3 ounces of beef to contain 25 grams of protein, while 3 ounces of soy-based tofu contains just 13 grams of protein. As for their concern of a

possible correlation between beef production and global warming, this opinion had only a few reported studies to support it.

Both the environmental and nutritional movements have joined forces to create reasons not to eat beef. However, these reasons are backed by faulty research or none

at all. Therefore, they should not be taken into consideration.

### Engaging consumers

How do we, as beef producers, encourage beef consumption? We should begin by

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### EXTEMPORANEOUS PUBLIC SPEAKING

The National Junior Angus Association Extemporaneous Public Speaking Contest is designed to develop the ability of contestants to express themselves on a given topic without having prepared a presentation in advance.

Winners of the intermediate A and intermediate B divisions each receive a Harvey Rattey bronze sculpture in memory

of the late Pat Grote, former American Angus Auxiliary president and a supporter of youth.

The winner of the senior division is awarded a custom-engraved Artisan belt buckle in memory of the late Richard L. Spader, former executive vice president of the American Angus Association.



► Winning the junior A division are (from left) **Ryne Crosthwait**, Stillwater, Okla., third; **Ethan Blevins**, Greenup, Ky., first; and **Allie Hartin**, Stuart, Okla., second.



► Winning the junior B division are (from left) **Eva Hinrichsen**, Westmoreland, Kan., second; **Jordyn Wickard**, Greenfield, Ind., first; **Francesca DeVore**, Promise City, Iowa, third.



► Winning the intermediate A division are (from left) **Cale Hinrichsen**, Westmoreland, Kan., first; **Abigail Greiman**, Perry, Iowa, second; and **Faith Guice**, Downsville, La., third.



► For his first-place win in the intermediate A division, **Cale Hinrichsen** (right) receives a Harvey Rattey bronze sculpture in the name of the late Pat Grote. Presenting is Lynn Hinrichsen, American Angus Auxiliary president.



► Winning the intermediate B division are (from left) **Jayne Bannister**, Kent, N.Y., first; **Bailey Corwine**, Quenemo, Kan., second; and **Sydni Liemann**, Princeton, Neb., third.



► For her first-place win in the intermediate B division, **Jayne Bannister** receives a Harvey Rattey bronze sculpture in the name of the late Pat Grote. Presenting is Lynn Hinrichsen.



► For his first-place win in the senior division, **Will Pohlman** (center) receives a custom-engraved Artisan belt buckle in the name of the late Richard L. Spader. Presenting are Brett Spader (left) and Lynne Hinrichsen.



► Winning the senior division are (from left) **Will Pohlman**, Prairie Grove, Ark., first; **J.D. Rosman**, Creston, Wash., second; and **Esther McCabe**, Elk City, Kan., third.

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educating society on the nutritional benefits of beef. Beef is a nutrient-rich food, and the data saying it causes heart disease or global warming is weak to nonexistent. This year, the new *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* will be considered and issued, and we have a chance to give society a positive view of beef. To do this, we need to show how beef sets itself apart from all other proteins.

A 3-ounce serving of *Certified Angus Beef* top round London broil has 30 grams of protein. As a consumer, I ask myself, “Would I rather have a juicy piece of CAB or soybean tofu? Thirty grams of protein or 13?” Looking at both the nutritional and taste benefits, I find it easy to choose beef.

Today I have uncovered the real truths about why we should eat beef, why we aren’t

eating beef and how we can encourage others to eat beef. Beef has been deemed unhealthy since 1970, and I think it’s time to bring beef back to the dinner table. After feeding your minds, it’s time to feed your appetites. So go, grab a thick, juicy burger. After all, beef doesn’t have to be just for dinner!

# Advancements in Breeding Beef Cattle

by **Allyson Sellers**, *intermediate A winner*

**D**id you know that in just three short years, a simple girl from a small town was able to go from being dragged by her heifer in the showring to becoming the girl who won showmanship and beating someone that had been showing cattle their entire life?

My name is Allyson Sellers; I am 15 years old, and I joined 4-H when I was merely 7 years old. I loved animals and desperately wanted to show a cow in the fair. Now as some of you may be thinking, a 7-year-old showing a 1,200-pound animal — no way — that would be way too hard to take on considering I was a measly 60 pounds. That is exactly what my parents were thinking. So instead of jumping straight into cattle, I learned about different animals during my early years of showing and waited for the day that I would finally be able to show a heifer in the fair.

Although it seemed that day would never come, I finally got my wish to show cattle! I know I never dreamed of tasting the sweet success that would eventually be blessed upon me in the showring.

One hot, sunny day at our county fair, I brought my heifer to a show where she decided to show out. I’m not talking about this animal not wanting to set up, or being a little stubborn about leading her in the showring. To put it in perspective, she pushed and shoved me all over that showring during both her class and mine.

You see, that was my first time in the showring, and I did not understand that physical changes going on in my heifer’s body could create such problems. All I knew at that point was that I was going to walk my heifer around that arena if it killed me.

As I have grown with my project, I now know how important it is to understand the behavior of my animals. I may only be in the 10th grade living in the small town of Vilonia, Ark., but I believe in the future of the beef industry and in the future advancements that will help cattle production proceed to the next level.

## Breeding technologies

I have been extremely fortunate to have guidance through learning the basic principles of artificial insemination (AI) and heat detection. I have a couple of family friends that have volunteered their time to show and explain the method of breeding females. I know firsthand that marking a calendar with observations of your female’s behavior is very powerful in keeping up with your female’s estrous cycles.

Without a means of heat detection through technology, you as a cattle producer must watch for simple signs such as the female having streaks on her hips where she has allowed another rider animal to attempt to mount her, nervousness or restlessness, and the most obvious being a swollen vulva.

This traditional method of heat detection is very tedious, and not always completely accurate.

Technologies in agriculture are always advancing, especially when it addresses cattle reproduction. No longer do cattle producers have to worry about watching the behavior of their animals and trying to determine whether or not their females are in heat. Granted, it always helps to understand their behavior so that you know what is going on, but heat detection can become especially hard when watching a couple hundred head of cattle.

I was able to tour a cattle farm and learned of a new advancement that will change the outlook of most any cattle producer. One of the things that this farmer had most recently started using was heat-detection ear-tag chips. These are little chips that are inserted into your cattle’s ear tags and synched with an app on your smartphone. The chips send notifications telling you which females are in heat, making it easier to monitor large numbers of cattle.

With these heat-detection chips, cattle farmers are enabled with the technology to service their females with artificial insemination practices, which I will better explain in a bit. These ear-tag chips will become more popular with time, as they were only recently developed in the Netherlands, and that is exactly where this farmer bought this wonderful scientific advancement. There are actually similar chips being developed at the University of Kentucky.

I believe that this could be a new era in the cattle industry, as it would help farmers meet

**Technologies in agriculture are always advancing, especially when it addresses cattle reproduction.**

the reproduction needs of their herd even in the busiest of times.

### Advancing genetic change

Seventy-six years ago agriculturists were able to discover the science of artificial insemination. AI is the abbreviation that you will hear most times in reference. AI is where you take a straw of semen from a donor bull and breed your heifers and cows, thus allowing you to use a broader variety of sires for your herd. By using AI to breed your females, you are not using the same sires over and over again.

As a cattle farmer myself, I understand the difficulties involved when trying to find a sire that is not related to the female you are trying to breed. I have come to love these advancements in reproduction practices because it offers so much more for a cattle farmer's herd than traditional methods.

Embryo transfers (ET) are also another advanced technology used for breeding cattle. This allows a fertilized egg of a donor cow to be placed in a recipient cow. It allows the female genetics to be passed on in a

similar manner as the semen from a male, thus allowing greater opportunities for herd genetics.

This technology was first performed by Walter Heape in 1890 by using rabbits. The original methods of this advancement were by surgical means, but greater technology has allowed for this to be done without any type of surgery. A good donor cow will have regular heat cycles at an early age and will not remain open after two breeding exposures. This female will be of superior genetics without any irregularities or genetic defects.

A recipient female is of highest importance also. The estrous cycle must be synchronized between the two females for the transfer to take place. This can be done by an injection from your local veterinarian. The fertilized egg from the donor cow will be placed in the recipient cow for the embryo to develop throughout the pregnancy. This practice is special to my heart because the first heifer that I ever owned came from a female that was an embryo transfer.

Agriculture has made a huge impact on my life, as well as my black Angus cattle.

George Grant was the first person to bring black Angus bulls to the middle of the Kansas prairie in 1873 from Scotland. He was the person responsible for enhancing American cattle genetics by bringing four Angus bulls to our part of the world. These animals have been a great asset to our cattle industry.

I have an inborn fondness for my Angus cattle, and what I do as a showman and a cattle farmer. Many advancements exist to help the beef industry grow, such as AI and heat detectors, as well as embryo transplants. These advancements exist because of research, because of those researchers' willingness to teach, and the rest of the cattle communities' desire to learn.

I am continuing to learn what is best for the health of my cattle and the best practices for breeding, but I also know that we must teach others the information that we learn, so the industry as a whole will thrive. I know I will continue to teach others about the challenges that I faced, so they will not have to go through the same challenges. Angus cattle will continue to set the bar high for all of the beef industry.

# The Golden Key

by **Sydney Thummel**, *intermediate B winner*

**G**rowing up in rural Northwest Missouri on a multi-generational family farm, I have learned that good communication is key to the success of any business. This is especially true when speaking about agriculture in general, or farming more specifically. I firmly believe that many issues our industry has faced in the past, currently face in the present, and is bound to face in the years to come are rooted in the lack of this simple concept.

### Lessons from legislation

A recent piece of legislation in Missouri, entitled Amendment 1, or the *Right-to-Farm Act*, was under a lot of scrutiny from many different organizations, both in support of and against the proposed legislation. Amendment 1 was written to protect farmers and to make farming a right, not just an ability; much like the First Amendment to the national *Constitution* guarantees freedom of speech and religion.

Not every family-owned farm has the

ability to protect itself from those that are against their way of life, and this amendment would act in part as a safeguard for them. In summation, those of the public that were opposed to the *Right-to-Farm Act* thought this Act would endanger the small farmer and allow large corporations and foreign ownership to take over rural Missouri because of the loose wording used in the Amendment.

Those in support of the measure countered these concerns by reminding the opposition of the regulations that are in place in Missouri to "minimize foreign ownership of up to 1% of Missouri farmland" (Holloway, 2014) We, the Missouri Cattlemen's Association and other state agriculture-based organizations did our best to lay the public's minds at ease about those issues, as well as a few others, but it was almost not enough.

The Humane Society of the United States was the formidable foe. Though I do not appreciate or condone their views,

nor do I think that they often make any sense whatsoever, the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) does an excellent job of promoting their propaganda to the general public. The HSUS knows what they want to say, how they want to say it, and precisely when they want to say their views, which they proved during the time leading up to the election. To me, that is exactly what communication is.

On Aug. 5, 2014, just shy of 1,000,000 people voted on Amendment 1 and on the fate of Missouri agriculture. I would like to clarify that when I stated earlier that I grew up in rural northwest Missouri, I more specifically live in Worth County, which is the smallest county in the state. Despite being vastly rural — the largest town boasts 812 people, according to the 2010 census — and having a majority of the families in the county coming from a farming background, Worth County barely passed this Act.

The statewide results were incredibly

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close, as well, with just over 2,500 ballots separating the “yes” votes from the “no” votes. I wholeheartedly believe that if the Humane Society can reach enough people to make a state that is vastly rural and has conservative tendencies almost vote down Amendment 1, then our industry must learn from their communicative abilities and rally our state to support the men, women and families that put food on our tables, clothes on our backs and roofs over our heads.

**Constant learning**

I’ve always been a fan of learning from those around me. I feel as though there’s never a point in anyone’s life when they can’t glean a bit more information out of any situation. That being said, I believe we can learn from what the Humane Society of the United States has done with their organization. Being as interested in the communication department as I am, I have become fascinated with how efficient word usage can convince people when used in the correct sequence and with the right tone.

It is becoming increasingly important to handle every interaction we have as agricultural ambassadors with the general public with care and respect. First impressions or brief glimpses into our world are sometimes the only thing those individuals living in Kansas City or Saint Louis have of our industry, and if we can’t show them that we are unified, hard-working and genuine, then who else can?

In order to represent ourselves to the best of our abilities as FFA members, alumni

and agriculturists alike, we can refer back to the five paragraphs of the *FFA Creed* that I believe to embody our industry. Part of one particular sentence in those five paragraphs says, and I am paraphrasing a little bit, “I believe ... in the ability of progressive agriculturists to serve their own and the public interest in producing and marketing the product of our toil.”

The rest of that sentence talks not only about working hard, but also thinking clearly with skill and knowledge. It doesn’t say anything about having to be a special kind of person with a fancy college degree; the creed simply speaks of the need to be willing to work hard and know what you are talking about.

I am currently serving as an at-large director on the Missouri Junior Cattleman’s Board. Because of that, I was able to hear several firsthand accounts from the Missouri Cattleman’s Association’s membership director, Ryan Clearwater. Mr. Clearwater is the man who is for all intents and purposes in charge of the Missouri Junior Cattleman’s board. We had a board meeting not long before the August election, and he let us know what was going on during the pivotal days leading up to the vote.

He said that many people, some even being those who are heavily involved in agriculture and the beef industry, were concerned with how things would be handled after the election if the bill were passed. He was earnest about telling them the facts associated with the bill, but he made sure to address their concerns gently and without malice. I have learned a great deal from Mr.

Clearwater about communicating a message to people because of this bill.

I tell you about Mr. Clearwater not only because he is a man that has influenced how I handle day-to-day interactions, but because he is a living example of what the *FFA Creed* means to me. Mr. Clearwater does have a college degree, but it isn’t agricultural. He wasn’t raised on a farm; he would simply visit his grandparent’s farm during the summer as a kid, and he was not involved in FFA through high school.

Despite being a “non-typical” advocate for agriculture, he has all the necessary qualifications to work with an association that is going all out for agriculture. He’s hard-working, dedicated and in the off chance that he doesn’t know the answer to a question posed to him, you can bet that he’ll do everything in his power to find the answer as soon as he can.

Again referencing the *FFA Creed* that I memorized four short years ago, I believe in the future of agriculture. I further believe that in the future of agriculture, it will take both production agriculturists and those gifted in the ability to communicate about agriculture to assure that Missouri, the United States and the world have a constant, safe and abundant supply of economically viable food.

I was a part of the success of Amendment 1 in the Aug. 5 primary, and I plan to put my communicative skills further into action to bridge the gap between those that produce food and fiber and those that consume the industry’s many products, as I grow and mature in the agricultural industry.

# Environmental Stewardship and Profitable Beef Production: A Common Objective

by **Will Pohlman**, senior winner

**T**imes have changed. These are the words my grandpa always loved to say and words that definitely can be seen now. Times have changed, or more accurately, times are changing. Cattleman today are more heavily regulated than at any other time in U.S. history, and for a sector traditionally exempt

and left alone, this increased regulation can be worrisome to some farmers. Some of the most recent advances in the wave of increased regulation on farmers across the nation are environmental regulations that require permits, plans and a host of added costs for producers.

As scientific evidence of climate change grows, people have begun to demand “green” products that are sustainable and safe for the environment — this includes products from farms. This increasing environmental concern among consumers has led to increased legislation to ensure environmental

responsibility of both consumers and producers. Times are changing for American cattlemen, and how we deal with it can help ensure future success and profit.

### Changing concerns

Many cattlemen have been surprised at just how quickly environmental concern has grown recently and how quickly it progressed to affect farmers. There has always been concern about pollution from big industries. From smokestacks, acid rain and the hole in the ozone layer, these concerns against big industries sprang up quickly. But when terms like “factory farms” and “industrial agriculture” began to be used and became buzzwords in the early 2000s, concern about where food comes from and its sustainability increased. This prompted added public scrutiny into farming practices.

Consumers suddenly began to not only be concerned about greenhouse gasses, but also the role ruminant fermentation played in rising gas levels. People literally went from not even knowing cows burped to concern about how cow burps affect the planet and how to regulate them.

Many people also began to worry about water quality, from corporate dumping of pollutants in rivers to the farms upstream. These concerns gained traction in the public consciousness, resulting in amendments to old legislation like the *Clean Air Act* of the '70s. Such amendments like the 2009 rule requiring reporting of greenhouse gasses from large CAFOs (confined animal feeding operations) show how public concern for “factory farms” has led to increased regulation.

In fact, much of environmental legislation and regulation is often the reflection of the public opinion or activism. Laws in Congress usually stem from constituent support and even regulations from unelected authorities like the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) have public comment periods. Of course, there are plenty of times where laws and rules from both sources don't follow the will of the majority, but public opinion still plays a significant role. This can be seen in the recent advancement of legislation

by the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works to rewrite the unpopular *Waters of the United States* rule issued by the EPA.

At the moment, though, most producers still enjoy a mostly unrestricted production — this is good news for producers. Most regulations facing the beef industry are directed toward point sources — large, concentrated sources of potential pollution such as feedlots and packing plants.

### Increasing regulations

The fraction of the beef industry that is affected by these current federal regulations

is small. For instance, under the 2009 greenhouse gas reporting rule of the EPA, only operations with more than 29,300 head of cattle need to even evaluate if reporting is required. This affects only an estimated 150-180 beef operations nationwide. If a producer or feedlot approaches this threshold, the easiest course of action may be to keep the operation beneath the rule's requirements as long as

possible to avoid the reporting rule and costs.

Water regulations affect producers of almost any size, however, due more to state or regional regulations rather than federal oversight. The current *Clean Water Act* only affects approximately 74% of government-defined CAFOs, requiring permits and well-defined nutrient-management plans.

However, some regions, such as the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, have much more stringent regulations as a part of the Watershed Implementation Plan to improve water quality in the region. These states have much more oversight in terms of manure-management plans, fertilizer permits and even bank erosion plans.

Even my small farm in northwest Arkansas requires a plan for us to spread fertilizer, but the plan doesn't cost anything or hurt our bottom line. The reliance on regional regulation is both a positive and negative for producers. Lack of federal regulation means less paperwork and, for many, an easier experience with acquiring permits or other plans. However, there is concern that heavily regulated regions such as the Chesapeake may have a competitive disadvantage nationally.

While farmers still enjoy a level of exemption from many of these

environmental regulations, that may soon change. The EPA is planning to reevaluate their greenhouse gas reporting rule for more regulation on operations with smaller carbon emissions that may soon affect more producers. The expansion of the *Waters of the United States* rule epitomizes the expanding federal authority. The EPA even funded an exploratory study this year to evaluate particulate emissions from backyard barbecues. The trend is definitely moving toward more micromanagement and increased regulation and producers need to be proactive.

### Turn the tide

With many laws and regulations following public opinion, it's crucial for producers to connect with consumers and show our shared concern for the environment. Many people do not trust or agree with current farming practices; however, an overwhelming majority of people trust farmers and have faith in them. Opening up the barn doors to interested consumers has profound effects on consumers. The impact of a production tour on consumers, especially tours for regulators, is incredible. If producers can show just how inaccurate “factory farming” is to consumers and show the steps producers take every day to be environmental stewards, the effects could be surprising.

Beef producers have always been stewards of the land — after all, we depend on it. However, there is always room for improvement. We pride ourselves on being an industry driven by consumers, yet historically have struggled to listen to them at times. It's important for producers to be mindful of public concerns and the root behind attempted regulation. Hearing public issues and addressing them proactively just may help avoid future rules and regulation and inspire public trust.

Times are definitely changing for beef producers. We are experiencing more environmental regulation and public scrutiny and are standing at the cusp of an increase in both. However, getting ahead of public perception with a proactive informational campaign and hearing popular concerns can help producers guarantee continued public confidence. Returned widespread trust in beef production will help ease pressure and, in turn, ease regulations or help prevent stricter ones. Times are changing, but with a proactive approach to consumer relations, producers can get ahead of them and help ensure future profits and success.



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