

No More Food Fights

Recognized ag advocate shares more-effective ways to communicate, build support of consumers.

by *Kindra Gordon*, field editor

‘People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.’ That quote by author, poet and civil rights activist Maya Angelou was emphasized by speaker Michele Payn-Knoper as she addressed attendees at the 24th Range Beef Cow Symposium in November.

Payn-Knoper is founder of Cause Matters Corp. and has been a leader in farm and food advocacy efforts during the past decade.

“When we respond [to consumers] with science and data, we will fail,” Payn-Knoper said regarding the misconceptions consumers have toward agriculture and food production. She

emphasized that taking the approach that we need to “educate the stupid consumer” is not effective.

“I suggest we approach this as a conversation,” Payn-Knoper said. “It’s not about bottom line; it’s about emotion.”

To that, she added, “Prepare yourself to talk about why you do what you do. Share with consumers why you use antibiotics and hormones on your farm.”

Payn-Knoper shared a short video of a young dairy farmer talking about her family’s fourth-generation, 1,000-head dairy farm in Michigan. When the video was shown to a consumer panel, the first question they had after seeing the video

was, “Where can we buy that family farm’s milk?”

As part of the *Angus Journal’s* full meeting coverage, you can listen to Michele Payn-Knoper’s presentation at <http://bit.ly/1NP6YAL>.

Michele Payn-Knoper encouraged producers to dedicate 15 minutes each day to sharing their ag story with others — either at the local coffee shop, the grocery store or on social media.

When the consumers were asked if they would still buy the farm’s milk if the operation grew to 2,000 head to add another family member to the business, the consumers indicated they would because the growth helped support the family business.

This illustrates that when agriculture shares its story and makes an emotional connection with consumers, support and understanding for agriculture can be established, Payn-Knoper said.

She encouraged producers to dedicate 15 minutes each day to sharing their ag story with others — either at the local coffee shop, the grocery store or on social media. She concluded by emphasizing that the leadership of everyone in agriculture is needed for the future.

Payn-Knoper has authored a book on the subject of ag advocacy titled *No More Food Fights*. Learn more at www.causematters.com/farmfoodbook/.

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Editor’s Note: *Kindra Gordon is a cattlemaster and freelance writer from Whitewood, S.D. This summary is part of the Angus Journal’s online coverage of the 2015 Range Beef Cow Symposium, which was hosted Nov. 17-19, 2015, in Loveland, Colo. For additional coverage, or to listen to the presentation, visit the Newsroom at www.rangebeefcow.com. The Angus Journal’s coverage of the event is made possible through collaboration with the event committee and sponsorship of LiveAuctions.tv.*



► Michele Payn-Knoper emphasized that taking the approach that we need to “educate the stupid consumer” is not an effective strategy to create understanding among consumers.