

NCBA CHAIRMAN SAYS COW HERD NEEDS TO GROW TO MEET DEMAND

by Charlene M. Shupp, *Espenshade, Special Sections Editor*

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. - The beef industry is enjoying high prices right now. In part, they are in response to the smallest national cow herd since 1957 and a weak U.S. dollar, which is encouraging beef exports. Now is the time to grow, one beef industry leader says.

Don Pemberton, National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) policy division vice chairman, was the keynote speaker at the Pennsylvania Cattlemen's Association Banquet last week at Celebration Hall, State College. "It does none of us any good to see our industry shrink," he said.

The cow/calf producer might question the idea since it would most likely mean lower calf prices. But, unless the herd grows, it could have long-term impacts. "We will lose bunk space in the feedlot, lose shackles in the packers, and we will lose shelf space in the grocery store," Pemberton said. His family operates Fox Creek Cattle Co. in Kentucky. He is a past Kentucky Cattlemen's Association president and has been a part of the NCBA executive committee since 2008.

Pemberton discussed the long-range plan released last fall by beef industry stakeholders. "This is not just NCBA's plan," he said. All parts of the cattle industry chain gathered to develop the plan for the beef industry. "Every segment of the industry has to be successful for the cattle industry to be successful," Pemberton said. The action plan focused on building domestic and global trade, public perception of the cattle industry, and regulations. He said the main point in the report was to expand the U.S. cow herd.

Pemberton also presented an update on legislative activity. The big push is to make sure cattlemen are not "regulated out of business." NCBA leadership and staff are looking harder at regulation compared with legislation. He referenced President Barack Obama's State of the Union promise to evaluate the administration's current regulations for any that hinder job creation. NCBA is working with the administration to highlight areas that hinder cattlemen. The pending dust regulation is one example. Pemberton said the current proposal would "make it illegal to drive a pickup truck down a dusty road." The "bright shining star" of the beef industry this year is trade, he said. Trade is expected to continue to grow this

year. He said that last year was the first year beef cattle exports exceeded beef imports since 1947. "Finally the global economy got in shape, so we are exporting," he said. Several free trade agreements are still not signed and ratified, including those with Korea, Colombia and Panama, which are supported by NCBA.

Pemberton spoke critically about GIPSA. USDA is reviewing all of the comments received on the rule. His family markets some of its beef under contract. "I don't want to be told by the government what price I can get for my cattle," he said.

Before announcing the new Pennsylvania beef ambassador, outgoing ambassador Kristen Stuft reflected on her year. She stressed the importance of promoting the industry, saying, "find something you are good at" to help promote beef. The 2011-12 Pennsylvania Beef Ambassador is Arika Snyder. BQA, PCA Awards Presented. The Pennsylvania Beef Council selected two farms for their work with the Beef Quality Assurance program (BQA). The beef award was presented to Les and Nancy Midla. The dairy award was presented to Logan Bower.

The Pennsylvania Cattlemen's Association recognized outstanding cattle operations and producers as part of the banquet. Bob and Margaret Duprey of Cherry Knoll Farm, West Grove, earned the Seedstock Breeder of the Year Award. The farm which was nominated by the Pennsylvania Angus Association, has 230 acres of pasture and hay ground, and close to 60 purebred Angus cattle. The farm has shown national champions, seen bulls enter into stud and bred the Roll of Victory (ROV) Show Heifer of the Year. It also hosts a private treaty sale each fall with buyers coming from across the country.

The Environmental Stewardship Award was presented to Mike Sherman of Montgomery. The farm, Sherman Beef Cattle, has made environmental improvements in the past three years, following a conservation plan. It has developed an intensive rotational grazing system, water quality improvements, wastewater management and no-till practices. The farm was also recognized this year as the "Cooperator of the Year" by the Lycoming County Conservation District. It was nominated by the Pennsylvania Hereford Association.

Richard and Susan Blank, owners of Blank Ranch in Scenery Hill, won the Commercial Cow Herd of the Year award. The farm manages its cattle on a rotational grazing system to maximize resources. The farm has completed the Pennsylvania Beef Quality Assurance program. It was nominated by Dave Nogan.

The Industry Service Award was presented to Jeff Nogan, a cow/calf and feedlot owner from Jermyn. He was recognized for serving on several boards, including the Pennsylvania Cattlemen's Association and Center for Beef Excellence. He has also hosted meetings and tours at his farm. Nogan is a past president of the Pennsylvania Cattlemen's Association. Mary and Kevin Noldy made the nomination.

Frank Stoltzfus was nominated for the Special Appreciation Award by the PCA Field Day Committee for his leadership in planning the 2010 field day. Stoltzfus works at the Masonic Village beef farm, where the field day was held.

Scholarships were presented to college students Lindsay Upperman, Andy Harding and Ryan Fairbairn.

Beef Youth Compete in PJCA Show Pennsylvania Junior Cattlemen's Association (PJCA) members exhibited 171 steers and heifers at the 22nd Annual Junior Steer and Heifer Preview Show on March 26 at the Snider Agricultural Arena.

About 80 purebred and crossbred cattle competed in the heifer show. Seven breeds competed for overall grand champion heifer. The champion crossbred heifer, owned by Evan Vonada of Mill Hall, was named grand champion. Whitney Betts of McClure exhibited reserve champion heifer, a crossbred heifer.

The steer show had 91 steers competing for grand champion. The champion banner went to Shannon Braman of Bedford for her champion heavyweight steer. Tyler Bowman of Accident, Md., exhibited the reserve champion.

Other champions from both shows are as follows:

Heifer Show

Angus: Matt Mitchell
Hereford: Tiffany Bowman
Maine Influence: Terrill John Boyd
Shorthorn: Champion Makayla Stone
Simmental: Caitlin Wolfgang
All Other Breeds: McCall Griffith

Steer Show

Lightweight Steer: Brittany Truax
Middleweight Steer: Clayton Garlock
Heavyweight Steer: Shannon Braman