

Many Nebraska Cattlemen (NC) members, leadership and staff attended the Cattle Industry Annual Convention in San Antonio, Texas and represented NC policy during the event that ended Jan. 30.

NC members met during the NC Caucus and received updates on issues and proposed resolutions that would be discussed during committee meetings.

NC members then represented NC's policy at the various committee meetings concerning issues such as price reporting, natural resource easements, public access to private lands, brucellosis, non-ambulatory animals, taxes, beef quality assurance and many more. Several Nebraskans were named to leadership positions.

NC took policy to the convention calling on the National Cattlemen's Beef Association urge Congress to immediately ratify the Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA) - one of the most important bilateral trade agreements in the history of the U.S. beef industry.

According to South Korean Economic Minister Choi, who addressed attendees at the International Markets Committee meeting, U.S. competitors such as Australia are well on their way to finalizing free-trade agreements with Korea, putting U.S. competitiveness at risk for years to come.

The resolution was passed out of committee, approved by the Board of Directors and the NCBA membership.

Senate Ag Committee Chairman Blanche Lincoln and 17 other U.S. Senators have written a letter to the President, supporting his pledge to double American exports and pass pending trade agreements with Colombia, Panama and South Korea. The President announced this goal during his State of the Union address.

Lincoln says opening more markets for agricultural producers will help farmers and rural

communities who have felt the devastating effects of the current economic climate.

NC contacted both Nebraska Senators urging them to sign the letter. Senator Johanns went farther to solicit his colleagues' signatures. Senator Nelson chose not to sign the letter.

The NCBA Board of Directors adopted the Governance Task Force report by a 201-13 margin, putting in motion the creation of a new governance structure, which would feature a smaller NCBA Board of Directors and a new House of Delegates that would include the organization's state affiliates, state beef councils, industry/breed organizations, and product/allied industry councils.

Numerous NC members were elected or appointed to NCBA leadership roles including past Nebraska Cattlemen President J.D. Alexander, Pilger, was elected to the NCBA officer team as Vice President.

David Bruntz, Friend, also a past NC President, will continue to serve on the NCBA Executive Committee representing the Policy Division from Region VII. Dave Hamilton, Thedford, and Craig Uden, Elwood, will serve on the Beef Promotion Operating Committee.

Past Nebraska CattleWomen president and Immediate Past American National CattleWomen President Kristy Lage, Arthur, will serve on the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Executive Committee. NC Past President Todd Schroeder, Wisner, will serve Live Cattle Marketing Committee vice chair.

Past NC President and rancher Homer Buell, Rose, represented cow/calf producers on a panel during the opening general session with other individuals representing the seedstock, feedlot, processing and retail sectors.

The annual Nebraska Cattlemen Reception, supported by long time sponsors Bank of the West, Bill's Volume Sales, Grace Mayer Insurance and Lextron Animal Health, was a huge success with one of the largest crowds ever attending, estimated at well over 300.

Nebraska Cattlemen, in conjunction with the Texas Cattle Raisers Association, proposed a BQA-related resolution to the Producer Education Committee at the convention.

The resolution was approved so NCBA will create a national “online BQA” education and certification program which could be used by any state for BQA training. This online training program will provide states another “BQA tool” with which to certify producers.

A directive regarding re-authorization of USDA’s Mandatory Price Reporting program was adopted during convention.

It was originally authored and proposed by the Texas Cattle Feeders Association, and Nebraska Cattlemen offered point No. 7 (inclusion of fed cow prices under the MPR umbrella) as an amendment in an attempt to provide more market information for cow-calf producers.

It directs NCBA to work to implement changes to the Mandatory Price Reporting statute and rules:

- 1) Review existing reports and definitions and make necessary modifications.

- 2) Create a report that shows daily intentions of all non-cash traded cattle that are committed for slaughter for at least 7 days forward. The revised report would replace the existing All Cattle Committed and All Cattle Delivered reports that have never provided the degree of detail that was intended.

- 3) Provide Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) with the flexibility to request additional information, as needed, to identify seasonal considerations and special circumstances. This change will allow AMS to develop more useful data for producers, like discounts on Mexican or Canadian cattle, discounts on identified characteristics and the discount on 30 month cattle.

4) Strip Economic Research Service of its responsibility to collect retail price scan data, transfer that responsibility to AMS, and provide them with adequate funding to collect, analyze, and report this information.

5) Remove the existing category in the Premiums and Discount schedule report, for carcasses weighing in excess of 1,000 pounds and add categories for carcasses weighing 1,000 to 1,050 pounds and carcasses over 1,050 pounds.

6) Develop a system through which USDA can collect, analyze and report market price data relevant to mandatory country-of-origin labeling for feeder cattle, live cattle, wholesale beef, and Hotel Restaurant and Institutional beef sales.

7) Include fed cow prices under the Mandatory Price Reporting umbrella.

This and other Nebraska Cattlemen information is available at www.nebraskacattlemen.org.

The Nebraska Cattlemen association serves as the representative for the state's beef cattle industry and represents professional cattle breeders, ranchers and feeders, as well as county and local cattlemen's associations. Its headquarters are in Lincoln and second office in Alliance serves cattlemen in western Nebraska.