

# 2007 Cattle Industry Annual Convention & Trade Show

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## NCBA Members Approve Policies, New Officers

Policy addresses renewable energy, international trade, cloning and the beef checkoff.

by **Joe Schuele**

NASHVILLE, TENN. (Feb. 3, 2007) — The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) hosted its regular annual board and membership meetings Feb. 3, concluding the 2007 Cattle Industry Annual Convention and NCBA Trade Show in Nashville. More than 6,500 cattlemen from across the nation attended the four-day event.

Renewable energy was arguably the hottest topic of the four-day convention, due to the surging demand for ethanol and its effect on feedgrain prices. Rapidly increasing prices for corn and other feedgrains have raised operating costs for cattle feeders during the past four months, which in turn has contributed to lower calf and feeder-cattle prices.

The policy brought forward Friday by the NCBA Agriculture Policy Committee was approved in large part by NCBA members Saturday, with modest modifications in the policy resolution language. The resolution voiced support for the nation's commitment to reduced dependence on foreign energy, including efforts to develop renewable energy. But cattlemen called for transition to a market-based approach to renewable energy production, which would help level the playing field for cattle producers and other feedgrain users.

The resolution supports the "sunsetting"

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of fuel-blending tax credits and tariffs on imported ethanol, as these policies were primarily designed to boost the initial development in renewable fuel production and technology.

With alternative fuel production now growing at an astounding pace, cattlemen do not consider it appropriate for Congress to renew these mechanisms in their present form when they expire near the end of the decade. The 54¢-per-gallon tariff on imported ethanol is set to expire in 2009, while the 51¢-per-gallon fuel-blending tax credit expires in 2010.

NCBA members also called for greater policy emphasis to be placed on development of cellulosic fuels. Production of these fuel types does not rely on feedgrains and would have a much smaller effect on grain prices.

NCBA members also approved policy

with regard to live cattle trade with Canada. Currently, cattle and beef imports from Canada are limited to cattle 30 months of age or younger. A pending USDA proposal would allow beef from Canadian cattle of any age, and live cattle up to eight years of age.

Cattlemen did not reject the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) proposal, but adopted a policy voicing concerns about its possible effect. The policy resolution approved by NCBA members demands permanent identification (ID) of all live cattle imported from Canada through harvest, and calls for USDA to develop an orderly market transition plan before expanding the scope of cattle and beef imports from Canada.

"NCBA believes in treating our trading partners as we would like to be treated," incoming NCBA President John Queen said. "But we want free, fair and reliable trade. USDA must look at the big picture and take steps to ensure that U.S. cattlemen are rewarded — not penalized — for opening our market to a wider range of imports."

Cloning was also a topic of discussion at the convention, primarily because of the draft risk assessment announced by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in

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**Editor's Note:** This release is adapted from a news release distributed by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association. For the original release, go to [www.beefusa.org/newsncba\\_policynews.aspx](http://www.beefusa.org/newsncba_policynews.aspx).

## NCBA Members Approve Policies, New Officers CONTINUED

December. FDA's initial findings state that meat and milk from cloned animals and their offspring pose no health risk to consumers.

Cattlemen adopted a policy supporting the further development of cloning as one of many reproductive technologies that can be used to enhance the beef industry. But they also urged all technology companies and owners of cloned animals to voluntarily keep these animals and their offspring out of the food supply until FDA makes a final decision on its risk assessment.

NCBA members also proceeded with caution with regard to any changes in the Beef Checkoff Program. An industry-wide task force recently advanced a slate of recommendations for enhancing the checkoff, including an increase in the \$1-per-head checkoff rate (contingent on a producer

referendum). But the policy resolution adopted by cattlemen seeks greater input and discussion on these task force recommendations before giving them renewed consideration at next year's convention.

### **New slate of officers**

Queen, Waynesville, N.C., leads a full slate of new officers elected by NCBA members. He succeeds Missouri cattleman Mike John as president. Guymon, Okla., cattle feeder Paul Hitch is the new president-elect, while Andy Groseta of Cottonwood, Ariz., was chosen as vice president.

Illinois cattleman Steve Fogelson will chair the NCBA Policy Division in 2007, with Montana rancher Bill Donald serving as vice chairman.

Gary Voogt of Michigan now chairs the Federation of State Beef Councils, with Iowa cattleman Alan Albright serving as vice chairman.

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