

Cattlemen Come Together to Talk Marketing and Industry

The Kansas Cattlemen's Association hosted a supper and meeting in Corning, Kansas where more than 75 cattlemen and women attended. The meal was prepared by Jim and Freda Dobbins and Ginny and David Pfrang. After supper Brandy Carter, Executive Director of the KCA, provided a brief overview of the numerous issues facing producers in Topeka.

"Kansas producers are being attacked on many fronts. Animal rights groups are trying to eliminate animal agriculture. The Environmental Protection Agency finds it easier to regulate producers than to regulate large metropolitan industries, potentially regulating producers out of business. The consolidation of the cattle industry is making it more difficult to competitively market cattle, and this is just a fraction of what is happening in our industry. These issues we are discussing are being addressed right there in Topeka at the Statehouse. Kansas Cattlemen's Association is right there making sure our legislators understand the impact of their decisions, and we are there protecting producer rights and the ability to farm and ranch," Carter remarked.

The evening's main speaker Perry Owens, manager of Ottawa County Feeders in Minneapolis, Kansas discussed the trends and changes in cattle marketing.

"In 1982 I can remember when packer buyers were maneuvering to bid on cattle. For instance, they would call Sunday night to be the first on the list. The industry started to transition in the late 80s early 90s. Then, we had a longer window of opportunity to trade cattle at the market compared to now where trading takes place within hours instead of days and moves in waves across different regions of the United States. Now, it is not uncommon to give more than the standard seven days to get your cattle sold. This is due in part to technology and in part to the lower percentage of cattle being traded through negotiated live price. To sum it up, we (producers) have been willing to give up our rights as marketers in order to sell cattle, and if you don't give up your rights, you don't sell cattle," Owens stated.

There were several comments and questions from the attendees in regards to marketing, but other issues were on cattlemen's minds as well. A number of attendees addressed the importance of country of origin labeling and shared their comments on an animal traceability system.

"It seems that a lot of the cattlemen express that they were never in favor of the National Animal Identification System (NAIS) that USDA had pushed to implement for years and now recently abandoned. Nor is there a lot of support for a potentially new traceability system. Although we do not have the details of what will be expected, if we have to track all cattle that cross state lines, logistics is going to be a nightmare," Owens continued.

Thank you to everyone attending and thank you to all of the sponsors: Seneca Veterinary Clinic; Mid West Ag Services in Seneca; Manhattan Commission Company; 1st National Bank of Centralia, Corning, Seneca, Vermillion; Bar S Tack and Ferrier Supplies in Holton; and JR Cattle Co. These businesses support local producers.