

2007 Cattle Industry Annual Convention & Trade Show

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State of the Industry

NCBA President Mike John looks at challenges, opportunities facing the industry.

by **Troy Smith**

NASHVILLE, TENN. (Jan. 31, 2007) — During the opening general session of the 2007 Cattle Industry Annual Convention, National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) President Mike John noted how beef producers face a changing business climate. The changes include challenges likely to make "business as usual" impossible, but John said changes will bring opportunities for savvy producers.

"How we deal with change will make all the difference," John stated.

Among the challenges listed during a "State of the Industry" presentation were increasing total beef production and a slight decline in consumer demand for beef. Despite improvement, the industry still has far to go in recovery of export markets lost after the bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) event of 2003. Additionally, an explosion in corn ethanol production is pushing grain prices higher and increasing cattle producers' production costs.

Still unknown are ramifications of the shift to Democratic dominance in both

houses of Congress. NCBA leadership and staff suspect agriculture will be at greater risk due to newly proposed environmental restrictions and fewer dollars allocated to farm programs.

NCBA lobbyist Colin Woodall said the changing political climate will likely bring opportunities, too. Woodall said NCBA will attempt to build on its history of working with lawmakers on both sides of the aisle, identifying allies and helping shape policy decisions.

Cattlemen's Beef Board (CBB) representatives also pledged continued efforts to invest beef checkoff dollars in promotion, protection and defense of beef's image in a global marketplace.

Session attendees also were introduced to Susie Ross who will host NCBA's new weekly television program, *Cattlemen to Cattlemen*. The program will be broadcast over RFD-TV, with new episodes airing each Tuesday at 8 p.m. Eastern time.



► Changes will bring opportunities for savvy producers, said Mike John, 2006 NCBA president.

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