

Handing Over the Reins

CCA president bids farewell

As I write my final column, I am sorry to see my term as president come to an end, but I am excited to see how the next officer team and our staff will move the California Cattlemen's Association (CCA) forward in the coming years. I'd like to leave off with a couple of thoughts about the work we continue to do and the groups who work on our behalf each day.

As we've seen in the past couple of years, our state budget has been in turmoil and federal spending has taken us deeper than ever in debt, we don't have the option of not being involved.

Add to that, the increasing power and reach that the administration has taken on and the expansion of regulations at every level of government, and I'm glad to say that we have strong voices working on our behalf.

A group of CCA members and I recently returned from the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) Fall Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C.

During the trip, our No. 1 priority was to push efforts to reform the estate tax. In particular, we had a very intimate meeting with Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), who laid out a plan to advance reform on the issue to preserve ranches and farms in California and throughout the United States. I believe that there is a sincere desire on her part to follow this effort through, and while nothing concrete was accomplished prior to the election, I'm hopeful the groundwork was laid for action on targeted reform to farmers and ranchers.

In addition to the estate tax, we were able to discuss a number of other issues of importance to our industry with a large number of members of the California Congressional Delegation.

During our visit, we shared positions from California ranchers

on maintaining free marketing of cattle, retention of antibiotics usage in livestock production and the need to continue to work on the expansion of beef exports to foreign countries, among other issues.

At a time when it is extremely difficult to influence policy in Washington, D.C., and Sacramento, we have held up remarkably well. While we haven't won every battle, I can assure you it is not because of a lack of effort.

During the trip, I was extremely impressed by the effort that is being put forth by NCBA's Washington, D.C., office with support from CCA members and staff in working with our California Congressional delegation. And, with an increase in the size of the Washington D.C. office over the past few months, it's clear that investments are being made in the right place to fight each and every battle that has the potential to impact our industry.

In closing, I would like to talk about things a little bit closer to home and how much it has meant to me to be the president of the CCA these past two years.

First and foremost, I want to thank each and every CCA member for the opportunity I have been given to represent you.

There are no words to describe the pride that I have felt in representing such a fantastic group of men and women who make up CCA. The satisfaction that I have received and the opportunities that I have been given far outweigh any effort that I have put into this endeavor.

I'd also like to highlight the staff that we have working for us in Sacramento that is unbelievably dedicated to meeting the needs of CCA members in the office each and every day.

Whether it is in coordinating educational and well-organized events and member programs, keeping us informed through CCA's publications,

preserving the organization's financial standing for the future, maintaining relationships with key stakeholders in and out of the industry or protecting our interests at the legislative and regulatory level in Sacramento and Washington, D.C., the work these talented people are doing each day provides the foundation for CCA's current and future success and I am fortunate to have been able to work with each of them

I hope you will give the staff and the incoming officer team the same support that you have given me and that together we will continue to make the CCA the strongest voice in supporting the needs of our industry. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you.



TOM TALBOT, DVM



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