

The Joint International Markets Committee

The Joint International Markets Committee began its meeting with a brief report on beef demand and export results from Rich Otley of the Cattlemen's Beef Board. This was followed by a more detailed report by Brett Stuart of Cattle-Fax on the current trends in beef production, consumption and export activity. Mr. Stuart also discussed the potential impact on cattle and beef prices of Russia's recent ban on U.S. poultry.

U.S. Meat Export Federation President and CEO Philip Seng followed with a discussion of USMEF's promotional activities and a number of emerging issues that impact consumer attitudes toward U.S. beef in overseas markets.

The committee then heard from Drew DeBerry, deputy commissioner from the Texas Department of Agriculture. Mr. DeBerry discussed the formation and mission of the Trade Action Network, which promotes science-based solutions to trade impasses and border issues. This was followed by a report from the co-chairs of a strategic planning task force (USMEF Chairman Jim Peterson and NCBA representative Dana Hauck) designed to improve foreign market access for U.S. products.

Committee Chairman Bob McCann led a discussion of the goals established in the Beef Industry Long Range Plan with regard to international marketing. He noted that the industry achieved its goal of becoming a net beef exporter (in terms of value) by 2010, but had not yet reached its annual export volume goal of 3 billion pounds. Rick Husted of NCBA reviewed the planning process for joint committees and Greg Hanes of USMEF provided guidance on the industry's current international marketing priorities.

The keynote speaker for the meeting was Jonghyun Choi, minister for economic affairs for the Korean Embassy in Washington, D.C. Mr. Choi urged the committee to support a resolution submitted by the Nebraska Cattlemen that insists on immediate ratification of the U.S.-Korean Free Trade Agreement. Michael Scuse of USDA followed with a report on that agency's current trade priorities and recent staff appointments. NCBA trade counsel Gary Horlick gave the day's final presentation, discussing the status of the WTO trade action filed against the United States by Canada and Mexico with regard to mandatory COOL.

The resolution (see above) on the U.S.-Korea FTA was the only new resolution submitted to the committee. It received unanimous approval. Ten "sunsetting" resolutions were presented individually to the committee for renewal, but none received a motion for renewal so they were allowed to sunset. The meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.