



NEWS RELEASE

TEXAS CATTLE FEEDERS ASSOCIATION

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TCFA Chairman Praises Cattle Feeders For Their Courage, Perseverance

When he began his year as chairman of the Texas Cattle Feeders Association (TCFA) in November 2008, Monte Cluck set a unique goal: to personally visit as many TCFA member feedyards as possible. Twelve months later, he had managed to make it to more than 60 yards and described the experience as "one of my most enjoyable times of the past year."

Delivering his chairman's address at TCFA's 2009 Annual Convention in Amarillo, Cluck said he was "inspired by the attitudes of the members" he met with during his feedyard stops. "Here we are in one of the toughest times ever for our business, and yet no one was ready to quit the fight. The strength and the will to survive and continue in the beef business are what differentiate us from any other industry, especially from nonagricultural industries."

In saluting cattle feeders for their resolve in the face of adversity, Cluck reminded them that the industry has survived many other tough times such as the beef boycott of 1973, "The Wreck" of 1974, the dairy herd buyout in 1986 and the BSE episode of 2003. Cluck believes the industry's ability to fight its way through those earlier ordeals proves that the cattle feeders can always come back, and will do so again, even in the face of a severe recession.

"Overcoming a global economic collapse is a real battle but we will get through it. Nothing will stop us from bouncing back. Not radical animal rights activists. Not yellow journalism. Not junk science about imaginary threats to the environment. And for darn sure – not socialism," he said. "We will stay on our feet and fight our way back because we are a tough bunch inspired by the generations who came before us."

Cluck is concerned that cattle feeders' path to recovery from recent heavy financial losses could be obstructed by bad ideas coming out of Washington D.C., such as ethanol subsidies, legislation to restrict the use of animal health products, the potential government takeover of health care, the threat of higher taxes and flawed environmental policies.

"Starting in January of 2010 and going through March of 2011, we will all have to know what our carbon footprint is in our feedyards. After we know – and I'm not sure

how a spreadsheet is going to tell us that – what will Big Government, mostly the EPA, do to regulate us? I can foresee that, at the very least, our cost of production will increase," Cluck said.

Faced with so many challenges, beef producers must maintain a united front, even as they are often competitors in their daily business activities. "We must stick together when our industry is threatened. If someone or something is attacking the beef business, that's a threat to all of us – corporates, independents, our vendors, and, yes, even the packers. Let's stay united. We're all in this together."

In fact, Cluck said the need for cooperation "applies to everyone in every sector of agriculture. Whether your work is in livestock production or row crops or grain or raising fruit, you are faced with a lot of the same challenges as everyone else in every other agriculture sector. Let's find the common ground to work together where we can." Building on the unity theme, Cluck said TCFA provides an excellent example of how to "bring together people with diverse views to work for the common good. There are more than 5,000 members of the Texas Cattle Feeders Association. And, so there are more than 5,000 different ways of looking at the many issues confronting the cattle business. But TCFA is a marvel in the way it works for the common good of so many people."

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