



WISCONSIN  
CATTLEMEN'S  
ASSOCIATION

# CATTLE TRAILS

To promote the Wisconsin beef business through advocacy, leadership, and education.

March 2018



## President's Path

*Eric Johnson,  
President*

It is both my honor and privilege to serve as President of the Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association.

A little bit about myself... I have been married to my wife, Cindy, for nearly 41 years. Together, we have three children and 4 grandchildren. Cindy and I live on the farm where I grew up near Dane, WI. We have been raising registered Shorthorn cattle for about 25 years. I have been employed at ABS Global for 39 years and currently serve as the herdsman in one of the main production barns.

I have spent my whole life around cattle. From the time I was old enough to watch the gate for my dad while he did the chores in the small feedlot we had on the farm, through my off the farm career at ABS to caring for our own herd of cattle. Cattle, specifically beef cattle, have always been a part of my everyday life. Cindy will tell you that I am happiest either being around cattle or talking about cattle and the beef community to someone that I may have just met or have known for years. Many of these conversations happen while sitting on a show box at either the state fair or World Beef Expo. It is that passion that I hope will guide me through my term as President of WCA.

The mission of the Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association is to be a leader in providing advocacy, education, and promotion for the beef industry. This is something that I take very seriously. However, the diversity of the beef community within the state. (Not only in geographic location, but also in the variety of ways beef is produced) makes providing leadership for all a big task. This is where participation by the organizations of which are affiliate members to WCA is very important. They have the ability with a seat on the board to share what issues are important to their specific membership. We need to continue to foster these affiliate member partnerships to fulfill our mission. With that being said, it is my goal as WCA President to get to an event sponsored by every one of our affiliate members over the course of my term. I have already had the opportunity to attend a number of affiliate events and look forward to meeting with more of our affiliate members in the future. I will continue to share the message that we are all pursuing the same outcome of producing quality beef for the consumer as well as maintaining an income. It is important to remember, when we are promoting our specific beef production styles, we do so without discrediting the other types of beef being produced in different types of management styles. Rather, we should strive to educate consumers about high quality beef, and let them choose the types of beef products they prefer. We are all in this busi-

ness together, and need to be supportive of each other.

As we move forward as an association, I am very excited about the professionalism and expertise that our board members bring to the table. With this rare talent, I'm sure that our future is bright.

When ever spring does arrive for you, in whatever part of the state you call home. Please take a moment each day to think about what you are doing and who you are doing it for. Enjoy the rebirth that spring brings. Almost all of us spend time alone in the field or in the calving barn. I know from my experience with a less than friendly bull that everyday chores can turn bad in a split second. Please take the time to be safe in everything you do.

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## Membership Shoutout!

*Nate Moll Membership Committee Chairman  
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Happy Spring everyone! Or maybe its still winter depending on the day. Hope everyone is having a successful calving season. Its always fun seeing the little ones kick up their heels in the pasture. At the first of the year I took over as membership committee chair. I want to thank David Lee Schneider for the work and ideas he has put forth to help grow the WCA membership. With that we have brought in some new minds and volunteers to continue on the growth of the great organization. We hope to present you with these ideas in our summer issue. In the mean time if you have any questions/comments about membership please feel free to reach out to me via. Email- [molln9847@gmail.com](mailto:molln9847@gmail.com) or give me a jingle on the phone at (608)445-7813.



## Steak Trailer

*Dave Koning, Steak Trailer Manager  
dkoning@wekz.net*


Dave & Rena appreciate the new interest and involvement with Matt Ludlow, Brad Spain, and Brady Zuck on the Steak Trailer Committee. We are looking forward to our first events of the 2018 season, including WPS in Oshkosh March 27-29, and Midwest Horse Fair in Madison, April 20-22. The Steak Trailer will be also be at two new events this year, including the National Jr. Shorthorn Show in Madison June 25 - July 1 and at the

National Jr Angus Show in Madison July 7-13. We are currently looking for people to work in the trailer from 6 am - 6 pm each day during both of these events. We have sent out invitations to both Junior Show Coordinators asking for help to make sandwiches during their events. Consider these events a bonus to the other 5 events the Steak Trailer attends. If you are interested in helping at any of the Steak Trailer events, please contact Dave & Rena Koning (dkoning@wekz.net, 608-325-9808) We are looking forward to another record setting year in 2018!



## Strategic Planning

*Mackenzie Cash, Secretary  
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Strategic Planning has been underway, both before and during Winter Conference. Prior to Winter Conference, board expectations were drafted to better communicate with affiliates what their representatives will be expected to do and participate in and how we can foster the relationships between WCA and the affiliates. During Winter Conference, an open strategic planning session occurred. Three main focuses came to light during the meeting- Membership, Affiliates, and Winter Conference. Since Winter Conference, Membership has been working to audit the membership process and has been putting to-  gether recommendations. Moving forward we will be revisiting the previous version of the strategic plan to tweak and create. Expect more to come!



## Digital Dermatitis

*Aerica Bjurstrom, Agriculture Agent,  
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Digital dermatitis (DD), also known as hairy heel warts, was discovered in 1974 in Italy. The disease first popped up in US dairy herds in the 1980's, and spread rapidly during the 1990's as herds expanded. The comingling of multiple dairy herds into one barn or facility made a perfect scenario for DD to infect millions of cattle.

Digital dermatitis is an incurable disease. Once cattle are infected with DD, they have it for life. Digital dermatitis cannot be cured, only managed. Treponemes, a spiral-shaped bacteria, cause DD. Treponemes that cause DD enter the body of an animal through a break in the skin on the foot. Treponemes hate oxygen and thrive in pen environments with poor hygiene, wet floor surfaces, and overcrowding. When cattle are subjected to standing in mud or manure for prolonged amounts of time, softening of the skin occurs and allows treponemes to penetrate the skin.

Digital dermatitis lesions mainly occur on the back feet. Lesions can spread between the toes and sometimes appear on the front of the foot. Lesions are recognized by two different appearances. One type of lesion, hyperkeratotic, appears as a raised callous. Proliferative lesions appear to have long fibrous hairs. Active DD lesions may appear initially as a raw, red, oval ulcer on the back of the heel just above or at the coronary band. There are six stages of DD. Named after one of the researchers who discovered DD, (Mortellaro), "M" stages are categorized as M0 (no lesion, healthy foot), M1 beginning of a lesion, M2 active, M3 healing, M4 non-

active healed lesion, and M4.1 non-active healed lesion with an active M2 on top of a healed lesion.

Beef herds are not immune to DD. While DD is present in beef cow/calf herds, feedlot cattle are especially susceptible. The key to controlling DD is to prevent outbreaks and spread of the disease. Once you find it, you are too late, your herd is infected. Cattle who are co-mingled with other groups of cattle, transition cattle, and animals under stress are at highest risk of contracting the disease. Untreated DD can cause lameness resulting in decreased rate of gain in feedlot animals, and reduced fertility and milk production in replacement cows. In addition, losses incurred through treatment costs, increased labor, and potential animal mortality are economically detrimental to the overall enterprise.

Digital dermatitis causing treponemes are spread through manure and mud. Keeping pens clean and dry as possible is a good start to prevent the spread of disease. Prompt treatment of active M2 lesions will reduce the spread of DD to other cattle and reduce the chance of the infected animal's development of lameness. Treatment requires the lifting of the foot, cleaning of the lesion, and applying topical oxytetracyclin. Dr. Dörte Döpfer from the University of Wisconsin School of Veterinary Medicine recommends <2g of oxytetracyclin per treatment. M4 lesions are a reservoir for future outbreaks. Treponemes lie deep within the skin and can become active at any point. Running cattle through a footbath two to three times per week should keep the lesion in the chronic nonactive M4 stage. Depending on preference, a premix, formalin, or copper sulfate solution will serve as an antibacterial and hoof hardening solution. All footbath solutions have pros and cons, you can read more about footbath

options at: <https://fyi.uwex.edu/dairy/resources/animal-well-being-herd-health/>

Early detection and treatment are important factors to controlling DD in the beef herd. Walking pens to detect DD is the first step of control. Utilizing an integrated management strategy of footbath use, hoof care, and footbath use will help control the spread of the disease. Not every animal exhibits the same symptoms and reacts the same to treatment, so utilizing a consistent control strategy is important. It is still unclear how much DD economically impacts the beef industry, but one thing is for certain, DD is here to stay.



## Beef Checkoff Sponsored Nutrition Research

*John Freitag, Wisconsin Beef Council  
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Way back in the 1980's, the beef checkoff prioritized the development of a scientific research platform to answer questions about nutrition, including providing accurate data on beef's nutrient composition. The beef checkoff continues to make that work possible today. In 1986, the beef community united to conduct the National Consumer Retail Beef Study (NCRBS). Texas A&M University and USDA addressed issues of taste, palatability, fat trim, and internal fat level (marbling). The overall findings were clear, Dietary recommendations emerging from increased knowledge of the link between diet and health were driving demand for leaner cuts and increased trimming at the retail level. Consumers did not want excess beef fat on beef cuts. Marbling was, and still is an important factor in achieving customer satisfaction in our

product. The results of this study helped to reaffirm the beef's industry commitment to listen to consumers and the industry responded by producing leaner beef.

At that time, most beef cuts in the retail meat case had a 1/2 inch of external fat. The industry communicated the findings to retail leaders and in 1986-87 both Kroger and Safeway implemented new fat trimming programs. Other retailers quickly followed. In the late 1980's, The National Beef Market Basket Survey, conducted by Texas A&M University for the national Beef Checkoff Program, set the course for future nutrient composition studies. As this study continued and the results were disseminated, beef industry leaders contended that "waste" fat shouldn't be produced in the first place, only to be later trimmed at the processing level. Thus the "War on Fat" campaign. Its primary mission was reduction of excess fat at the production level. Practices that included searching out non-traditional breeds of beef cattle from around the world, advanced genetic selection tools, and better ways of feeding cattle were instrumental in producing a leaner beef carcass. The 2005 National Beef Market Basket Survey monitored the impact of these improvements. The analysis found that overall fat thickness was reduced 0.09 inches, making an 81% decrease in external fat on retail cuts.

Americans love beef. With heightened interest in healthy, satisfying and wholesome foods, lean beef options are in high demand. In addition, the dietary guidelines for Americans and MyPlate encourage people to "go lean with protein"- further promoting the role of lean meat in a healthy diet. The great thing about our product is, that today's leaner beef offers consumers the flavor they crave and the

wholesome, nutritious food they seek all in one delicious package.

Supplying consumers with leaner beef that simultaneously delivers on nutrition, flavor, safety and convenience is the result of successful collaboration spanning at least four decades. This “gate to plate” effort involves the entire beef supply chain, beginning with you, America’s cattle farmers and ranchers raising leaner animals. Next, packers and processors closely trim beef cuts, and finally, super markets and restaurants offer a growing number of lean beef cuts to consumers. A critical component of this collaboration has been the ongoing effort to provide reliable and accurate nutrient data on the beef cuts available to consumers to help them make informed choices about what they want to eat.

This is where your beef checkoff has stepped up and provided funding for accurate, up-to-date information on beef cuts offered in the market place and made a commitment to support efforts by USDA to continually update nutrient data in its National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference (SR) which is publicly accessible at [www.ars.usda.gov/SR](http://www.ars.usda.gov/SR). These ongoing nutrient updates reflect continued improvement in beef’s lean profile as well as a greater availability of lean cuts. Nutrient data released, included 10 updated cuts from the chuck and the round, which now combined with previous updates of the chuck, rib and plate and the inclusion of new innovative cuts such as the Beef Value Cuts and the Beef Alternative Merchandising Cuts.

The demand for composition data has increased with changes in the American diet, food environment, and public health needs. Nutrient data in the current SR provide the foundation for almost every food composition

database used in food policy, research, dietary practice, and nutrition monitoring – in the United States and in other countries. This food composition data is invaluable for the calculation of nutrient values of menus in schools, hospitals, long term care facilities, and for food items in retail stores and restaurants. Health professionals, such as our Registered Dietitians rely on this nutrient data to support nutritional messages and guidance used in diet counseling and communications.

Here are some examples of how beef nutrient data from the SR are used:

- Updates to the dietary guidelines for Americans
- Data for beef nutrition labels and other on-package nutrient claims at the retail meat case
- Nutrition information for foodservice menus
- Public and private nutrition education programs
- Menus for national School Lunch Programs
- Nutrition information on recipes
- Reference points for new studies by nutrition researchers and comparisons of nutrient composition of various diets and dietary patterns
- Nutrition information to health and medical professionals who advise clients with nutrition solutions
- Nutrient information for foods and products for use in articles and online reference services.

There are many more examples of things that the Beef Checkoff has done on your behalf, but that is for another article. Stay tuned and we will share them with you. BEEF IT’S WHAT’S FOR DINNER!!!



## Cattle Industry Renewed Interest in Traceability

*Amy Radunz, UWRF Beef Management  
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The 2016-2020 Beef Industry Long Range plan included a strategic objective of adopting an Animal ID Traceability System. And the plan stated the industry should be proactive in continuing the discussion of animal identification and traceability. The first action was for NCBA to conduct a comprehensive feasibility study on US Beef Cattle identification and traceability systems.

The report identified potential advantages of implementing a traceability system in the U.S. First, a traceability system could minimize the impact of a catastrophic animal disease outbreak, such as Food and Mouth disease. Second, domestic market opportunities could be captured. For example, major industry players such as WalMart and McDonalds have committed to developing sustainability programs that include food traceability. Finally, the industry could position themselves to better capture value on the global export market. In the global market 38 countries currently have a traceability system including our major competitors – Australia, and Brazil. Furthermore, countries such as China are demanding it for access

The study identified key principle findings for moving forward in a developing a traceability system:

1. This needs to be an industry-driven approach.
2. The system should manage and be overseen by an entity that includes both private and government interests.



3. The approach needs to maintain data privacy
4. The system should be equitable to all industry sectors
5. The system should be compatible with common industry practices.
6. It should operate at the speed of commerce.
7. The opportunities

The US could take a proactive approach to determining the system to approach traceability and work with each segment to find an acceptable system. This could be market driven, and opportunity is there, however, if the void remains then this could be filled by a US government agency. The potential outcome of not exploring and implementing a system now might be a catastrophic event such as Foot and Mouth Disease. The response to such an event could result in a mandatory system that needs to be rapidly implemented with potentially little to no input from industry stakeholders.

What actions can cattle producers do? First, you can get involved and become informed about Wisconsin Livestock Identification Consortium efforts in this area. Also, a producer can be prepared by implementing identification systems to not only help in the management of cattle but also should allow them to be prepared when a system is put in place.



## How You Can Support NCBA's 2018 Policy Priorities

*Kevin Kester, NCBA*

The 2018 Cattle Industry Convention is officially in the rearview mirror, and

now it is time to roll up our sleeves and get to work. Armed with new policies and clear priorities for 2018, NCBA is moving swiftly to deliver on the issues that matter most to producers. With diverse, passionate members spread across the country, we might not always agree on every topic. But when it comes time to lobby on behalf of our industry, we recognize the importance of presenting a united front.

Our dedicated staff in Washington, D.C. wake up each day to fight for the policies that our producers pass each year. We are lucky to be working with an Administration and Congress that have shown a willingness to listen to our input and work to address our concerns. The commitment to reducing the regulatory burden on producers is evident in policy decisions, from the proposal to repeal the 2015 Waters of the United States rule, to the restoration of grazing in land formally designated as national monuments. However, with the mid-term elections fast approaching, our window for achieving further progress on key policy issues is smaller than it may appear.

Although we have a full seven months between now and Election Day in early November – seemingly an eternity in the political world – the realities of campaigning for reelection will increasingly conflict with the business of legislating. In theory, Congress could keep working to churn out new bills right up until the end. In practice, that never happens. Every member of the House of Representatives and one-third of the Senate will have to devote time and resources to their respective races back home. That includes navigating their state primary, hitting the summer barbecue circuit, and raising money for the campaign war chest. It also means

that taking up controversial legislation will become a non-starter.

By the time summer rolls around, our ability to pass meaningful legislation will be seriously curtailed. As a result, we will have to move even more quickly than usual to secure policy wins this year. I know our organization and our members are up to the challenge.

We cannot all spend our days lobbying in Washington, D.C. After all, we have our operations to run. But that does not mean we cannot engage in the political process. In last month's column, I talked about how recruiting members and donating to the NCBA Political Action Committee can help maximize the impact of NCBA's policy efforts. Members can also attend our Legislative Conference (April 10-12 in Washington, D.C.), which teaches producers about the public policy process and connects them with elected officials. Finally, one additional action can do wonders for our cause: Asking your representatives in Congress to vote on the issues that matter to you.

A phone call or an email from a constituent is one of the most influential pieces of feedback a politician can receive. They know that for every person who calls or writes, there are dozens in their district that feel the same way. And I can guarantee that in the coming months, there will be plenty of times when Congress needs to know where cattle and beef producers stand.

Our lobbyists in D.C. depend on the grassroots voices of our members to amplify our message on Capitol Hill. Simply put, they cannot do it alone. When the moment strikes, and the request for comments goes out, all of us need to be there to answer the call.

# Legislative Update

Jordan Lamb , DeWitt Ross & Stevens

[jkl@dewittross.com](mailto:jkl@dewittross.com)

The Wisconsin State Legislature is on the verge of adjourning the 2017-18 legislative session. This session began in January 2017 and will conclude sometime in early spring of 2018.

The final weeks of this legislative session were focused on the following issues for WCA's state advocacy program.

**Additional Funding for WLIC.** The Wisconsin Livestock Identification Consortium (WLIC) was funded with \$250,000 annually (\$500,000 over the biennium) in the 2017-19 state budget bill. However, the WLIC is seeking an additional \$100,000 in each year of biennium through stand-alone legislation – [Assembly Bill 765](#) / [Senate Bill 667](#). This legislation has passed both houses and now awaits consideration by Governor Walker. WCA supports this legislation.

**Additional Funding for Producer-led Watershed Grant Program.** Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grants are awarded by DATCP for projects *developed by farmers* that focus on ways to prevent and reduce runoff from farm fields and that work to increase farm participation in these voluntary efforts. Each application must come from a group of at least 5 farmers in the same watershed, collaborating with conservation agencies, institutions or nonprofit organizations. The maximum grant award per group is \$40,000. Fourteen pro-

ducer-led groups received funding in 2016 for a total of \$242,550, eleven producer-led groups were awarded \$197,065 for 2017 funding and seventeen groups were awarded 2018 funding for a total of \$250,000.

Representative Joel Kitchens (R-Sturgeon Bay) and Senator Rob Cowles (R-Green Bay) have authored [Assembly Bill 946](#) and [Senate Bill 796](#), which would increase the amount of funding in DATCP's soil and water resource management program that may be allocated for producer led watershed protection grants in each fiscal year of the 2017-19 biennium from \$250,000 to \$750,000. This legislation has passed the Assembly and now awaits consideration by the State Senate. WCA supports this legislation.

**Wetland Reform Legislation.** Senator Roger Roth (R-Appleton) and Representative Jim Steineke (R-Kaukauna) introduced legislation aimed at providing additional wetland regulatory reform. [Assembly Bill 547](#) / [Senate Bill 600](#) would reform Wisconsin's wetland permitting statutes by (1) eliminating the requirement for a permit for a discharge of dredged or fill material to a *nonfederal* wetland; (2) removing regulation of "artificial wetlands" (*i.e.*, the wetland was created by human action and has no prior stream history); and (3) streamlining Wisconsin's wetland mitigation program by prohibiting DNR from imposing any requirements or conditions under their mitigation program that exceed the federal standards in 33 USC 332. This bill has passed both houses and is waiting for review by Governor Walker. WCA supports this legislation.

**WCA Pressures Congress to Act on Federal Wolf Delisting.** Once

again, there is federal legislation pending that could remove the gray wolf from the federal endangered species list in the State of Wisconsin and other Midwestern states. Wisconsin's population of gray wolves far exceeds the state Department of Natural Resources' targeted management goal of 350. The number of wolves in our state also exceeds the FWS criteria to federally delist wolves. Wisconsin's management plan has successfully followed a science-based approach designed to maintain the prescribed wolf population of 350 since 2012. The experts at the FWS have determined that Wisconsin's wolf population has recovered to a level that no longer requires it to be listed as endangered. Management of the wolf population should, therefore, be restored to the Wisconsin DNR.

Accordingly, the WCA drafted a letter to Senator Tammy Baldwin at the end of February asking for her support for wolf delisting. The letter was co-signed by the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation, the Wisconsin Corn Growers, the Minnesota Farm Bureau, the Michigan Farm Bureau



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## WI Cattlemen's Association

### Executive Committee

Eric Johnson– President

Matt Ludlow– President Elect

Jena Swanson– Past President

Mackenzie Cash– Secretary

Austin Arndt– Treasurer

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### FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

As of October 1st, 2017, NCBA annual membership dues increased from \$125.00 to \$150.00. Please plan accordingly when updating your NCBA membership after this date.

# 2018 WCA SUMMER TOUR JUNE 30, 2018



*"To promote the WI beef business through advocacy, leadership, and education."*

## **Breneman Farms**

*Pardeeville, WI*

Matt Breneman of Breneman Farms showcases the diversity as an embryo transfer cooperator herd to a custom cattle feeder for both dairy and beef stockers. He is an informed, involved beef producer invested in Wisconsin's beef industry. Matt along with his wife Kelley run 400 beef cows, custom feed over 500 head, and farm 1600 acres. He also works with ABS Global to house females for genetic development at his facility. Matt also develops bulls for seedstock producers. He has recently built new bulls development facility, new sale facility, and has a remodeled cattle handling facility to better serve his customers.

## **Bula-Gieringer Farms**

*Coloma, WI*

Cattle Manager: Jay Wodill

Bula-Gieringer Farms was established in 1980 when a partnership was formed between Mark Bula and Mark Gieringer. The business is headquartered in Coloma, WI, and consists of vegetable and row crop farming as well as the cattle enterprises. In addition to the crops, the farm keeps 450 head of cattle comprised of Angus, Simmental, and Sim-Angus, both registered and commercial. The farm utilizes local marsh for summer pastures and crop residual for fall feeding. The winter feeding program consists of haylage, corn silage, ryelage, and baled hay. The spring calves are sold in November and December. Through recent usage of genomics, Bula-Gieringer has expanded relationships and marketed the calves directly to a feedlot for finishing. Bula-Gieringer also has two cooperator herd relationships with Nichols Farm of Bridgewater, Iowa and Thomas Angus Ranch of Baker City, Oregon.

## **Eron Beef, LLC**

*Stevens Point, WI*

Eron Beef, LLC is owned and operated by Dave Eron. The operation finishes Holstein steers and colored cattle in a slatted floor facility. Having started out feeding cattle in a dirt lot, Dave was looking for a way to have a more controlled environment for feeding cattle, as well as capture more value from the manure generated. Dave also utilizes a variety of by-product feeds to control feed costs and maintain a competitive advantage. With a focus on technology, low-stress cattle handling, and modern data/performance tracking, Dave is at the forefront of the cattle feeding business in the upper Midwest. This stop will highlight the modern beef feeding operation, and allow producers to learn more about slatted floor feeding facilities.

For more information & online registration, visit [www.wisconsincattlemen.com](http://www.wisconsincattlemen.com)

Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association

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WCA Summer Tour  
June 30th  
Shortorn Junior Nationals  
June 26th– July 1st  
Angus Junior Nationals  
July 7th-13th  
Farm Tech Days  
July 10th-12th  
World Beef Expo  
September 28th-30th

**WCA  
Upcoming Events**

**Wisconsin Cattleman's Association**  
632 Grand Canyon Dr.  
Madison, WI 53719



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