



RAAA 2008 National Convention

The 55th Annual Convention was held at the Little American Hotel and Conference Center, Cheyenne, Wyoming, and hosted by the Rocky Mountain Area. Over 250 members, commercial cattlemen, guests, sponsors and staff participated in “How the West was Won by the Red Angus Cow”.



Wednesday - September 17

The pre-convention activities started with a Commercial Cattlemen’s Symposium: Reaping the Rewards of Efficiency with Red Angus. The program had three areas of focus: Coping with Rising Input Costs; Can Efficiency Improve your Bottom Line?; and Selecting for Efficiency-Where the Rubber hits the Road. Over 80 attendees were educated and motivated by the outstanding line up of speakers which included: Dr. Denny Crews, Dr. Tom Jenkins, Dr. Merlyn Nielson, Dr. Berry Dunn, Bruce Durheim and Rod Hill.

In the early afternoon, the 15 trade show vendors began to set up their booths. Registration of convention attendees became fast and furious. Everyone was eager for the evening’s hospitality - compliments of the Rocky Mountain Red Angus Breeders. A variety of delicious hors d’oeuvres, made the greeting of old friends and meeting new members even more enjoyable.

Thursday - September 18

The First Time Attendees Meeting started the day’s activities at 7 a.m. A lively group enjoyed meeting board members and staff and

learning about the convention format.

Promptly at 8 a.m., the General Session was called to order and the business of the Convention began. President Steve Andras welcomed the attendees and special foreign visitors, and then gave his President’s Report.

Greg Comstock, Executive Secretary, gave the “State of the Association” address. This included finances, staffing, marketing strategies, and highs and lows of the past year. The JRA Year in Review was next with Kristina Weiderbach, Nathan Nelson, Laura Mushrush, Montgomery Dempsey, Tyler Rush and Marianne Mendoza each reporting on one aspect of the juniors activities.

After a short break, Dr. Jon Beever, Univ. of Illinois, gave an enlightening talk explaining the inheritance patterns of common genetic defects and characteristics of osteopetrosis.

Committee reports were next. The chairperson from each committee presented a short synopsis of the accomplishments, recommendations and activities of the past year.

Lunch time featured a special sur-



prise visit from Sal Forbes, one of the RAAA founders. The membership then listened to each Board of Director candidate give a short talk on their qualifications and reasons for wanting to serve on the RAAA board.

The afternoon was given over to Committee Meetings. In a departure from past years, the meetings were held concurrently. Breed Improvement and Promotions had the first time slot. Then, Marketing and Registration Committees met, and the day finished with Show and Sale and Constitution and ByLaws. The morning committee reports reviewed the past year; in the afternoon, the meetings focused on the future.

A social hour and a good beef dinner put everyone in a relaxed mood, ready to enjoy the evening's entertainment. The "Bit-O-Wyo" ranch's Blue Water Cowboy Band entertained the crowd with plenty of cowboy favorites and cowboy comedy.

Friday - September 19

Another early start on the day with the Affiliates Meeting at 7 a.m. Clint Berry and a large group of affiliate officers discussed methods to improve communication, leverage advertising dollars with co-op ads and general promotions.

The district and then regional caucuses took place before the resumption of the General Session. A representative from each District reported on what had taken place in their meetings. This included future convention planning, discussing general industry concerns and electing

board directors Gary Jacobson, Kim Ford, and Joe Mushrush.

The election of a new Red Angus President was next on the agenda. Kelli Brown was nominated and elected by acclamation.

Gary Jacobson and Tyler Sonstegard from District 5 - Northern Plains, gave a short presentation on the 2009 Convention. With a backdrop of music by Ian Tyson and a colorful video highlighting the Shooting Star Casino and Event Center, attendees got a sneak peek of Mahnommen, Minn., venue for next year's Convention.

With the business of the Convention completed, lunch time was a relaxed interval featuring the comedy of Mad Jack Hanks.

The afternoon offered a number of options to participants. A variety of workshops included: Web Site advertising with Chris Newitt, Print Ads with Tracey Koester and Kathy LaScala, Introduction to Cow Sense, Red Angus Website 101 with Mikalena Randazzo, REDS Tutorial with Kenda Ponder, and an "Up close and Personal" Q & A session with Red Angus Staff.

The day was capped off with the Awards Banquet. The annual award presentations, staff longevity recognition and GridMaster Awards added to the festive atmosphere and relaxed congeniality.

Planning and executing a successful Convention takes untold hours of work and dedication. Many thanks to the Rocky Mountain Area for hosting this wonderful event.