



A Message from the DCHA President

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Make a difference

First and foremost, I would like to thank John Bernard and his conference committee for a great DCHA Conference in Tucson, Ariz., this year. The high caliber of speakers and presentations continued in the tradition of DCHA.

Those in attendance responded that the Annual Conference was very valuable to them. More specifically, there was high interest in people management and the development of management systems, as shown by the attendance in these breakout sessions.

The economy was on everyone's mind and many questions were asked about how to weather the storm. Another popular topic of discussion was finding best management practices for individual operations. Many of the speakers were able to give attendees their opinions, insights and outlooks on these points. As with every DCHA Conference, our goal is to see each attendee take something home that will help them improve their operations and their lives.

DCHA is very pleased with the outcome of the Annual Conference. This year's attendance was down, but the representation of animal units was the highest ever, with more than 700,000 animals represented at this year's Annual Conference.

Our sponsor support was also its highest ever. I would like to personally thank the sponsors who displayed in the trade show. Some of our sponsors also provided the means by which many attendees could attend. I was very impressed and pleased with the enthusiasm of our sponsors to bring customers to this Conference.

This year, DCHA developed the Gold Standards program, which outlines production standards for Holstein calves up to six months of age. At the Annual Conference, the organization shared a draft of the Gold Standards with attendees during two breakout sessions. The attendance of these sessions was great and the feedback received has led us to the final document. A brief overview of the Gold Standards is the featured story in this issue. You can find the final Gold Standards document on the DCHA website (www.calfandheifer.org), and it will be presented in several publications in the coming months. I would like to extend a big thank you to Maureen Hanson and her committee for all of their work on this project.

I encourage each of us to use the information we gathered at the Annual Conference to make a difference. We are the voice when it comes to animal and land stewardship. We know and understand our responsibilities to this stewardship better than any special interest group. I encourage each of us to tell our story and tell it with passion. I was able to help with an open house just recently at a very large dairy in Wisconsin, where more than 1,200 community members attended. I was most impressed by the passion the owners had in sharing their story and the response of those who attended. Opening our mouths sometimes can be hard and uncomfortable. But if we don't speak directly to the listener, someone else will. And the message may lead people to form opinions that are based on false information.

I'm very proud to be associated with DCHA and this industry, and appreciate the support of each one of you as we work together to make a difference.