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Livestock

Cattle drive highlights ICA's 100th birthday

By SEAN ELLIS
Capital Press

BOISE — The Idaho Cattle Association's five-day centennial celebration culminated with a cattle drive down the middle of one of the state's busiest roads.

Thousands of people lined Chinden Boulevard July 18 as Gov. Butch Otter and Lt. Gov. Brad Little, both ranchers, joined current and past ICA leaders on horseback as they herded a group of longhorns down the road.

Following the cattle drive, a large group of people mingled with members of Idaho's ranching community, snapping photos of the cowboys and cattle.

ICA members said the cattle drive, which was covered heavily by local media, was the highlight of the centennial celebration and an appropriate way to showcase it to the public.

"A cattle drive is pretty iconic of the cattle industry," said ICA Communications Director Britany Hurst. "When you think of cowboys, you think of cattle drives."

The drive was part of a concerted effort by the ICA to mingle and connect with the public as much as possible during the celebration, Hurst said.

"A lot of times we're preaching to the choir, so this week we have opened up a lot of opportunities to reach out to the public and bring them together with cattle producers," she said.



Sean Ellis/Capital Press

Current and past Idaho Cattle Association leaders line up for a group photo after herding cattle down one of Idaho's busiest roads July 18. The event was the culmination of the ICA's five-day centennial celebration in Boise.

With \$2.4 billion in farm gate receipts last year, cattle was the state's second largest agricultural commodity and it's important to remind the public how important the industry still is to the state's economy, said ICA President Carl Lufkin, a Leadore rancher.

"I think the (industry) swings a pretty big stick in agriculture in Idaho," he said. "We'd like all of Idaho to celebrate what is probably one of the most important industries in the state."

The centennial celebration was a landmark event for Idaho's cattle industry, said ICA Vice President Jerald Ray-

mond, an Eastern Idaho producer.

"It's a big deal to the entire industry and entire state," he said.

You only have a centennial once "and none of us is going to be around for the next one," Hurst said. "It's a big deal; it's a huge landmark."

With cattle prices at or near record levels for two years now, it's a great time for the ICA to turn 100, Raymond said.

"The mood is one of celebration here," he said. "We've had some great years and we're very appreciative of it. We feel very blessed."

Raymond said the current

market situation makes it "a great time for the older generation to figure out how they are going to pass their assets on to their heirs ... and it's also a great time to lay away some money for when times change again because we know that they eventually will."

Lufkin said a highlight of the event for him was seeing all the young faces there.

"Looking out across this crowd today, there's a lot of young people here that are excited about the industry and want to be involved," he said July 15. "That speaks volumes about the health of the industry and where we're headed."

2015: Cattle profits are up

By SEAN ELLIS
Capital Press

BOISE — Last year was an unprecedented year of profits for the domestic beef cattle industry, and 2015 won't be far behind.

But while cow-calf producers could experience record or near-record profits again in 2015, margin operators are having a tougher time.

That was the message Idaho Cattle Association members heard July 15 during a presentation by Top Dollar Angus founder and owner Tom Brink, a national expert on beef production and supply chain economics.

Last year was "an unbelievable, unprecedented year for the cattle industry as a whole. All segments of production basically experienced record profits," Brink told several hundred ranchers during the ICA's centennial celebration. "We've never seen anything like it."

The average per-head profit for cow-calf producers last year was a record \$355, and that number won't change much this year, he said.

However, the margins for stockers and feedlots are tightening.

Key market drivers this year include an ample corn supply, continued tight cattle numbers, relatively strong beef demand and a larger competing meat supply, he said.

Despite more competition from pork and poultry — pork output is forecast to increase 7 percent this year and poultry 3.9

percent — domestic demand for beef is still up 5.6 percent year-to-date and U.S. beef production is forecast to be down 2 percent this year, following a 6 percent decline in 2014.

Last year's decline in beef production "shocked the market and drove the market through the roof," he said.

Put all those factors together, "and I think we'll see another year of basically record profit in the cow-calf segment," Brink said. "We are looking at a second record or near-record year in cow-calf profitability."

But, he added, margin operators must be careful. "It's going to be a tougher year for (stockers and feedlots) for sure. The pressure in 2015 is on our cattle feeding sector."

Following Brink's presentation, ICA Executive Vice President Wyatt Prescott said the industry is anticipating an ease-back off the recent record prices and margins "but the fundamentals are there to support very positive margins and a very strong market."

ICA President Carl Lufkin, a Leadore rancher, said the positive market situation makes it a good time for the Idaho cattle industry to celebrate its centennial.

"It's been a very good market for cow-calf producers and the stockers and feeders have also done well," he said. "The price of feeder cattle right now probably has (margin operators) a little nervous ... but I think everybody is pretty optimistic about the future."



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ASOTIN COUNTY 4-H TEENS ARE BUSY PLANNING THE 2015 S.E. DISTRICT 4-H TEEN RALLY

ASOTIN COUNTY, Wash., has about 150 actively enrolled teens (7th through 12th graders). These youths are enrolled in projects that range from raising and showing beef, swine, goats, sheep, poultry, rabbits, horses and dogs to sewing, cooking, robotics, archery and teen leadership.

A handful chose to take advantage of outstanding national events like the National 4-H Congress — an educational, service and recreational opportunity in Atlanta, Ga., and the National 4-H Conference, a premiere civic engagement opportunity in Washington, D.C. Many of the teens travel to state events such as "Know Your Government" at the state capital in Olympia to learn about our three branches of government, the 4-H Teen Conference, an educational, college and career readiness event at Washington State University and the Teen Leadership Summit held in Cle Elum, Wash., where teens develop leadership skills.

At the local level Asotin County 4-H teens are busy planning the Washington State S.E. District 2015 4-H Teen Rally.

It is two-night getaway for youth in 7th through 12th grade to engage in educational workshops, meet youth from other counties, learn more about 4-H, and have a whole lot of fun! Elections for 4-H State Ambassadors, and the State 4-H Advisory Board are held at the rallies.

The theme? Harry Potter

When and where? Sept. 25-27 at Camp Wooten, 30 miles S.E. of Pomeroy, Wash., in the Blue Mountains.

For more information, e-mail kim.belanger@wsu.edu or call 509-243-2009.



Photo courtesy of 4-H. Teenage 4-H members such as these can look forward to a wide variety of activities in the coming year.

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