

Record numbers were reached as nearly 600 Nebraska Cattlemen members gathered last week in Kearney at the 2011 Annual Nebraska Cattlemen/Nebraska CattleWomen Convention. The annual convention is the primary policy making forum for Nebraska Cattlemen members.

Each Nebraska Cattlemen member's beef operation is unique as is the association, as it works to address various issues that may affect its members.

"Due to the diversity of cattle operations in Nebraska it is important to speak up and come to Nebraska Cattlemen meetings to help direct policy," said Art Brownlee, Nebraska Cattlemen brand and property rights committee chairman.

Each of the four Nebraska Cattlemen councils (cow/calf, farmer/stockman, feedlot, and seedstock) met as well as all six of the policy committees giving Nebraska Cattlemen members multiple opportunities for discussion and adoption of important policies.

Members discussed and set policy on land easements, child labor law, brand, and educational programs. A major discussion was Nebraska Brand Law.

Nebraska Cattlemen hosted 16 meetings in 2011 to gather input about brand inspection as directed by the membership at the 2010 convention. Over 450 individuals attended these meetings, most with verbal comments that were recorded along with the 123 written input forms. Input from across the state varied but major points were discussed by members in several forums at convention.

"The membership vote proved that last year's decision to "go to the country" was the right one," said Art. "After stops across the state and analysis of how the industry utilizes brand inspection in defined ways, membership voted to work to modify brand inspection law to follow the priorities of cattle producers."

The membership passed a resolution that Nebraska Cattlemen members will work with the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture and the participants of the 100 Beef Cow Ownership Advantage Program to provide resources for their herd. A conservation easement resolution was passed by the membership because Nebraska Cattlemen members support the right of landowners to determine if an easement fits their unique situation.

Another action taken by Nebraska Cattlemen membership is to join with the Nebraska CattleWomen to represent cattle producers across the state. The merger of the two associations will take place July 1, 2012 once all of the details of the merger have been confirmed.