



Animal Agriculture Alliance (AAA) 6th Annual Stakeholder Summit (www.AnimalAgAlliance.org)

Animal Welfare: Roadmaps to Successful Solutions
Arlington, Virginia - March 19 – 21, 2007

Overarching Theme: Animal care/welfare is not going away as an issue – it is growing and will continue to grow as an area of concern. Agriculture industry must develop strategies to proactively address animal care & welfare concerns.

Speakers had broad views as to how industry should address animal care and welfare issues. Recommendations included:

- ✓ Develop programs and communication strategies that recognize the social/moral aspects of an issue
- ✓ Whole of industry response needed – joining of forces across animal agriculture
- ✓ Develop strategies at the political level
- ✓ Industry developed standards – fix what needs fixing

Programs and Communication – points made by speakers:

- Develop a framework of social responsibility. Articulate commitment to animal welfare and promote consistency of thought across the producer community on obligations to the animal.
- Avoid selective journalism – use multi-disciplinary groups to analyze the whole scientific community of results.
- Values matter – not just science.
- Change dynamic of the discussion – define ourselves in a professional model, engage stakeholders – including NGO's to know what is important to them.
- Attributes of a profession: ethical standards, code of conduct, accountability, best practices, certification, and continuing education. All key to establishing trust.

Whole of Industry Response – points made by speakers:

- Examples were given of numerous state and local initiatives to ban or regulate aspects of agricultural production.
- Courts are being used to redefine animal agriculture in the U.S. Bottom line: need a unified industry approach to address. (*Note: there were many calls to join AAA from speakers.*)
- National Commission on Industrial Farm Animal Production (<http://www.ncifap.org/>) “formed to conduct a comprehensive, fact-based and balanced examination of key aspects of the farm animal industry. For the next two years, the NCIFAP, in consultation with other national experts, will conduct an assessment of the industry's impact on the public's health, the environment, farm communities and animal health and well-being.” Concern was expressed regarding the lack of industry representation. AAA is working toward greater industry input on the commission's work.

Political Strategies – points made by speakers:

- HSUS has done a good job of raising their credibility in political circles. Concern expressed regarding their growing political influence and financial resources.

- Activist groups have been effective in getting their message out through the education system – changing how children are educated about agriculture.
- Lesson learned during Arizona Ballot initiative (ban on sow stalls and veal crates) – the public is not knowledgeable of industrial agriculture practices. Consumers need to better understand modern agriculture.
- Industry needs to be more engaged politically, with the community/media and with the education system.

Industry Developed Standards – points made by speakers:

- Voluntary systems can work – must have integrity, i.e., transparent to the public, statement of commitment to animal care, dynamic (processes that can change and result in real improvements), third party verification.
- Need industry developed standards and training/certification programs to address issues and make improvements
- Strong voice needed - speak to what industry is doing

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