For a decade, Colorado Independent CattleGrowers Association has served as a voice for private producers and a bastion of rugged individualism. After many years of fighting the good fight, it’s time to look back with satisfaction and look forward with hope. Join us in picturesque La Junta, Colo., for great speakers, ranch tours, and everything we’ve all come to love about the Annual CICA Convention.

Here are 5 great reasons to join us in La Junta!

RANCH TOURS

On July 17th we have a full day of sight-seeing planned. We’ll begin the day at the beautiful Muddy Valley Ranch south of La Junta. After lunch at Nivnview, we’ll spend the rest of the day touring the Wallace, Halls, and Davis Ranches. The day will be rounded out by a tour of the Hasser Ranch.
The Board of Directors is pleased to introduce the 2015 Joel Franz Memorial Intern, Clay Patton of Limon, Colo.

Clay joins the team with an impressive resume of leadership positions and public speaking experience. In addition to Clay’s tenure as the Sentinel for the Colorado State FFA, he also enriches the Colby Community College campus by serving on the Presidential Scholars Committee and livestock judging team. Clay not only contributes to activities on campus but also maintains a 4.00 grade point average. His drive, ambition, and commitment to excellence are evident in his various spheres of influence.

The Joel Franz Memorial Internship commemorates the vision of the late Joel Franz who believed that training our youth to champion their own rights as agriculturists was of vital importance. In keeping with that vision, Colorado Independent Cattle Growers Association selects from applicants each year with the end goal in mind—namely, that young people find their voice. This position also provides the intern chosen with a stipend, insuring that those who serve will have the means to pursue further education.

Clay exemplifies those traits vital to the continuation of independent agricultural production—tenacity, determination, and gumption.

Colorado Independent Cattle Growers Association is pleased to have him on staff for the summer and bids him a warm welcome.

DISEASE JEOPARDIZES U.S. BEEF SUPPLY

On Monday, June 29, 2015, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) announced that the ban on beef imports from Argentina and Brazil had been lifted. The ruling paved the way for all of Argentina and 14 states in Brazil to begin importing fresh or frozen beef products to the U.S. in as little as 60 days from the date of publication in the Federal Register.

Beef importation from the two South American nations had previously been prohibited due to the presence of Foot-and-Mouth Disease in their herds as well as inadequate means to trace and quarantine infected animals. Of the 27 states in Brazil, 14 have been declared “FMD free” since 2007; however, many of the “FMD free” states border others that have become breeding grounds for FMD. The infected states also lack infrastructure to keep animals from mingling in borderlands. Brazil also struggles with BSE; a recent case caused several countries to ban all Brazilian beef imports.

The announcement was met with shock and outrage from U.S. producers. FMD remains one of the most highly contagious of bovine diseases. The disease has been eradicated from the U.S. cattle herd since 1929 but the looming imports from South America could spell the end of a “clean bill of health”.

![Brazil's FMD status](image)
CICA was built on the principle that our policy should always drive the decisions we make as an association, and that policy should be determined by the membership. At each convention, the Directors host morning working sessions wherein the policy that directs our organization is forged. Input from the membership about local or regional issues is always welcome and has always been the impetus behind our position on various topics.

**BEEF IS ON THE MENU**

Why would we serve anything else?

On behalf of the Board of Directors, we hope to see you there!

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Producers across the nation were disappointed by the recent decision of the U.S. House of Representatives to repeal the all-important COOL measure. The decision raises questions about sovereignty and transparency in the marketplace. Why would an American legislative body rule against protecting American markets? Why would they deny consumers the right to know where meat products originate? Why would they repeal a measure designed to provide transparency in the market?

The answer is two-fold. On the one hand, the World Trade Organization (WTO) ruled in May that the U.S. Country of Origin Labeling law (which has been in place since 2002 and was fully implemented in 2009) violated standing trade agreements that the U.S. has made with Mexico and Canada (such as NAFTA). On the other hand, Mexico and Canada are both threatening the U.S. with the imposition of tariffs totaling more than $3 billion in retaliation for the harm done to their meat industries as a result of COOL. Both countries have requested permission of the WTO to do so; the WTO has not yet released a decision on the matter.

The combined effect evidently swayed legislators to adopt H. R. 2393—a measure that repeals all COOL requirements on beef, pork, and chicken. Keep in mind that the repeal still needs to pass a vote of the U.S. Senate and gain approval from the Executive Branch before it goes into effect.

**Is COOL Dead?**

Farm Credit Under Threat

The CICA Board of Directors was apprised of a situation with the potential to harm the Farm Credit System earlier this spring. The issue stemmed from comments made in April by Frank Keating, the CEO of the American Bankers Association, which publically called for the elimination of the Farm Credit System.

In an op-ed published by the Grand Forks Herald, Keating likened Farm Credit to Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. “Thanks to the federal guarantee for Fannie and Freddie, home prices lost touch with reality. Millions of Americans were devastated by the loss in value when the home mortgage bubble burst. Could the Farm Credit System's loans — made artificially cheap by taxpayers — be distorting prices in the farm sector?” Keating queried.

In response, Farm Credit called on supporters to sign letters to both Keating and the Colorado U.S. Representatives in support of the continuation of Farm Credit as we know it.

“Mr. Keating’s proposal would cause serious harm to Colorado and especially to the rural communities and agricultural industry within our state,” the letter asserted. The letter was signed by more than 40 agricultural organizations, CICA among them.
Greetings Independent CattleGrowers,

I hope this letter finds you packing your bags and loading the car to head to our 10th Annual Convention. There is no doubt it will be the biggest and best one thus far, and many people are saying it may even be the event of the year for Colorado, so be sure to be in La Junta July 17-18!

What a quarter it has been since the last newsletter. It has mainly involved weekly harassment through calls and emails to our Senators and Representatives in regards to repealing COOL, fresh beef Brazilian imports, and fast track trade, all of which have one thing in common to me: not good for the USA Cowboy’s long term chance for survival.

Speaking of representing the people, almost all the polls I have seen have shown over 90% of American consumers wanting to know where their food comes from, and yet our politicians voted to get rid of the COOL program. So they are representing what people? Packers. JBS. Cargill. Tyson. At least our sheep herder friends get to keep their products labeled, which I genuinely think will insure their success and survivability in this country.

I have never seen a trade deal in which the U.S. was a net winner, or, dare I say, an “equal” trade partner either, so the fact that we give the power to make a “fast” track agreement to any government, or individual, does not set easy in my stomach. Cattle prices are relatively good right now, but if you think it will be great for 5 years or even 3 more years, think about all the people that are doing their darnedest to knock the prices down. We don’t even have our own elected officials on our side. I hope everyone gets healed up and ahead before our margins get squeezed again. Ask a corn farmer about how fast a margin can get squeezed.

Obviously, there are plenty of reasons to be thankful and happy at this time. Moisture maybe takes the cake this year, and that should be reason enough to treat yourself to a couple days away from the operation. There are obviously plenty of issues that need to be addressed and your input can and will help the long term sustainability of Colorado’s cattle industry. So, that being said, I look forward to seeing you July 17-18!

Sincerely,

Wil Bledsoe

P.S. Don’t forget to bring your red policy binders if you have them, because we will have updated policy inserts available.