

2024 MINNESOTA STATE CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION



Annual Report

Mission: *To create and maintain an economic and political climate that provides individual members the opportunity to sustain and grow the cattle industry in Minnesota.*

Another year has come and gone - 2024 started out with a very mild winter which everyone appreciated. May showers were very abundant and got the growing season started off with ample moisture which led to a great season for grass and hay production. Plenty of quantity, but very little quality.

For the most part, rains were good across the state through the summer, but for some it got a little dry by fall. Silage and corn yields were good and harvest weather allowed for a lot of work to get done. Cattle markets remained high for the entire year. Corn market steadily dropped leaving a cost of feed lower. Cattle inventories are extremely low. Inputs, even though lower than the previous year, are still high compared to average - mainly due to the higher interest rates and inflation. The national cow herd is still not showing any growth, and numbers are as low as 1962.

Our membership numbers for MSCA have increased over the last year, which is great to see. Kaitlyn Root, our executive director, has worked extremely hard alongside MSCA Membership Chair Angie Ford to make this happen. Having a strong membership is extremely important for when we go to St. Paul or Washington D.C. as our elected officials ask how many producers we are representing. Through our current partnership with Boehringer Ingelheim, we can offer new members a free bottle of Eprinex Pour-On with membership. The higher the membership, the bigger impact we can make.

Deer depredation is still a large problem for not only cattle producers with stored feed, but for the growing crops as well. We had multiple meetings throughout the year with the MN DNR on this topic and are still currently working with them and other departments to come up with solutions to this problem. Elk also have been a growing nuisance in the same sense. The DNR are planning to relocate elk to the Carlton County area near Duluth. We are opposed to this and spent a good amount of time making our opinion heard. Wolf depredations were also at a high this year. Still being protected and managed under the Endangered Species Act, MSCA still works to get that updated and lobbies for an increase in the depredation funds.

Our second largest fundraiser, Farmfest, had a great year with a lot of Big Beef Sandwiches going out the front of the mono slope building. Thank you to everyone who volunteered your time and the committee who put this great event on. A special thanks to Minnwest Bank who really brought some manpower to help us out, and another thank you to American Foods Group for the donation of the meat. Farmfest was heavily attended by many state and national politicians that stopped and talked with multiple members of the MSCA executive team. Farm bill was at the forefront of these discussions, with only an extension being passed this year.

The MSCA tour was a huge success with 300 plus people in attendance with multiple stops from all aspects of the industry in the Northwest Stockmen's Association's region. Once again, thank you to everyone who planned, worked, grilled and allowed people to view their operations. Convention was held in St. Cloud in December with a great turnout and impressive trade show. The convention also included industry speakers and MSCA Quarterly and Annual Meetings. Plenty of time for fellowship was had.

Thank you to everyone who planned and helped make the convention run smooth. Thank you to the vendors for all your support, and thank you to everyone who attended.

We continue to have a great working relationship with the Minnesota Beef Council and contracted staff to cover all our administrative needs as our membership grows and workload increases. The MSCA and MBC have some of the best people on staff that I'm very grateful for.

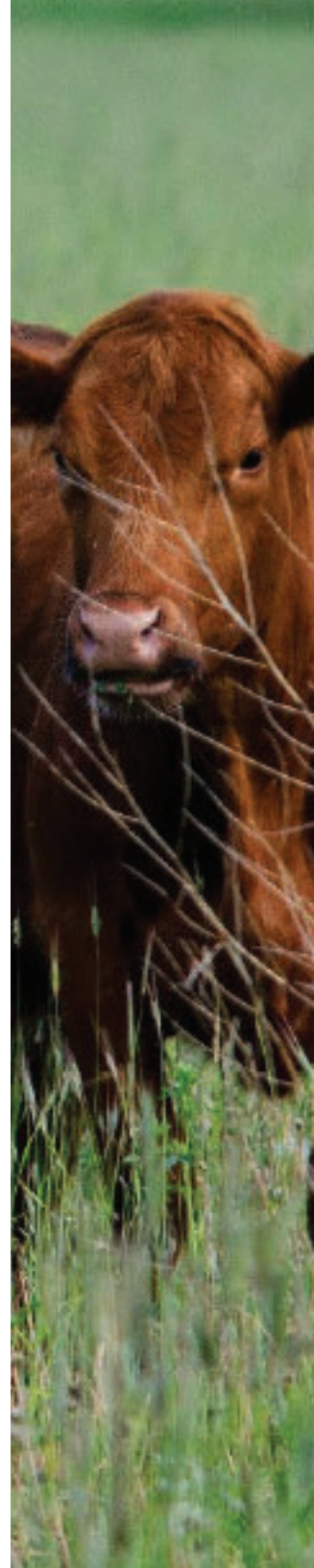
Thank you to all the board members who volunteer your time. Your time away from your farms and ranches does not go unnoticed.

This association would not work without all of you. Your input and leadership helps keep MSCA representing producers across our diverse environments within this state.

Your membership is the reason we have a voice in St. Paul and Washington D.C. Thank you for your membership and encourage others to join to make us stronger.

- Jake Thompson

President, Minnesota State Cattlemen's Association





2024

MINNESOTA STATE CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



The Minnesota State Cattlemen's Association is known for its strong representation of the state's beef producers. This is largely due to the incredible leaders MSCA has had and their efforts to promote, preserve and advance the state's industry. All MSCA leadership is nominated and selected by MSCA's members. MSCA is made up of 21 local affiliates. The state is also divided into 8 regions with MSCA leadership consisting of a regional director together with the officers.

2024 CATTLEMEN EVENTS

Steak on a Stick



The MSCA once again grilled steaks on the front lawn of the Minnesota Capitol in St. Paul during April. This annual event brings cattle producers and state legislators/staffers together to network and discuss priority issues. The West Central Cattlemen's Association and Cottonwood Cattle Producers provided grills

for the event, and MSCA members assisted with grilling and serving steaks. We were able to serve 1,000 steak on a sticks in just one hour! This is our opportunity to share the story of beef production with policy makers while enjoying our delicious product.

Legislative Conference



MSCA Executive Director Kaitlyn Root and MSCA President-Elect Rachel Gray traveled to Washington D.C. in April to meet with Congressional offices to discuss cattle priorities. Key topics included funding for the Foot and Mouth Disease Vaccine Bank; disaster relief programs including drought relief; support for the Beef Checkoff; delisting the gray wolf

and updating the Endangered Species Act; strengthening the Livestock Risk Protection program; and conservation programs. Rachel and Kaitlyn met with all 10 of our Minnesota Congressional offices while in D.C.

Developing Future Leaders

The MSCA sponsors the Minnesota Beef Council Top of Class program each year. This program develops future leaders of the beef industry through two in-state classes and one trip to Denver, Colorado. The mission of this program is to develop the skills of Minnesota's beef industry leaders to maximize their impact and effectiveness in local, state, national and international arenas. We also support youth in the beef industry by offering two \$500 scholarships each year - the Dennis Bottem & Reid Mason scholarships - and by sponsoring the MYBEP Heifer, the Beef Ambassador Scholarship and 4-H Award sponsorships.



Summer Tour

The Northwestern Stockmen's Association hosted the 2024 MSCA Summer Tour in Thief River Falls, Minnesota. The tour brought in around 300 attendees and highlighted multiple operations and businesses in northern Minnesota, including Didrikson Farms, Waage Farms, Hanson's Dairy, DigiKey, Northland Community and Technical College, Greenbush Vet Clinic and Garner Eeg's operation.



2024 CATTLEMEN EVENTS

Farmfest

The MSCA kept tradition this year by selling our Big Beef Sandwiches at Farmfest Aug. 6-8. This is one of the largest fundraising events for the MSCA, and the event also serves as an opportunity for discussion with Minnesota policy makers and representatives. Influential representatives stopped by to grab a sandwich and discuss what is happening on the ground for Minnesota cattle producers and the MSCA's top priorities for the year.

Minnesota Cattle Industry Convention



The MSCA hosted the Minnesota Cattle Industry Convention at the River's Edge Convention Center in St. Cloud Dec. 6-7. The convention offered educational sessions including presentations on cull cow management, sustainable opportunities in the beef industry, hay testing and a Minnesota policy update, with a guest appearance from Senator Aric Putnam. Kevin Hoge was awarded as the 2024 Minnesota Cattleman of the Year, and Merck Animal

Health received the 2024 Industry Service Award. Andrew Revier was named the recipient of the Dennis Bottem Scholarship, and Taylor Ford was recognized as the Reid Mason Scholarship recipient. The Minnesota Beef Council also awarded Three River's Cattlemen as the Prime Promoter of the Year during convention.

2024 Leopold Conservation Award



The MSCA nominated Grant and Dawn Breitektretz of Redwood Falls, Minnesota, for the Leopold Conservation Award. The award honors farmers, ranchers and forestland owners who go above and beyond in their management of soil health, water quality and wildlife habitat on working land. The Breitektretzes, who own and operate Stoney Creek Farm, were presented with the \$10,000 award at the Premier Soil Health Event in Mankato on Dec. 03. Grant serves as the past president of the MSCA, and both Dawn and Grant serve on the MSCA Farmfest Committee. We are extremely proud to recognize Grant and Dawn as the 2024 Minnesota Leopold Conservation Award winners!



Priority Issues

Deer/Elk Depredation



Producers in northwestern Minnesota face crop and fence destruction from elk, and elk depredation claims through the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) totaled \$263,598.79 in Fiscal Year 2023. This amount exceeds the \$155,000 the MDA had allotted for claims. During the 2024 Minnesota Legislative Session, MSCA Executive Director Kaitlyn Root testified in both the House and the Senate Environment Deer/Elk Depredation Committees against a statutory change which would

allow the MN DNR to increase elk herd populations even when crop and fence damage payments have been increasing. The Ag Finance Bill included \$50,000 to convene a working group to recommend options for addressing crop and fence destruction caused by elk and deer. The Environmental Finance Committee did not adopt language repealing a provision passed in 2016 prohibiting an increase in the size of the elk herd population in Kittson, Roseau, Marshall, or Beltrami Counties unless claims for damage caused by elk decrease two years in a row. However, the adopted language includes language allowing the DNR to increase the size of the Central Kittson elk herd population by 30 percent from current levels; including a requirement for DNR to work with the elk working groups to develop a plan to address depredation while growing the herds. MSCA continues discussing this issue with DNR and MDA and is working to increase elk depredation funds, as well as funding for depredation abatement materials.

Gray Wolves

The MSCA continues to support the delisting of the gray wolf and updating of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The ESA's intent was to identify species most at risk of extinction, provide tools for recovery and delist those species when recovery goals were achieved. Identification, evaluation, listing, recovery and delisting are all key components of the ESA process - but since 1973, only two percent of listed species have met their recovery goals and been delisted. Now is the time to make urgent improvements, and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association is advocating for updates as well.



Priority Issues

Feedlot Regulations

Minnesota feedlot operators oftentimes fall under intense scrutiny from lawmakers and environmentalists. Unfortunately, this scrutiny is frequently guided by misinformation. This year, the MSCA met with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), along with other ag organizations, to curb overregulation. MSCA, along with other ag groups, submitted comments on MPCA's proposed updates to the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System and State Disposal System permit applications. Our comments highlighted the concern with the vulnerable groundwater designation criteria and how the MPCA broadly characterized areas of the state as "vulnerable"; forcing spring manure applications will increase risks such as soil compaction and runoff, possibly lead to loss of yield and potentially cause an increase in nitrate leaching; the need for increased manure storage; the fact that research and farmer experience show later planted cover crops have much less potential to reduce nitrate leaching due to limited growth in our short growing season; concerns with devaluing manure which may actually lead to increased use of commercial fertilizer; and more. MSCA and other ag groups also met with Environmental Protection Agency Region 5 Administrator Debra Shore in July to discuss farming practices in southeastern Minnesota.



Cell-cultured Fake Meat Labeling



MSCA and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association support proper labeling on fake meat products to ensure consumers know exactly what they are buying at the grocery store. MSCA Member Don Schiefelbein testified in the Minnesota Senate Ag Committee during March in support of two bills enforcing "cell-cultured" or "lab-grown" labels to be required on lab-grown meat products. Unfortunately, the bills did not pass, but we are happy to see the discussion starting in Minnesota and will continue to advocate for proper labeling.

