Beef Month and Local Leadership

May is National Beef Month, a month-long celebration of everything beef-related. From juicy steaks and burgers to flavorful roasts and stews, beef is a staple in many American households. This month, we celebrate the hardworking ranchers and farmers who raise quality beef for our tables, as well as the delicious and nutritious meals that beef provides. Join us as we explore the significance of National Beef Month and the impact it has on the agriculture industry.

National Beef Month has a special meaning this year because one of our own local producers has been elected to lead the National Cattleman’s Beef Association (NCBA) this coming year. From the NCBA web site, we find this introduction:

“Gene Copenhaver is a fifth-generation cattleman whose family dates to the 1850s in Washington County, Virginia. Copenhaver currently manages his family’s stocker operation in southwest Virginia with his son, Will. Copenhaver was an agriculture loan officer for 38 years and served his clients who were primarily cattle producers in five East Coast states.”

“Copenhaver,” the site continues, “served as NCBA Vice President, chair and vice chair of the Policy Division, chair and vice chair of NCBA’s Tax & Credit Committee, and chair and vice chair of NCBA’s International Trade Committee. He is a past president of the Virginia Cattlemen’s Association and past chairman of the Virginia Cattle Foundation. He and his family have long been active members and supporters of NCBA, Virginia Cattlemen’s Association, Smyth-Washington Cattlemen’s Association and the Virginia Cattlemen’s Foundation.”

The introductions closes with, “Copenhaver graduated from Virginia Tech with a degree in animal science. He has been married to his wife, Jodi, for more than 35 years, and they have three grown children, Brad, Will and Jaymee, and one granddaughter.”

A television ad from several years ago featured a staff member in the lodging service industry who observed, “The busiest people always have time to be kind.” Gene and his family do much more than support the cattle industry.

Gene is an active advocate for 4-H and FFA. Over the years, Gene has thrown his support behind many youth projects, especially those with new ideas and new approaches to old issues.

Just one example was his support for the SWVA 4-H Tractor Club. When we were just getting established as a club, Gene and his family donated a gravity wagon to us which the members and adult volunteers reimagined into a basketball arcade game.

This isn’t anything new. Twenty years ago, a young Dairy Extension Agent dreamed up a youth project called “The Commercial Dairy Heifer Project.” The aim of the project was to teach young people who might not have the money for a high dollar show heifer, about the care of dairy animals and the financial responsibilities of any animal project.

Once again, when the call went out for sponsors, Gene was the first person to see the value and jump on board to help. Of course, it goes without saying that Gene and his family have supported innumerable programs with Washington County 4-H

It's been my honor to know Gene for over 50 years; he will serve NCBA and represent “the 276” well.

Upcoming Events

May 3 Tractor Club outing to Butler TN. Leaving Extension Office at 8:30 and back about 3 PM. Hot dog lunch planned. Bring your favorite drink. Water provided.

May 14 VESA Conference, Randolph Farms, VSU Campus, Petersburg

May 23 Last Day of School in Smyth County

May 26 Memorial Day Parade, Marion

May 30 Deadline to consign VQA calves for July 8 sale

June 10 Evergreen 3rd Annual Good Growth Outreach Program, Scott Waddle Farm 5:30 PM

June 12-14 OGATA Summer Show, 908 Hillman Hwy, Abingdon VA

June 23 Deadline to consign VQA calves to Aug sale

June 24-28 VA 4-H Congress, Blacksburg

July 7-11 Smyth County 4-H Camp

July 8 VQA Sale

July 14 VQA Steer Take-Up

July 16 VQA Heifer Take-Up (depending on numbers…. Could be a one-day take-up)

July 21-23 Virginia Beef Cattle University, The Inn, VA Tech Campus

July 29 Youth Day at Rich Valley Fair… stay tuned for more information

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in this activity, please contact Andy Overbay or Pam Testerman at (276) 783-5175/TDD (800) 828-1120) during business hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. to discuss accommodations 5 days prior to the event.

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