

Winds of Change

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It's a special delight to be in Provo, Utah on this beautiful morning. What could be more empowering than to be in this room filled with such great minds, in such an inspirational setting as the campus of Brigham Young University and having the opportunity to discuss together the meat industry and the roles that we each play in that industry. This morning I am certainly both honored and profoundly humbled by the invitation to present your "President's Address".

The American Meat Science Association is a group for whom I have great respect. There are people in this room this morning who have helped shape my thinking as well as my career. The notion of trying to impart any sort of wisdom to this scholarly group is something that I find rather intimidating. So I'm not going to present you this morning with any product of grand research. I won't present you with a lot of statistics. What I will present to you this morning is a collection of my observations about the changes that I believe are going on in our society, changes that are going on in the livestock and meat industry and then, more specifically, changes that are occurring in our organizations as we try together to deal with these winds of change.

As all of you know, the American Meat Science Association and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association have had a very strong and a very symbiotic relationship for nearly a half century. My administrative forefather — R. C. Pollock — then directing the National Live Stock and Meat Board, initiated the convening of the Reciprocal Meat Conference, which, in turn, led to the creation of the American Meat Science Association and we've had a close working relationship since that time. In fact, in preparation for these remarks, I took a look over the last four years at research projects that either the National Live Stock and Meat Board or the National Cattlemen's Association, has funded and directed in conjunction with a number of universities across the country. I found that nearly \$7 million in research funding have gone out through the auspices of my predecessor

organizations, 56 principal investigators involved, several dozen universities, four to 12 at any one time on any particular project. Our staff speculate that the principal investigators on those projects would be nearly 90% AMSA members — some speculate it may be as high as 100% AMSA members. The relationship could not be stronger. But obviously, things are changing.

Your organization has changed. Since its founding, AMSA has evolved into an international organization representing academics, both large and small industry, government professionals and others interested in the meat industry. You've changed constantly during that period of time to serve an industry that has been in constant change. Likewise, the National Live Stock and Meat Board, the National Cattlemen's Association, the U.S. Meat Export Federation and the Cattlemen's Beef Board have changed as well, evolving in response to a changing environment. They are today either merged within or formally allied with the new National Cattlemen's Beef Association. It's been a profound and dramatic change in the way we address the livestock and meat industry.

Well, this is not news to you. We are in an era of unprecedented change — unprecedented change in our society and our industry and in our organizations. And we are challenged today, I believe, to answer the question — not just to hear the question, but to answer the question — How will we respond to change?

Will we lead it? Are we willing to take the steps necessary to lead to change, to drive change in a direction that we believe is correct and positive and fulfilling for the long term? Or will we simply choose to try to endure change? Will we simply try to hunker down, protect ourselves, endure these winds of change? Or will we choose to simply be its victim? Roll over and be blown away by these winds of change?

Let's think about the dimensions of the changes that we have before us. Scottish writer George McDonald once said, "The best preparation for the future is the present well seen to and the last duty done." So often when we talk about changes that are underway in our society, we like to look down the road and talk about the future and the future that we might have. Perhaps it's important, as George McDonald reminds us, to think about the present and see to it that we are taking care of the present and that our last duty is done.

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What's going on in our society today? Let me talk about three or four issues — changes in our society and in the marketplace for the products that we produce and try to move through that marketplace profitably.

First is the widening wealth gap in our society, a trend that is going on around the world. A widening gap between the “haves” and the “have-nots” has multiple societal implications. Obviously, some of these are more frightening than the implications they might have for the meat industry. But this wealth gap does have an impact on the marketplace in which we're delivering product, in ever-increasing quantity and does fragment the marketplace.

Recently I spent some time going around to visit major beef retailers across the country and visiting stores ranging from the Marsh Stores in Indianapolis to Fry's in Phoenix — looking at meat in the retail case priced all the way from \$14 a pound to 88¢ a pound. While you recognize that we have marketplaces for our products today, the marketplace of today is remarkably different from the marketplace just 10, 15, or 20 years ago and certainly a remarkably different marketplace from that faced by R.C. Pollock and our colleagues 50 years ago.

We've got to think about marketplace fragmentation and what it means for us. Harriet Nelson and June Allison are no longer in the kitchen preparing our product all day long for that single grand family meal in the evening. We have changing product demands that we need to be constantly aware of and I know that many of you in this room are cognizant of them and have directed product change over the last several decades.

The second change in our society and one that perhaps concerns me much more than the widening wealth gap, is the widening knowledge gap among our citizens. Again, this is a trend that is not only true in the United States, but is true internationally.

On the news just this morning, we heard that one-fourth of high school graduates in this country today are minority students, only 16% of whom go on to a college or university. We have a frighteningly large and an arguably growing sector of the voting public who have a lethal ignorance of science and economics. This leads to emotion-based public policy development, resulting in emotion-based regulatory environments in which our industry must function. We must collectively have great concern for those individuals who are buying our product, who are worrying about the way we produce our product, yet who have less and less knowledge about the science behind that product and the way it's being produced safely and of high quality for them.

The same is true within agriculture and I'm going to talk about this with some regularity throughout these remarks. We have people in agriculture who are making decisions about policy today who are frighteningly lagging the frontiers of knowledge in both science and economics. I don't think we can endure that very long. It is creating a fractured agriculture that I believe is intolerable.

The area of change in our society and our marketplace

is the economic and social globalization that have gone on throughout our society and throughout agriculture and, in particular, throughout the meat industry. As an international society, you have helped to drive that. You accommodate thinking from around the world and you are accommodating the differences in thinking in the marketplace in nations around the world. Global commerce creates a new demand for education and understanding among individuals throughout the meat industry, right down to the seed stock producer in Bobtail Creek in Hayes County, Nebraska.

There are new demands that you must address. Consumers are exposed to much more variety due to their international understanding today. My fourteen-year-old daughter has now traveled in five or six countries and has a notion of cuisine in those countries that she finds just a part of her everyday thinking and her own ideas about what food products might be like. That's a dramatic change certainly in just a few years in my own family and my own life.

The final change that I would touch on relative to our society and the marketplace is what I call the “frazzle-ization” of our lifestyles. Demographers tell us that there is a dramatic increase today in dual-career households, which is dramatically changing the meal demands, where they get their food, how it's going to be prepared and how quickly we can have it on the table. One of the retailers with whom I met recently talked about teenagers being increasingly responsible for home meal preparation. According to his data, forty-four percent of meals eaten at home today are prepared by teenagers. Seventy-two percent of teenagers prepare at least one meal daily for themselves in their home.

We have a frazzled lifestyle out there — people with less time to be at home together, less time for meal preparation, less time to deal with our meat products — and yet we've got to accommodate them. Be assured, they're not waiting for us! In many cases today, convenience far outweighs nutritional value and price in perceived value to the consumer. Those are all changes that I believe cause us to re-think the way we interact and the way we think about our need for each other in this partnership.

Let me change focus for just a moment and talk about changes in animal agriculture and the meat industry, which I believe go directly to the root of the relationship that we have between our organizations.

I would hardly be considered an expert on the poultry and pork industries. But let me take a quick look at those two industries and the changes they have gone through, because I think they feed into changes in the beef industry and how we must relate to each other.

I see four critical changes that have occurred in the pork and poultry industries. First is that they have narrowed and more carefully controlled the genetic base for the animals that produce their product. They have much more tightly managed the genetics — genetic engineering, if you will — within their species than we have in the beef industry.

Second, they've made dramatic improvements in production efficiency. They have captured available efficien-

cies and have been remarkable in their improvements, all the way from the genetic end with the producer, to the marketplace. These dramatic changes have reduced the cost of their products going through the chain.

Third, they have expanded product lines dramatically in response to consumer demand. The pork and poultry industries, I believe, have listened carefully to the consumer's demand for greater convenience, for consistency in the product that's coming through that meat case and — particularly in the case of poultry — when you look at their market share and the way it has expanded over the last 14 years, they've obviously done a great job of convincing the consumer that indeed they have a product that is desirable, a product that's healthful, a product that is convenient and one that fits today's frazzled lifestyle.

Fourth, the pork and poultry industries certainly have become more vertically integrated. They have vertically integrated ownership and control of production, processing and delivery of their product to the consumer in a way that I find remarkable. Arguments certainly can be made that what they have done (from an economic perspective) has been a good thing, that indeed they have captured efficiencies and that they have made themselves more quickly responsive to the consumer than we have in the beef industry. When I get to the level of sociological concerns, I'm not so sure it's been such a great thing. But that's probably an argument for another day.

Let's turn to the beef industry. I think it's fair to say that the U.S. beef industry today — perhaps the world beef industry, but certainly the U.S. beef industry — is wrestling with questions of direction. We have moved much more slowly than our principal competitors in the meat case, but we're asking ourselves questions that I think will have a profound impact on our future.

First, we know more about the genetic composition and the genetic management of beef cattle today than we've ever known in history. The bovine genome project, among other projects that have been conducted over the last decade and a half, at least tells us more about the genetic composition of that beef animal than we've ever known in our history. The question is now: How do we manage it? We have over 80 beef breeds and composites currently in use in this country, versus four or five breeds and composites used by our international competitors. How do we manage the genetic base? How much control are we willing to give up in order to manage that tremendous amount of genetic information we have out there?

Second, we know more about the nutritional capacity and capabilities of the beef animal today than we've ever known in our history. We know more about the nutritional inputs to those beef cattle than ever. How do we use it? How do we manage it? If we continue to have \$5 corn, what feedstuff should we be running through that very versatile ruminant animal in order to make it cost-competitive with pork and poultry in the meat case? This is a critical question to which we have no answer today.

Third, we know more about the beef muscle today — thanks to the work of many of you — than we've ever known in our history. We also know its challenges. We know that as we try to compete with pork and poultry in the meat case for convenient products, for products that fit today's lifestyle, we've got some challenges that those meats do not have. We've not overcome them. When will we do it and how will we get there? I think it is the question facing our industry today.

Fourth, the beef industry is wrestling desperately with the notion of how we are to be structured. Do we agree that vertical integration has been a powerful and positive tool for the pork and poultry industries? Or do we believe that it is an economic tool that will indeed destroy the sociological underpinnings of our industry. We have said for nearly a century that those sociological underpinnings are still important to us — and I believe they are. How are we going to deal with that? Secretary Glickman's Commission on Concentration in Agriculture released their report just three days ago which confirmed once again that beef producers have a profound distrust in the marketing system for their cattle and their products. Some will argue that they're just ignorant, they just don't understand the way the real world works. I'm not ready to buy that. The fact is that they have a deep distrust for their marketing system. But I believe that there are people in this association who can help us address a new marketing system in which producers can be rewarded for quality and one where they can have trust in the objectivity of the marketing system into which they place their livestock and the products from those animals. I think that is a wrestling match in which you're going to be engaged, so be prepared.

I believe the meat industry is ripe for a wave of innovation on its own, as we look at changes in animal agriculture and the meat industry. As I visited with those retailers just two weeks ago and as I deal with our colleagues in the packing industry, I have no question that we are moving quickly toward case-ready beef products that will revolutionize the way we present our product in the meat case.

Ken Johnson has committed a good portion of his recent career to the concept of value-based meat marketing — a revolutionary concept that I believe can change the way we relate to those who are taking our product through the retail meat case.

We see many meat items — particularly beef products — being considered for new and very innovative convenience and snack items and already entering the international marketplace. I would guess there are people at this meeting who have helped develop those products for Japan and the Pacific Rim, as well as some of those now going into Eastern Europe.

We also see more linkages between retailers and producers than we've ever seen. I was fascinated as I visited with the retailers and others from the production sector around the country. Everybody is whispering about the pilot alliances they have established between retailers and producers. Retailers are hearing from their customers, at the

meat case that “We want high quality” and “We want consistent quality” and “We’re willing to pay for consistent high quality”. How do you get it? Those retailers are recognizing the way you get it is to go back to the producer who is willing take accountability for producing a high quality, consistent product, with the economic reward for bringing that high quality consistent product to them. They’re willing to share it. And it’s happening; it’s happening quietly, but it’s happening across the industry in a very, very exciting wave of entrepreneurship that I think we have not seen in this industry for decades. It’s an exciting trend.

I spent the weekend reading a report from Bill Helming. As some of you know, Bill is a consultant who has worked in agriculture for decades. Bill is suggesting doing away with the USDA quality grading system. It’s a wild idea in some quarters, but I think he makes compelling arguments. These are arguments that are going to confront this industry and arguments from which you cannot recoil. If we’re to make the right decisions and good decisions, we must have a partnership with you that feeds those decisions on a scientifically objective basis and helps us move the industry forward in a proper course, not a “zig-zag” one.

Finally, as I look at changes in the meat industry, I would say simply that I believe the livestock and meat industries are finally learning to listen to the consumer. We’re still spending plenty of time shooting at each other across various sectors in the industry; make no mistake about that. We’re still looking at each other and trying to decide who’s the customer. We’re still cannibalizing one another, sector-to-sector. But we are starting to see leadership saying if we don’t focus on the consumer just as they’ve done in every other industry that’s successful and vibrant and economically dynamic today, start to ask what they really want in the meat case, what they really want to take home and feed to their families, what they really want to buy out of that service counter, we can’t survive. And we’re starting to listen.

You’re helping with that. And I hope you too are listening carefully so that you’re directing your efforts and the scarce financial and human resources that we have in this industry toward satisfying that consumer. That is the only place we can collect enough dollars to support all of us — whether we are producers, scientists, or organization representatives. There’s only one source of the dollars that will support us.

So what about these organizations? Like the National Live Stock and Meat Board and the National Cattlemen’s Association (now NCBA), what about AMSA? I think it’s important that we step back and look at these commodity organizations — whether they’re in the meat industry or elsewhere in agriculture — and ask why they were created. I think we all would acknowledge that they were created for and have demonstrated, certain very important strengths. First, they created a place for people with common interests to come together, to discuss and debate issues of mutual concern. That’s always been important. These organizations have been a place where people with like interests could

pool their resources for increased clout — whether that be political in the governmental sense, whether it be political in an industry sense.

Secondly, they became a place where people could come together to determine that if all of us agree, or if we can reach consensus, if we can collaborate, if we can pool dollars, then we can make things happen together that we couldn’t separately.

Thirdly, they have been a place where people with like interests could share information. They are wonderful channels for listening to and communicating with each other and for being a source of learning and encouraging the passing along of knowledge to much broader audiences. They served a great purpose in that regard. But I think we also must acknowledge that over time these organizations have also developed certain weaknesses.

They become a home for championing very parochial interests. They become a place where we see each other as being important as a cell unto ourselves and a good place to divide ourselves from others. They’ve been very focused on self-preservation. As time has gone on, we have not often enough asked: “Can we still justify our existence? Is there still a purpose for us to come together and share our common interests. Are we serving anyone but ourselves in that process?”

Over time, I think these organizations have begun to behave like political parties. Now, for some citizens, a political party is a place to participate and serve the loftiest goals of our society. For too many others, however, they have become a place for entertainment, or a place to decide who our enemies might be. Or, a place to fight with ourselves and then with others. And in the process, I think they have become destructive.

Today, I believe commodity or industry organizations are challenged to justify their existence. Resources have shrunk, numbers of people within our industries have shrunk. They need to ask themselves: “Do we contribute to the economic strengthening of our constituents? Do we indeed make decisions and then take actions, that give economic strength to our constituents?” If not, I doubt that we can justify ourselves. We need to ask: “Do we contribute to the knowledge and understanding of our constituents? Are we indeed sources of learning? Are we reaching for new knowledge so that we can pass it on and help this world deal more broadly on the base of knowledge and understanding, rather than more flaming rhetoric?” Or are we just learning and talking to each other and wondering why these numbskulls out here can’t pick it up?

Finally, I think we need to ask ourselves: “Are we bridge builders or are we bridge burners? Are we in the business of looking for those folks with whom we might collaborate? Are we looking for those whose strength might be further strengthened by our strength?” Or are we looking for ways to build our own strength and divide ourselves from our colleagues and industry so that we will not be tainted by their activities?

I believe that organizations like ours, to justify our existence going into the 21st century, need to take leadership very seriously. If we are not in the business of leadership, we are in no business at all. In my view, we can no longer be like the corner bar that is always open for any conversation regardless of the facts. We can no longer simply serve any product that's requested, regardless of its value or lack thereof. We can no longer function with no sense of mission other than collecting revenues.

Society is making some tremendous demands upon us as individual organizations and as an industry and we need to recognize this. Society is demanding unprecedented assurance of the safety and wholesomeness. Our society in which we have this growing knowledge gap is nonetheless demanding unprecedented safety and wholesomeness. If we can't give this assurance to them, we'll be out of business. The HACCP Alliance has created an opportunity to talk about what's rational and reasonable in those assurances. But we've got to do it; we've got to meet this demand of our society.

Society is also demanding protection of the environment in which our livestock and products are produced. We can no longer simply shake our fist in the face of those who say "We're not going to let you dump the refuse from your industry wherever you want." We can no longer stand aside and simply say "Well, we know better!" There are tremendous demands on us for the protection of the environment in which we produce our product and it will take the scientific community to help us respond as an industry in a way we've not responded in the past — in spite of some great efforts, by the way.

Third, society is demanding quality, consistency and convenience from our products like never before. Again, many in this room have been at the forefront of responding to this demand, but we've got to get serious as an industry, as collective partners in this business, about delivering on demands for quality, consistency and convenience. We're gaining, but we're not there yet.

Finally, society is demanding competitive pricing of our products versus other protein sources. Now, it's very tempting in the beef cattle industry — in any industry — to say, "Gosh, we've done all that we can do". Well, the fact is we have technologies that are decades old that we've not yet gotten around to adopting. My friend, Carl Stabber, who recently left USDA, took a close look at our rate of adoptions of new technologies in agriculture. He shared these data with me, data which I find stunning and which I revisit periodically, because I find it almost unbelievable. He found that in agriculture, generally, from the time of discovery until time of implementation, there's a gap of eight to 13 years. And I doubt that in animal agriculture, we beat that average at all. When I still see straight bred commercial cow herds running around the country and when I still see thousand-acre pastures, I must tell you that there are discoveries that are not being implemented today in animal agriculture.

From genetics to the meat case, we've got to take advantage of those technologies that will help us reduce the

cost of production to keep us competitively priced and I think it can be done. Again, I believe, the pork and poultry industries have done a much better job on that front than we have in the beef industry, but we've got to get on the train.

I believe the livestock and meat industries must do four things if indeed we're to move aggressively toward the future. First, we must accept responsibility across all sectors. Hear what I'm saying. Accept responsibility across all sectors of the industry for delivering a safe, high quality, competitively priced product, consistently to the consumer. Now that's not just doing a little something in each sector of the industry to try to produce that high quality, safe consistent product for the consumer. It is accepting responsibility; saying if I produce it, I want to be paid for it. If I do not produce it, I will not. That means, taking responsibility across all sectors for delivering a high quality, consistent product. We are still cannibalizing; we are still bragging to each other at the coffee shop about how we beat our partner in the other sector because of the mistakes he or she made. We really took advantage of him this time. We've got to quit doing that and recognize it is only when we take responsibility, when we are accountable sector-to-sector and ultimately to the consumer, that we indeed will make progress.

Second and related thereto, we must as an industry invest more heavily and with a greater sense of direction in research. I think we have failed miserably as a nation and as an industry to generate and invest the dollars that are necessary to drive progress in the meat industry when it comes to research. This is an area that the new NCBA is focusing on. Dr. Jim Gibb, who is the head of our Center for Quality, believes strongly that we must work with you to develop a clear, prioritized agenda for research in animal agriculture and then work together to capture and invest the resources to support that agenda to make progress. We can no longer tolerate a shotgun approach to the funding of research in agriculture in general and certainly not in animal agriculture. We don't have enough dollars; we don't have enough people out there to simply go in a thousand different directions with our research initiatives. This is an area where we expect to be working closely with you in the months ahead.

Third, I believe the livestock and meat industries must invest more heavily and with a greater sense of direction in the education of those who control and manage our resources.

This, ladies and gentlemen, is a big issue. It is a critical issue to all of agriculture and certainly in animal agriculture, because I believe that we can no longer, as an industry, tolerate having agriculture be the last bastion for those who are too uneducated, ill equipped, or ill informed to function in any other industry in control of financial resources. We can no longer be the last place they can come and own and control and drive resources in an industry of this magnitude. The U.S. beef industry is a \$40 billion industry at the live cattle level — a \$40 billion industry. We can no longer tolerate having people owning and controlling resources who

think education is something for kids. We have got to collectively invest in preparing people for leadership — for leadership in agriculture — who see learning as a lifelong obligation.

I believe that society is very near to demanding that those who are going to control the natural resources that underpin agriculture, must live up to the same standards of qualification and technical capability, as those in health care. Those of you in this room take very seriously the preparation of individuals who will be leaders and who will control those assets in animal agriculture.

Fourth, I believe the livestock and meat industries must dramatically improve the pathway for economic signals to be sent from the consumer to the producer. This is a serious and growing challenge for our industry. However, I think some good things are happening.

I see bright and aggressive and entrepreneurial producers linking with retailers and taking responsibility for bringing a high quality product to the consumer and, in turn, being paid for it. But the fact that it has to be entrepreneurial, that it has to be outside traditional marketing channels is a problem. When you read Secretary Glickman's Commission Report on Concentration in Agriculture, you recognize the tremendous distrust that rank and file producers have in their marketing system today. They do not feel (and certainly there is clear evidence) that they are not receiving signals from the consumer as to how their product should be produced. They are not being rewarded when they produce high quality; frankly, they're not being discouraged when they do not produce high quality. This has got to be changed. Science will play a key role in determining objective evaluation of quality. I believe you will play a key role in rebuilding a trustworthy marketing system in the livestock and meat industry and I challenge you to take that seriously.

Let me return to a principal theme in these remarks. Organizations such as ours must be in the business of fostering leadership behavior. When I see Roger Mandigo in the audience today, I can't help but go back 25 years to my exposure to him in the classroom and the way he has influenced my behavior as I stand before you today. Those of you who are in the classroom, believe me, you are sowing the seeds of leadership behavior — positively or negatively, whether you like it or not.

Recognizing that there are many in AMSA outside academics, I'd like to focus on them for the moment. Organizations such as ours must be in the business of fostering leadership behavior. We must focus on a collective vision for an industry and focus on a sound long-range plan for achievement of that vision.

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association is founded on a fundamental vision — a vision for a dynamic and profitable beef industry which concentrates resources around a unified plan, that consistently meets consumer needs and increases market share. A simple but powerful vision and one undergirded by a single long-range plan for the industry, focusing on seven key leverage points: (1) quality and

consistency of our product, (2) production efficiency, (3) domestic market segments, (4) international market development, (5) issues management, (6) public relations and (7) strategic alliances. Every element of this plan involves people in this room and I hope that we can share in the addressing of this vision for the beef industry and the long-range plan for its achievement. And I know that you are an organization that believes strongly in the long-range planning process.

Second, as we foster leadership behavior, we must encourage innovation by supporting both discovery and implementation of new initiatives in our industry. That's the business we've got to be in. It is saying to people, "The world is changing, the winds of change are blowing and indeed, if we are going to lead change, we've got to foster innovation".

Third, we've got to encourage collaboration within and across our industry and discourage the cannibalism that has been so common in our industry. Of course, I've been in and around the land grant system and other elements of our industry long enough to know you've got your own level of cannibalism to worry about. But we've got to decide that that's no longer a way for a progressive society to function and together encourage the kind of collaboration that leads to success.

Dr. Bobby Austin of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, head of Kellogg's leadership programs, has had a longstanding interest in programs trying to reduce the level of violence among African American men and boys. Bobby operates under a very simple definition of leadership: That is, leadership is the knitting together of diverse forces for good. That's what we're all about. There's tremendous diversity in this room. In our own society. There is tremendous diversity in the beef industry. There is tremendous diversity across sectors in the meat industry. We need to be in the business of knitting together those diverse forces for good. Indeed, the American Meat Science Association and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association are far, far different organizations today than their predecessors were just a few years ago. Society has changed and it continues to change; our industries have changed and will continue to change at an ever-increasing velocity. But I believe we still need each other desperately, as partners, if we're to see the livestock and meat industries prosper.

Let me conclude with a statement that I hold dearly, developed by a group of unknown authors that were part of a project called New Era Communications, spawned by futurist Bob Theobald back in the 1980s. They produced an essay for and about our times called "At the Crossroads".

It began with this statement: "They said if we can proceed as though in a spiral, circling back to gather that which is deep and rich and good and then moving on to the next stage, we can build on our collective wisdom."

The American Meat Science Association is in the business of building upon wisdom. You're in the business of discovering new knowledge. You're in the business of dissemi-

nating that knowledge so that each new age can be better than the last, driven by decisions that are based upon truth and based upon understanding. We are today like children in an orchard, longing for the richest fruit that's hanging just out of our grasp — wondering how to capture it. There are several approaches we can take: We can each stand around and jump incessantly for that fruit, even though it is out of our individual reach; we can scream at it, shaking our fists

at it; we can throw rocks at it. Or, we can use our collective strengths to boost each other, to capture that richest fruit that is our objective. I believe such a partnership is critical to the success of the meat industry and to the success of us as human beings occupying this earth.

I hope that through this milestone conference we can indeed build upon our longstanding partnership and make a better world with it.