

CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Arkansas Cattlemen's History

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Association

On May 19, 1959, 12 men signed the Articles of Incorporation in Texarkana, Arkansas. Those men were Arch W. Smith, W.E. Williams, Harrison Grace, Robert Grass, J.D. Harris, W Varnell Boyce, M.S. Boyce, Jr., A.D. Price, Charles A. Harrison, D.S. Santifer, Roy Fry and Buddy Boyce.

Arch W. Smith served as the first president of the Arkansas Cattlemen's Association.

The association was formed to provide "one" voice for cattlemen, ensuring that their economic, educational, political and social interests were represented and advanced. The association was initially formed to help ranchers against cattle theft.

"We were just a bunch of ranchers trying to start a cattlemen's association," John McKnight, second president of the Arkansas Cattlemen's Association said.

As a grassroots organization,

dues are an important part of revenue for the ACA. At the inception, dues were only five dollars.

"The dues have gradually increased over the years, but they are still the best bargain around," Jim Baker, Arkansas Cattlemen's Association President 1983-84 said. "You get more for your money now at \$50 than they did at \$5 dollars."

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the ACA focused on building its membership base, advocating for favorable legislation, and providing educational resources to improve cattle production practices.

"We made a start and followed through on some things then we started to grow a little, back then it was very small," McKnight said.

The Arkansas Cattlemen's Association started in the Wallace building in downtown Little Rock on the second floor.

Around this time, Jerry Hindshaw, ACA President 1979-80, decided to expand the membership structure to what we know today, county

associations grouped into areas. The purpose of this was to better serve the growing membership by providing them with networking and educational opportunities at the county level. This also expanded the executive board to 12 members, to include the Area Vice Presidents and increased the State Board to have a representative from each county.

In the 80s the association expanded its activities including conferences, educational seminars and field days. These events became crucial for knowledge exchange and networking among cattlemen.

Throughout the 90s, the Arkansas Cattlemen's Association significantly promoted the Arkansas beef industry through marketing campaigns and collaborations with other agricultural organizations.

Throughout this time, the industry faced multiple challenges, including Brucellosis. The ACA worked with the industry and the Livestock & Poultry Commission to help

bring Arkansas to a Brucellosis Free status through the Brucellosis Program. It was created to help eradicate Brucellosis by collecting fees per head of cattle sold to monitor, prevent, and control the disease in the state. This program has grown and adapted to fight other animal health diseases and is now called the Bovine Health Fee. It helps fund the calfhood vaccination and livestock inspectors at the Arkansas Department of Agriculture.

"We have a dog in the fight from the standpoint we invest in animal herd health," Baker said.

Additionally, the Arkansas Cattlemen's Foundation (ACF) was also created in the early 90s. The ACF was established to be the foundation arm of the ACA. They serve as a true non-profit, or 501c3 organization and support educational programming for members and youth. Through generous donations from ACA members, the ACA was able to buy a building on Executive Court in Little Rock in 1992. The ACA still

resides in that building to this day.

In the early 2000s and 2010s, the association joined the industry in embracing technology. The ACA launched initiatives to inform members about cattle markets, health management, and industry trends. The association's focus on the next generation of cattle producers grew with the growth and establishment of new programs, such as the Junior Cattlemen's Association and Arkansas Cattlemen's Leadership Course. These were both established to engage and educate the next generation of cattle producers.

Now during the 2020s, the ACA has adapted to changing market conditions and consumer preferences. The association has also addressed challenges such as fluctuating cattle prices, protecting our members' livelihoods, and working on state and national legislative issues.

The ACA has always focused on representing the members on a legislative front. Some large wins include legislation to make disaster payments to cattle producers exempt from Arkansas state taxes, legislation

protecting producers' ability to artificially inseminate their cattle, and to protect livestock owners from certain liabilities.

"We haven't always had big numbers but our relationship with the state legislation has always been the key," Baker said.

Over the past 65 years, the Arkansas Cattlemen's Association has played a pivotal role in advancing the interests of cattle producers in the state.

"The ACA was started to help cattle producers be successful and have a unified voice and it is every bit as important today and into the future that we maintain our legislative presence, education for our members, advocate for our industry, and development of future leaders," said Scott Sullivan, current ACA president.

The efforts in legislation, education, advocacy and development have significantly contributed to the growth and sustainability of the Arkansas beef industry. As the ACA moves forward, the goal continues to adapt to new challenges and opportunities, ensuring a strong future for Arkansas cattle producers.

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