

# Prairie FARMER

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18-year-old grows herbs for Chicago grocers Page 10



Prep the dryer this summer Page 26

Cook serves up seasoned sirloin Page 58

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**COWMAN:** "I think grassroots associations are important," says new Illinois Beef Association president and Macomb cattleman Trevor Toland. "If we don't do it at the grassroots level, it's not going to happen."

## Bridging the gap

By **HOLLY SPANGLER**

### Key Points

- Macomb cattleman Trevor Toland is new IBA president.
- Toland often must explain NCBA ethanol policies to neighbors.
- Longtime teacher aims to equip cattlemen to tell their stories.

**A**S the new Illinois Beef Association president, Trevor Toland finds himself in a unique position of explanation and negotiation. But the Macomb cattleman is well-equipped for the job.

His operation is nestled in the rolling hills and valleys of western Illinois' Lamoine River, where well-managed pastures are stocked with Red Angus-cross cattle. He plants a little corn, but most of his ground is better-suited to bovines. But this being Illinois, his neighbors

plant a lot of corn and soybeans, and Toland often finds himself returning from NCBA meetings with some explaining to do.

"It's hard when farmers here in Illinois see where NCBA was critical of ethanol," Toland says.

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association, in the wake of higher grain prices, has adopted policy against the government's ethanol subsidy. As Toland describes, the combination of ethanol and higher corn prices has created tough times for the cattle industry.

### Cattlemen in the corn belt

Toland understands where his neighbors are coming from. "If I hadn't been on the NCBA board and been aware of the process, I'd be a lot less open-minded," he adds.

Toland explains that NCBA's

representatives are elected based on cattle numbers per state. That gives cattle belt states like Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas more votes to cast — and corn belt states like Illinois and Iowa a few less. As the guy who can see both sides, Toland finds himself bridging the gap between the cattle belt and the corn belt.

He may just be the right man for the job. After 30 years in front of a classroom of teenagers, Toland is well-versed in explanation and negotiation. He knows the path to a healthy beef industry is a happy, well-

informed consumer, and among his goals during his IBA tenure is to promote those programs that train cattle producers to advocate for their industry — programs like Masters of Beef Advocacy, Beef Quality Assurance and simply getting out in front of the meat counter.

"I want to equip people to answer the question 'How are your animals cared for?'" Toland concludes.

■ **For more on the Illinois beef industry, check out pages 8 and 9.**

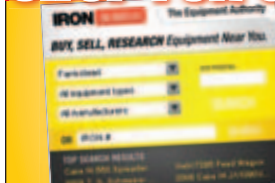
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