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The Cattlemen's Convention, Ranchers-Cattlemen Action Legal Fund (2)

Max S. Baucus

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Hello everyone and congratulations on your first annual "Cattlemen’s Conference!" I know a lot of hard work and dedication has gone into making RCALF first a dream then reality. I tip my hat to the efforts of Leo and Sam McDonnell, Kathleen and Reed Kelley, Herman & Diane Schumacher, Jack McNamee, Bill and Betsy Donald, Chuck and Pam Rein, John and Pam Patterson, Sharon and Dennis McDonald for their dedication, ingenuity and creativity ensure a strong future for the cattle industry.

This has been an amazing year. From the International Trade Commission to your grassroots campaign back home, I have watched your efforts and your organization grow, mature and take root. You have demonstrated your ability to effectively deliver Rural America’s message to the Capitol City as well as the rest of North America. You have challenged your fellow ranchers to think creatively and take action. And now, I urge you to plan for the long-term, envisioning a successful cattle industry well into the next century.

In Washington, I will continue to pursue several issues relevant to this convention. Concentration, trade, a safety net and competitiveness. But we will be most successful if we work together as a public-private partnership. We must continue to push for transparency in the marketplace. That means strengthening our anti-trust laws and giving more enforcement power to the U.S. Department of Agriculture to break the corporate stranglehold on Rural America. We must ensure that our trade laws work for Americans by passing legislation that effectively prevents import surges, restricts the USDA grade to US production and opens new markets. We must make certain that livestock has a safety net to balance out the highs and low in the marketplace. And we must become aggressive and successful domestic and international marketers of the highest quality beef in the world.

This convention is a giant step in the right direction. I applaud your efforts and look forward to working with you in the year to come. Again my congratulations!