

## Grandin Warns

(Continued from Page A1)

facilities, Grandin spoke about her experience with cattle producers and packagers.

According to Grandin, bruises are costing the cattle industry about \$22 million per year.

### Tremendous loss

"There's a tremendous loss that just saps the whole industry," she said, robbing producers and packagers out of large amounts of money per head. The problem, as she put it, "gets down to a lack of accountability."

Grandin revealed results of several studies, including several of her own observations and surveys taken over a 20-year period. Within the past 10 years, however, she has concentrated her research on Mid-West and Eastern producers and slaughterhouses. Grandin has found a wide range of data that shows that, in too many cases, producers and packagers are doing a great deal of harm to the cattle industry.

Bruises alone create a great deal of problem — all stemming from mishandling and gross negligence, especially in the case of the 10-15 percent of the "hardcore abusers that are dragging cripples around, throwing calves, just doing stuff that every decent livestock producer knows is wrong. And we have got to do something about these bad actors. We have to put a lot of pressure on the bad actors or they'll wreck the rest of the industry."

Even though many feedyard managers do a superb job, according to Grandin, the whole industry must come together and educate "John Q. public" about what the industry is trying to do to maintain good animal husbandry techniques.

### Expensive part

The livestock expert said that 45 percent of all bruises happen in the loin area, the most expensive part of the animal. She related statistics taken by a Colorado packer that reports about 5 percent of all the fed feedlot cattle (particularly in the West) have bruises. "That's adding up to a loss of 43 cents a head on the average," she said.

Moyer Packing Co., in an independent study, proved that 2-10 percent of all cattle have rib-area bruises. The loin bruises occurred on up to about 30 percent of the cattle — a loss of \$8-24 a head.

And back bruises are increasing, mostly because, Grandin believes, of the trucks used to transport them.

"The thing that's bad about all these bruises is that it hasn't decline that much," she said. "Why are bruises still just as bad now as they were 10 years ago?"

### Segmented market

Grandin attributes the continuing losses to not only mismanagement, but the fact that the industry operates as a segmented market. The problem is, the producer doesn't get a premium price for extra work and expense he puts into the calves.

Grandin said rough handling is the biggest cause of all bruises. The other half is caused by defects in the facilities, such as sharp edges, cattle being agitated, or gates that fall on cattle.

"Where those feedyards are going to start getting a \$200 deduction on a truckload of cattle, you should have seen them do something about bruises," she said. "Bruises dropped from 14 percent of the cattle to 7 percent."



**Cattle bruising and mismanagement are hurting the industry, according to Dr. Temple Grandin. She spoke on Tuesday at the Cattle Feeders Day in Lancaster.**

She said that when the feedlot operators had to start paying for the bruises, "all of a sudden, the bruises got important. And then they went out and got these special trucks to haul these precious little darlings in," she said. "For years I've talked to these feedyards about bruises, and they could care



**H. Louis Moore, Penn State economist, gave his 1991 predictions for the beef industry at the Cattle Feeder's Day.**

less! But then all of a sudden when they had to pay for it, they did something about it."

Dark cutters — meat which has been stressed, and turns dark, with a shorter shelf life — is another major problem that Grandin sees occurring with increasing regularity. This shows up on a lot of 4-H cattle, raised individually and not socialized with the other penned animals. The problem occurs when, after the show and sale, the cattle then are brought together for a length of time and fight until they are slaughtered — by that time,

about 20 percent, on average, become dark cutters.

"The national incidence of dark cutters is going up," she said. Another reason is that we are breeding more lean cattle. "There's also the possibility that some of the hormone implants . . . could be increasing." She said that hormone implants have to be more carefully researched into the affect they may have on dark cutters.

### Other factors

Other factors that contribute to bruises on cattle include sudden weather change (32 degrees F with an icy rain is very life threatening to cattle) and injection site damage because of "sloppy, dirty injection techniques," said Grandin. Some vaccines are very irritating and cause pus.

This kind of problem is costing about \$1.44 an animal and affects about 8 percent of all cattle.

"This is pretty bad, this is pretty serious," she said. "This is the sort of thing that's going to get us into a lot of trouble with the consumer."

### Top concern

But educating the consumer about how meat is produced should be a top concern of feedyard operators and packers. Grandin mentioned that producers

should take time to explain exactly how meat is produced.

"Maybe we ought to actually show how the animal is slaughtered," said Grandin. "The general public thinks that (the cattle) are bashed over the heads with a sledgehammer. What actually happens doesn't actually look as bad as people are imagining is happening."

"We have a choice of us showing (the slaughter process) and showing it nicely, or the animal rights people are going to go to some scud-pit packing plant and take some really grotesque pictures.

### People imagining

"What people are imagining is worse than what's actually going on in a well-run place," she said.

"As long as we don't have accountability, these losses just keep happening," she said. "We live in an era where a high percentage of the public does not know where food or other products come from, where perception is reality."

The livestock expert believes that the main factor is communication. "We have to start communicating with the public. We're not going to be able to do anything about the animal rights radicals. We need to communicate to Mr.

(Turn to Page A36)

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