

**We are not against good science....but all science is not good.**

It's too bad the beef industry has been so naive about how powerful Zilmax is and that National Cattlemen's Beef Association has shown a lack of leadership on its use. NCBA has supported a product that obviously needed more verification as to who uses this supplement, why it is used and the value it brings to the consumer. Yes, the consumer, our customer and our future. It's time the industry realizes it is in the food business, not the pharmaceutical business. The industry had good intentions to deter the ever increasing competition from other proteins and to counteract the effect of federal ethanol mandates on corn prices. But it unfortunately embraced a product that should not have been sold to all cattle feeders, as recent studies by Kansas State University and others have noted.

The way Zilmax has been used, such as top dressing and an inability to measure its intake and consumption by some feeding operations, can cause significant side effects. The question of possible residues in by-products and ractopamine in beef (from using Optaflexx) has been an excuse for some of our export customers to cut us off. Yet the industry needs all its customers. It cannot afford to turn them to other sources of product since the value of the U.S. market is significantly enhanced by the sale of beef and offal products all over the world. The industry must have a long term strategy to cater to global customers and give them what they want rather than what we think is good for them. They pay the bills. We must determine what we want to provide our customers and consumers. What is it going to take for us to determine the direction that will secure our future? We need to talk *with* each other rather than *at* each other.

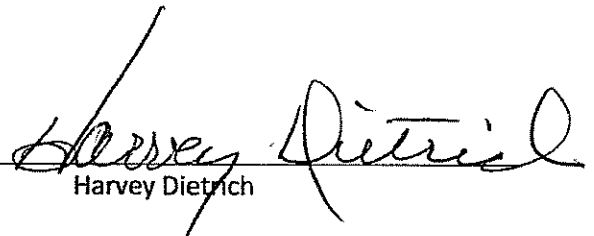
Customers need to be satisfied and confident they are receiving value for their money. We can do that by offering consistency, quality, tenderness, size and a pleasurable eating experience. We also need to be pro-active on animal wellness issues.

When we are provided products to improve our profits, it is our responsibility to make certain these products will improve the quality of our animals and beef for consumers. They will always have the final say. With consumers foremost in mind, we must maintain beef's integrity and quality without controversy. When we make a game-changing decision in our business, we must include all stake holders to better serve the entire industry with complete transparency.

Drugs will come and go. We have animals we need to protect and consumers we need to satisfy. Both are our livelihood and our future.

Respectfully,

  
Gerald Timmerman

  
Harvey Dietrich

One final thought: How can we have concerns about beta-agonists in our industry, yet be complacent about their use in the show ring?