



ARTICLES

IBA ANNUAL MEETING & AWARDS CEREMONY

About two hundred cattle producers made their way to Springfield for one fantastic day of educational breakout and general sessions at the 2026 Illinois Beef Association Annual Meeting and Awards Ceremony.

The IBA Annual Meeting & Awards Ceremony aims to bring the best educational opportunities for its members throughout the day with superior industry panelists and speakers. The 2026 event did just that, plus recognized members who dedicate themselves to our industry and association.

The day kicked off with a general session on various risk management strategies, such as LRP, presented by Iowa State Field Extension Specialist, Joseph Lensing. Other general sessions included a special visit from National Cattlemen's Beef Association CEO, Colin Woodall, who gave an overview of the state of the industry and NCBA. Plus, the final General Session of the day brought the topic of New World Screw Worm back on the table with University of Illinois veterinarian Dr. Jim Lowe giving an informative overview of the industry threat.

Breakout sessions were sprinkled throughout the day's general sessions. On the East side of the building producers could learn more about bull management from Extension Specialist, Travis Meteer, management of high-risk cattle from a panel that included Dave Duzan, Katie Wernimont and Dr. Logan Douglas, and supplementing trace minerals, also brought to producers by Katie Wernimont of Akralos. On the west side, Doug Hanson presented on selecting forages, Dr. Dan Shike shared about calving distribution and its impact on the bottom line, and Laura Fidler helped producers know how to cattle market in a world of AI technology.

Shannon Welsh of Blandinsville was approved to carry on his IBA Presidency for the 2026-27 year alongside IBA Vice President, Larisa Willrett, of Malta. IBA's Executive Vice President, Josh St. Peters provided an in depth look at how IBA has served since last year's meeting, during the luncheon and annual meeting mid-day.

The day concluded with the 2026 IBA Awards Ceremony, where the Association recognized dozens of valued members and their achievements. The fourth class of Beef Leadership Academy participants graduated from the program (see above for class participants). Illinois Beef Foundation named the 2026 Foundation scholarship recipients and hosted a silent auction and raffle to raise funds for the scholarship program. IBA recognized a "Valued Industry Partner" or "VIP," awarded to recognize industry professionals and business partners who go above and beyond, putting their time and talents to work in support of the Association and its missions. This year the VIP Recognition award was presented to Joe Meggison of FeraDiagnostics. Read more about the VIP Recognition and all IBA Award winners on the following pages.

