

## Emerging Issues

This session, moderated by Sen. Brent Jackson of North Carolina, focused on important issues of concern to the agricultural industry in North America.

**Cody McKinley** of the National Pork Producers Association, gave the members an update on the status of African Swine Fever. McKinley reminded the audience that there is currently no vaccine for this disease which has a 97% death rate. He commented on the risks of transportation of pigs from impacted countries to our region. There are outbreaks currently in Asia, Africa and Russia. The most disturbing recent occurrence is the appearance of ASF in China, a country that account for ½ of the world's pig population. Should it spread there, the markets will be impacted severely. McKinley noted that it is perfectly safe for humans to eat contaminated pig meat, but the amount of meat that would need to be sold quickly in a large outbreak would adversely affect the prices. He stressed the need for planning in the event of an outbreak in the US/Canada. Prevention is the key.

**Dr. Kevin Keough**, of the Prion Research Institute, discussed the similarities between Chronic Wasting Disease in cervids (elk and deer) and Dementia/Alzheimers/Parkinsons in humans. The diseases evolve from a triggering in the prion molecule to misfold. The only way currently to eradicate CWD in a herd that has been diagnosed is slaughter of the herd. In Norway, CWD was discovered, and they had to have an extreme slaughter. In addition, they could not bring animals back to the area for five years, and no hay or straw grown in the once-contaminated area could be eaten or sold.

Members were then invited to discuss issues of importance in their states/provinces.

**Darren Coppock** of the Ag Retailers Association, spoke about Glyphosate liability.

**Sen. Mike Gabbard** of Hawaii spoke about the need for young farmers and youth leadership training.

**Rep. Mike Brandenburg** of North Dakota spoke about mitigation appropriations from the federal government.

**Sen. Daniel Zumbach** of Iowa spoke about the need for help for small and rural towns.

**Karla Jones** from ALEC asked the members to write to their congressional delegation urging passage of the United States, Mexico and Canadian Agreement (USMCA)