

Cattlemen Ask USDA to Protect Integrity of Checkoff

In a recent letter to USDA, the Kansas Cattlemen's Association shared its concerns regarding the recent proposal by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) Governance Task Force to restructure its organization, creating a House of Delegates, and directly impacting the Federation of State Beef Councils and the Beef Checkoff Program.

"Under this proposal, the Federation of State Beef Councils will have a vote in the House of Delegates; however, the Federation will only hold 40% of the vote. By merging the Federation into the structure of NCBA, the Federation will have less input in the decision making and be subject to the House of Delegates directives. This would not be in the best interest of the Federation nor the 965,000 producers that are supposed to be represented by the unbiased members of the Federation. Federation members should not vote on policy, and policy members should not vote on any Checkoff issues. By allowing policy makers within the NCBA to vote on Checkoff programs, this jeopardizes the integrity of the Beef Checkoff entirely," stated Brandy Carter, KCA Executive Director.

The KCA letter expressed that the Federation of State Beef Councils should be a complete and separate entity, not affiliated with any policy organization. Currently, with no current firewall in place and with no future firewall proposed, NCBA, which only represents 3 % of USA beef producers, is only protecting the interest of its organization and its membership and trying to control a program meant to benefit all producers. Kansas Cattlemen's Association provided a number of facts and raised probable cause for the Agriculture Marketing Service and USDA to reject the proposal submitted by the NCBA governance task force.

KCA also pointed out that those representatives from Kansas that sit on the Federation are all affiliated with NCBA and its affiliates only. Whereas other states have beef councils comprised of producers belonging to other organizations or no organization at all, the administrative organization of the Kansas Beef Council, according to policy, elects or appoints all beef council and Federation members. This does not provide access for non-NCBA affiliates to represent Kansas as part of the Federation. Although Kansas Cattlemen's Association is a certified organization permitted to nominate for the Cattlemen's Beef Board, KCA is prohibited from nominating anyone to the Federation.

KCA recognized that the Beef Checkoff is an important program intended to help producers compete through the promotion and research of beef. And although, KCA supports the Beef Checkoff, it urged USDA to review the current Beef Checkoff structure and how the policies of individual organizations are able to control and potentially misuse authority of a program meant to benefit all.