

Cattlemen Call for Investigation of Checkoff in Light of recent Resignations

In light of the recent resignations of Cattlemen's Beef Board CEO Tom Ramey and Chairman Tom Jones, Kansas Cattlemen's Association expressed grave concern over the circumstances that led up to the resignations and asked Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack to conduct a full investigation.

Both Ramey, serving 17 years with the CBB, and Jones, just elected Chairman in February 2011, cited personal reasons for leaving. Yet, both resignations came shortly after much pressure from the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), its affiliates, and several state beef councils, of which most have strong ties to the policy organization of the NCBA.

"NCBA and organizations affiliated with the policy group, unhappy that the CBB is working for more accountability, have been using a well-funded campaign to attack CBB directors and officers including Mr. Ramey and Mr. Jones. The NCBA affiliates and beef councils (who are aligned with NCBA) have been aggressively positioning themselves to maintain control of the Beef Checkoff."

"With a recent audit indicating that NCBA misappropriated over \$300,000 in Checkoff funds, these transgressions make it clear that there is a lack of separation between NCBA and the Checkoff. The current structure of the Checkoff, where NCBA, is not only the main contractor but also holds multiple committee seats and controls the Federation of State Beef Councils, is a clear conflict of interest. This indicates why NCBA has a special interest in maintaining control of the Checkoff. It also further explains why NCBA, its affiliates, and some state beef councils would combat the efforts of the CBB, Mr. Ramey and Mr. Jones to improve the Checkoff system."

"The checkoff is a program meant to enhance the marketability of beef to consumers and benefit everyone in the supply chain including the hundreds of thousands of producers who raise cattle for our nation's and our world's food supply; it should not benefit one policy organizations and those that it represents."