

The call began at 8:00 CDT.

States Represented on the Call: OR, KS, CO, TX, CA, SD, NE
MT (member attended, no official representation from State Assn as they elected not to participate)
IA (Eric Nelson could not be on the call but had Herman Schumacher stand in for him.)

As there was no official agenda, Chris Abbott opened the meeting thanking everyone for being on the call. He asked Leo to share his views and turned the floor over to Leo. Leo asked the group what the group intended to do with this call of state associations. He said it looks like this would be an avenue to communicate but said that a national association would be the best bet to address the larger industry issues. Leo expressed his thoughts and said that the states on the call may want to work towards an affiliation committee within a national group, which ever group(s) attendees decided to work with.

Chris then explained that the call was an informational meeting, and the group would be discussing current events. Abbott expressed that there has been an interest in having state associations directly communicate with each other. Abbott then asked Jess Peterson and Abra Belke for an update on what they are working towards.

Jess started that he and Abra are back in D.C. and started a government relations group and are talking to various organizations; they did sign a contact with USCA last week and are back working for cattle producers. Peterson said that producers need a strong coalition and affiliates to need be involved. During recent weeks, there has been some lag time where the packers jumped and are trying to marrying COOL with Animal ID, exempt Canadian and Mexican cattle from this, and there is a concern that the House is going to weaken COOL.

Peterson went on to say that the Senate AG Committee has a hearing regarding the Farm Bill and a notable concern TPA (trade promotion authority). USCA is monitoring this and there doesn't seem to be a lot of support for it. There is nothing on the horizon that would need to pass fast track. This would be a win for cattle producers, but Peterson reminded that we all still need to be engaged in this.

Peterson continued...USDA now has a brand advisory committee. This is a working committee to advice USDA on I.D. and all 17 brand states are included in the committee.

In relation to trade, the U.S. is still working on exports to Japan and a complete resumption of beef into South Korea as well.

Ken Winter asked a, in regards to the agreement with Korea, would that still allow Korea to discriminate against Canadian beef in the U.S. Chuck Kiker responded that Yes, it does allow them to keep discriminating.

In relation to the Senate Hearing in D.C. Herman Schumacher stated that Eric Nelson did testify today (Wednesday 4-18) He was well received and he thinks there is a lot of bi-partisan support for our issues.

Rick Fox added that the senator from South Dakota was also supportive of Eric's testimony. Producers haven't always seen that from the senator so we making progress.

Louis Day: Asked if even with the 17 states being represented on the USDA brand advisory committee, does USDA still want to have producers sign up for a mandatory I.D. system, even if it were with brands?

Jess responded that he wasn't sure what USDA's motives are, but that this advisory committee is a group of people who come together to advice the Johanns. It is yet to be determined what they will say.

Danni Beer discussed the American Cowboy Jerky Drive. A gentleman has a program that he is offering to FFA chapters. He is selling a jerky product and the American Cowboy Magazine to educate about COOL. Danni said that there has a letter and ask signing associations to consider signing on to it. It would **not** cost anything and gives some legitimacy to the work that is being done. The letter would show support for the program and the work the gentleman is doing to promote COOL. Danni will send it to Brandy and she can forward it to everyone.

Jim Hanna discussed the beef checkoff. He stated that he and others are taking some ideas from the producer survey and trying to see what kind of support there is for the check off. They are working on a 1) referendum, 2) restricting some of the checkoff for USA products, and 3) allowing the beef board to contract directly with vendors. He has been talking with about 4 different national groups, but they are not all on board yet. One group may not be on board because they say that they do not have policy in place to support these ideas. When there is an agreement reached with the other groups, they will look for support in Congress to either include this in the Farm Bill or get a stand alone piece of legislation.

Chris Abbott asked Herman if this is something that R-CALF may want to join and support as well. Herman said that as he is not a board member he cannot speak for R-CALF but said that he thinks that, yes, this is something that they might want to do.

Danni mentioned that David Pfrang, of Kansas called her and asked a COOL info as he is preparing for a meeting with his Representative in Kansas.

Brandy Carter stated that she did appreciate the participation from various groups and would like to be able to have more communication to not only discuss industry issues but also ideas about how the state associations might grow, raise funds to continue the work for producers, and better communicate and provide information to its own members.

Chris Abbott stated that there were 9 out of 11 states (in some capacity) on the call – He would like a follow up call in 3-4 weeks. He hopes that each state will get with Brandy, provide feed back so that we can move forward with issues not just on a national level and a state level.

A few people did comment that they thought that this call was a good idea to allow everyone to communicate.

A few also commented that they thought that there needs to have some structure and goals (as to what we hope to achieve) for the calls.

The call ended at 8:46 CDT.