

Producers Come Together to Support Positive Change for the Beef Checkoff

Over the last several months, Kansas Cattlemen's Association staff has been involved in a collaborative effort to share information and resources to help make a positive change to the cattle and beef industry. This year has been a turning point for many opportunities. As all producers participate in funding the Beef Checkoff, KCA and many other groups have come together to show support for the Checkoff and have opened discussions with USDA to ensure that the program maintains its integrity and mission.

In a recent letter to USDA and the Cattlemen's Beef Board (CBB), state and national organizations strongly supported and applauded the Executive Committee of the CBB for their strong stand regarding the separation of a policy organization and the Federation of State Beef Councils.

The coalition agreed with the CBB executive committee that "a separate and independent Federation is in the best interest of all those who pay the checkoff, regardless of organizational affiliation or policy position." The letter reiterated the groups' support for any action by United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) that would lead to the separation of NCBA from the Federation of State Beef Councils.

"Over 97% of producers belong to organizations not affiliated with NCBA. Of these producers approximately 72% are *exclusively* represented through their State Beef Councils and the Federation. This would indicate that 72% of beef producers would not have an equal voice in the governance of their Checkoff program if the Federation remains under the dominance of NCBA."

Organizations involved with this collaborate effort include: Independent Beef Association of North Dakota (IBAN), Independent Cattlemen of Nebraska (ICON), Independent Cattlemen of Wyoming (ICOW), Kansas Cattlemens' Association, R-CALF USA, SD Livestock Marketing Association, South Dakota Stockgrowers Association, and Western Plains Action Group.

Although there are a number of people involved in this coalition, a special thank you goes out to Ernie Mertz and Vaughn Miller of South Dakota, Margaret Nachtigall the Executive Director of the South Dakota Stockgrowers Association, and Tommy Tuggle of Linn County, KS. Their hard work, participation, information, and selflessness are greatly appreciated.