

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Check-off program opposed

Editor, Lancaster Farming:
In order to better inform the nation's cattlemen of what the passage of the forthcoming referendum will mean to them, I would advise them to write to their congressman and ask for Public Law 94-294 from the 94th Congress, H.R. 7656, part of which I hereby submit:
"Enforcement: Sec. 14 (a) - The several district courts of the U.S. are vested with jurisdictions, specifically to enforce and to prevent and restrain any person from violating any order or regulation made or issued

pursuant to this Act. Penalty (b) - Any person who willfully violates any provision of any order issued by the secretary under this Act, or who willfully fails or refuses to collect or remit any assessment duly required of him thereunder, shall be liable to penalty of not more than \$1000 for each such violation which shall accrue to the U.S. and may be recovered in a civil suit brought by the U.S.
Investigations: - Section 18 - The Secretary may make such investigations as he deems necessary for the effective carrying out of his

responsibilities under this Act or to determine whether a producer or slaughterer of cattle or any other person has engaged, or is about to engage in any acts or practice which constitutes or will constitute a violation of any provision of this Act or of any order or rule or regulation issued under this Act.
This is just part of a 10 page Public Law, and of which every cattleman should be duly informed. I further submit part of the proposed regulations as recorded in the Federal Register of Tuesday, January 25, 1977:

Assessments
(a) Each producer-seller, upon sale or transfer of ownership of any cattle, except as provided below, shall pay to the producer-buyer or slaughterer thereof, pursuant to regulations issued by the Board, and such producer-buyer or slaughterer shall collect from the producer-seller an assessment based on the value of the cattle involved in the transaction as follows:
(1) The Beef Board, with the approval of the Secretary, shall set the amount of assessment not to exceed five-tenths of 1 percent of the sale price;
(2) The assessment rate for the first three years shall not exceed three-tenths of 1 percent of the sale price;
(3) In the event that no sales transaction occurs at the point of slaughter or other transfer, a fair commercial market value shall be attributed to the cattle for the purpose of determining the assessment;
(4) Cattle slaughtered for his own home consumption by a producer who has been the sole owner of such cattle shall not be subject of assessments provided in this subpart;
(5) The Beef Board may provide for the adjustment of the value of breeding cattle or classes of breeding cattle, including those used in milk production, so as not to exceed commercial market value, or it may exempt collection of the assessment on such cattle until time of slaughter;
(6) Each slaughterer shall remit assessment(s) collected to the Beef Board at such times and in such manner as prescribed by regulations issued by the Board, including any assessment(s) due at time of slaughter on cattle of his own production;
(7) Failure of the slaughterer to collect the assessment(s) on each animal shall not relieve the slaughterer of his obligation to remit the assessment(s) to the Beef Board as required in this subpart; and
(8) The Beef Board may collect directly from any producer any assessment(s) that he collected under the provisions of this subpart or otherwise due which were

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

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programs. The idea is to beef up the cattle market; to leesen or even eliminate occurrences of poor markets.

The American Farm Bureau has come out in favor of the referendum. Farmers Union is reportedly disappointed in that the objectives aren't strong enough. A large number of producers either beef and dairy cattle or both are probably still straddling the fence.

A healthy advertising, research, sales and promotion program is desirable, and often even necessary if the business is to retain profitability. It's unfortunate that any advertising the farmer does on his own behalf will give dairy processors and meat cutters, for example, an increase in paychecks without their being contributors to the cause, but that's what we've got. It's also unfortunate that advertising we do for our own domestic farm products could benefit sales of products we import, but

that's what we've got. Finally, it's unfortunate that the referendum is coming at a time when the cattle business is reportedly heading for better times, and producers may feel we'll soon be doing alright anyway.

That may be true. Economic forecasts claim the cattle industry will begin improving this Fall and that demand and cattle numbers should be in balance for nearly two years, at least. Prices are likely to rise, but so will cots. What's left after expenses is still a guess, and that's really what it's all about.

A beef referendum, such as the one now facing marketers of beef and dairy cattle for meat, isn't conceived and implemented overnight. So the fact remains, no matter what the other signs may be, now is the time to decide on the beef referendum. If rejected during either the sign-up or vote, this opportunity for cattlemen and dairymen may not come again for a long, time.

The decision is yours.

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