

National Cattlemen's Assoc. oppose gov't control

DENVER, Co. — Continued opposition to excessive government control of the beef cattle business was reflected in many of the policy positions adopted recently by the National Cattlemen's Association.

Concern about beef demand and the need for the proposed Beef Research and Information program also were apparent in talks and in resolutions approved at NCA's annual convention in San Diego.

If beef is to remain competitive with other foods, production efficiency will have to continue to improve. Resolutions dealing with marketing and futures trading were among other highlights of membership action on policies for the coming year.

Opposition to burdensome government controls was voiced in such areas as medicated feeds, predator control, pesticide use, labor regulations, proposals to control beef pricing and reporting, water usage, private and public land use and energy production.

NCA committees are responsible for implementation as well as development of association policies. Following are summaries of some of the resolutions adopted by members at the 1980 convention.

Animal Health

NCA opposes a Food and Drug Administration proposal to regulate mixer-feeders (those who mix feed

only for animals on their own premises, including feedlots) on the same basis as commercial units mills selling feed into commerce. Members support a simplified and separate regulatory system for mixer-feeders.

NCA will continue to review the new Brucellosis Uniform Methods and Rules - to be adopted by the states by Jan. 1, 1982 - and will seek any further changes as needed. Other new policies also are aimed at assuring a sound, workable brucellosis program.

Intrastate animal quarantines under "extraordinary" conditions would be imposed under legislation asked by USDA. NCA says the proposed language is too broad, and that such quarantine authority should be granted only for use in event of outbreak of an exotic disease like foot and mouth.

Beef Cattle Research

Members endorsed a set of research priorities previously developed by the research committee. They are aimed at making beef production and marketing more efficient and more competitive.

Beef Promotion & Consumer Relations

Recognizing the need to maintain and improve beef demand, a growing problem because of all of the Anti-beef propaganda, the association strongly endorsed the Beef Research and Information program

Environmental Management

The association called for stronger predator control programs. The group voiced continued opposition to unreasonable restrictions on brush and weed control agents.

Foreign Trade

Members resolved the administration of the new counter-cyclical import legislation should be closely monitored. Noting the potential for more beef exports, they pointed out that other countries should grant a measure of guaranteed access to their beef markets, just as the U.S. guarantees access to its markets.

On the matter of grain export controls, NCA will oppose restrictions on ag exports except to countries engaged in activities threatening our national security.

Labor

NCA re-emphasized the importance of the right to work, and the group reaffirmed its opposition to compulsory unionism. The association will work for protection of agriculture's exemption from the National Labor Relations Act, and it will oppose any move to bring agriculture under any proposed ag labor relations statute.

The U.S. Department of Labor, in NCA's view, has abused the Farm Labor Contractor Registration Act,

designed to protect migrant workers, and has tried to apply it to feedlots and other employers who are not labor contractors. NCA will seek necessary changes in the rules and legislation.

Marketing

The futures markets continue to be controversial, particularly in areas without delivery points. The membership directed the board to act as necessary to determine if the general membership feels that futures trading should be continued.

The association also adopted a detailed position aimed at improvements in the feeder and live cattle futures contracts, including more delivery points, limits on trading in one day, changes in the delivery process to minimize adverse effects on cash markets, making the delivery unit more closely reflect cash market conditions with further limits on number of Yield Grade 4's deliverable; improved surveillance.

NCA noted threats to the free enterprise meat business as a result of proposed new government controls. NCA will oppose government action which would ban formula meat trading, impose mandatory reporting, force electronic trading or reporting on the industry, or limit packers to specific percentages of slaughter.

The association said it would cooperate to the extent possible with the Ag Secretary and the meat industry to improve meat pricing and reporting, within a free market.

NCA urged USDA to again make the Packers & Stockyards Administration a separate agency. The group said it opposed feedlot and packer integration if such action would constitute conflict of interest or contribute to market dominance by a firm.

Private Lands & Water Usage

A statement of livestock industry water policy includes protection of vested

water rights and water uses and state water rights, which are recognized as property rights.

Taxation

NCA opposes a proposal to require income tax withholding on payments to independent contractors, custom operators, etc., who contract their services to farmers. The group favors simplified depreciation rules and a shorter depreciation period for certain property.

Transportation

Revising policy on state truck size limits, NCA urged that the length limit be not less than 65 feet for tractor-trailers or other combinations.

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