

Cattlemen's Assn. steps back to assess Beeferendum defeat

DENVER, Colo. — The beef cattle industry will have to reassess its beef research and information programs and come up with more effective plans within the framework of existing organizations, Merlyn Carlson said Monday.

Carlson, who is president of the National Cattlemen's Assn., commented on beef program needs following the apparent defeat of the proposed uniform collection plan. Based on preliminary reports, it appeared that the Beef Research and Information Program would not receive more than 40 percent "Yes" votes in the producer referendum held February 19 to 22. A simple majority was required for passage.

"In my view, the voting results were unfortunate," Carlson said. "But cattle producers have spoken. A majority does not want this particular program at this time. Meanwhile, the need for a strong beef program — particularly in the diet-health research and information area — is still very much with us."

"Even many Beeferendum opponents agree there is a real need for stronger market development programs. Now we must channel that agreement into greater support of state and national programs — with the aim of doing a better job of fighting anti-beef propaganda at the national level."

"In the case of cotton and eggs, markets were badly eroded before members of those industries instituted effective check-off programs. I hope beef demand will not have to be eroded to the same degree before we undertake stronger programs."

"We now will have to reexamine what we are doing and how we are doing it. We will have to determine what we realistically can do,

establish new priorities and more clearly focus our efforts on the greatest needs.

"A really good beef research and promotion effort might require \$1 per head. But if a realistic level is significantly lower than that, and is obtainable from only limited numbers of producers, then we will have to gear our programs to meeting the highest priority needs within that kind of budgeting. And the industry will have to accept the kinds of efforts and results which can be attained within those limits."

Carlson said a good deal of the Beeferendum opposition appeared to stem from false allegations about "government control" and the level of collections. However, he added, the fact remains that many cattlemen, with access to accurate information, apparently did not agree with all of the cost-benefit and other arguments in favor of the proposed program.

Carlson noted NCA and other members of the Beeferendum Advisory Group had not yet had an opportunity to discuss the implications of the vote, but, he said, this no doubt would be done soon.

The NCA board will meet in March. It is not expected that another national referendum will be sought.

"The challenges to NCA, Cattle-Fax, the National Live Stock & Meat Board and other organizations have increased," he said.

"NCA will have to assume a stronger leadership role. Hopefully, NCA and other industry groups will emerge as a stronger, more unified force on behalf of cattlemen. We hope the recent anti-government activism can be translated into greater and broader-based support of organizations, including NCA, which defend

and advocate beef and the free enterprise system in the livestock business."

Carlson said there appeared to be a number of reasons why the 1980 referendum approval level was considerably less than that in 1977, in spite of a major Beeferendum effort by many dedicated cat-

tlemen and women and organizations

Among these reasons, he said, were the incorrect but more widely held perception that this would be a "government-run program" and the collections would be a "tax"

Improved feeder cattle prices and less urgency among some producers to

March confidently into tree planting

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Here are some guidelines to follow at planting time.

Inspect new trees for insect and disease damage as well as heat injury and mechanical damage. Return damaged trees to the nursery.

Plant trees during early spring - mid-March to first of May.

Plant trees soon after arrival from the nursery so their roots will not dry out. When weather does not permit immediate planting, cover the tree's roots with soil and water thoroughly.

The planting holes should be large and deep enough to set trees without crowding, bending or breaking their roots. Set the tree at about the same height as it stood in the nursery row. That point may be determined by finding the "soil line" on the trunk.

After placing plants in holes, begin refilling with

good top soil next to the roots. Pack the soil with your feet as it is added, being careful not to leave air pockets around roots. When the hole is about three-fourths filled with soil, pour in 2 to 3 gallons of water. After this water soaks in, finish filling with soil.

Leave a slight depression around each tree to catch rainfall. Cut off one-fourth of the tree top and branches right after setting.

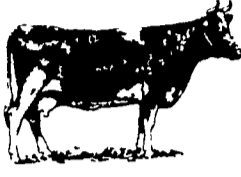
Do not mix dry fertilizer materials with the soil in refilling the hole. This may cause new feeder roots to be burnt as they develop.

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support a program whose benefits would be longer range, were cited as was frustration and uncertainty about the entire economic and political situation; high inflation and rapidly rising interest and other costs; resistance to an increased or another "cost;" financial losses by feeders for several months; more conservative economic and stronger anti-government attitudes generally

Failure of many producers (particularly those for whom beef cattle are not the major enterprise) to accept arguments about program and investment need; apathy among some program supporters; increased activity by a number of opposition groups; a feeling by some that the money would be wasted by high-overhead "Madison Avenue-type" operations, also contributed.

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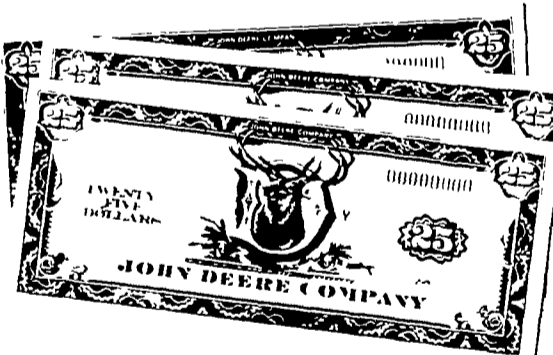
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