

# Beef Referendum

(Continued from Page A1)

today's market," Cope said. When you consider the bottom line, where the young calf has been fed colostrum that would have been discarded, and brings \$150 at market, you have a high profit item. And the dollar checkoff is peanuts. If we had this kind of profit margin on the remainder of our operation, we would do very well," Cope said.

### BEEF CYCLE

McCoy feels the idea that the referendum was timed to favor the beef cycle is without merit. "Earlier there was concern that when the referendum was taken we might be in a different situation," McCoy said. "We certainly are in the part of the beef cycle where beef numbers are at unprecedented low levels. But it's also unprece-

dent that beef consumption is up at the same time that prices are higher. Per capita consumption of beef increased in both the last two quarters," McCoy said. "And that's certainly not a result of lower cattle numbers. I've never seen this phenomena where we have cheap feed on the farm and high cattle prices. Usually cattlemen sit on the cattle until the corn crib is empty," Cope said. "But we're not seeing the over-fat, over-done steers coming to market. We're keeping current, and I think it'd because of promotional progress at the retail level. It's exciting," McCoy said.

### PRODUCER APATHY

McCoy said more negatives bombard the industry now than when the previous referendum vote was taken ten years ago. "The American Medical Association

bombarded the industry with negative cholesterol and fat reports," McCoy said. "But with the check-off dollars we have been able to, through research and promotion, change our product and present it to the consumer in a more palatable form. We now feature beef for today's generation of consumers. We didn't have the money to do this before the checkoff.

"My concern is that for whatever reason a lot of people will not vote. I would guess that would have a negative effect on the outcome," McCoy said. "I think if the referendum is defeated we'll never see another chance in my lifetime, and many of the advances we have

made in the last months will be lost."

### VOTE TIME

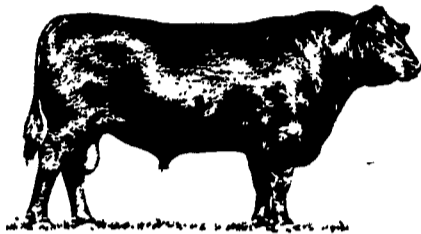
"Any time is push time somewhere in the nation's ag community," Cope said. "While the May 10 date hits our area in planting time, a March date would have had farmers in the southern tier states going full blast. June will be harvest time in many areas, and mid-winter could have brought a snow storm. So we simply need to take time to vote at the time we have the opportunity," Cope said.

### WHO, WHEN WHERE

If the wife is a partner in the farming operation, she can do the

voting on Tuesday, May 10 at the county agent's office. In addition, a 4-H or FFA steer owner can also cast a vote. By now absentee ballots should have been cast. But if the outside referendum envelope was not signed, the beef producer who voted needs to re-vote in person. (See side story page 1.)

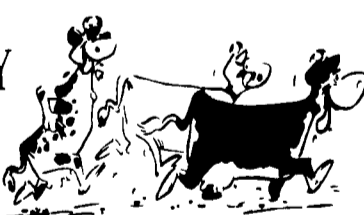
Both industry leaders agreed that if producers feel there are some inequities in the program they should support the referendum and then work within the industry to make any changes. "This is our industry program," McCoy said. "We control what is done. It's not under any government control."



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