

Council Supports Industry-Wide Long-Range Plan

CHICAGO, Ill. — Directors of the Beef Industry Council (BIC) of the Meat Board meeting here voted to "fund and participate in further development of the industry-wide long-range plan."

Three other organizations, the Beef Board, National Cattlemen's Association, and the U.S. Meat Export Federation, had earlier agreed to proceed with the long-range plan.

The action came during the BIC Planning Conference, held to consider and approve program plans and budgets proposed for fiscal year 1995 in the areas of consumer information, promotion, and research. A preliminary FY95 BIC budget of \$51.9 million was approved, which includes \$7.1 million for consumer information, \$7.3 million for research, and \$33.8 million for promotion. Final plans and a budget for 1995 will

be approved during the BIC annual meeting here August 11-13.

According to BIC Chairman Ralph "Buck" Bell, Jr., the producers and industry representatives who make up the BIC board are anxious to move the process along. "They told us to move ahead with the implementation of the long-range plan. They want to make sure that the changes we make will benefit the entire industry."

The plan, first presented last December by the Beef Industry Long Range Plan Task Force, includes eight leverage points with outcomes designed to make the industry more responsive to consumers and thus improve market share. It also suggests the leverage points can be better achieved through a more unified industry structure.

"Several of our directors and many state beef councils have questioned the advisability or need to merge the four organizations to accomplish the outcomes envisioned in the long range plan," said Bell, a South Carolina beef producer. "But I think we can make structure changes that will unify our efforts, coordinate our programs and streamline the approval process to reduce costs in managing our limited resources."

Bell, BIC Chairman-Elect L.R. "Ron" Curtis, BIC Treasurer Max Deets, and Meat Board President John Huston will represent the BIC on the 20-member Oversight Committee, which was created to implement long-range plan leverage points and a unified industry structure to most efficiently and effectively implement the leverage points. A structure proposal is

to be complete and ready for the four organizations to vote on by late-January 1995. If the plan is approved, the new structure could be implemented as early as July 1995.

"The most important thing for the industry," according to Curtis, a Hastings, Iowa, cattle feeder, "is to immediately ask all organizations to align their programs with the leverage points outlined in the Beef Industry Long-Range Plan. We think BIC programs are already consumer-driven and we've been doing a pretty good job of bringing consumers back to beef. But we can do even better when all resources are focused on consumer benefits."

During open discussion of the plan, directors called on BIC officers to work through the Oversight Committee to:

- Assure everyone in the beef

business — whether dairyman, veal producer, packer/processor or cattleman — is represented in any new structure.

- Assure continued access to the multi-species strategic alliances.

- Work to eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy.

- Be open during the development process "so everyone knows what is being proposed and how it will affect them."

- Call for a single meeting during which a final recommendation can be presented to and debated by directors from all organizations and then vote in secret ballot.

Bell asked BIC directors to communicate with officers frequently. "When you have questions, concerns, comments or suggestions, please let us know: Call us, fax us or leave word at the BIC office — we'll get back to you."

Deputy Secretary To Serve Md.

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — Governor William Donald Schaefer announced that Maryland Secretary of Agriculture Robert L. Walker will be leaving his post to take a diplomatic overseas assignment with the U.S. Department of Agriculture as the U.S. agricultural policy adviser in Ukraine.

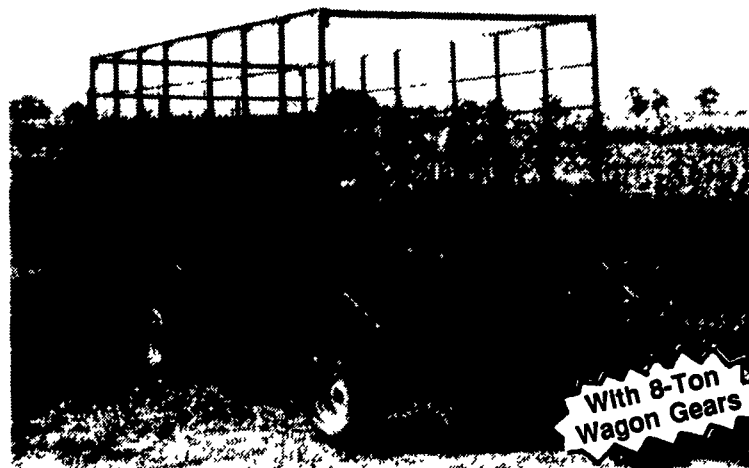
The appointment will last at least a year. Lewis R. Riley, deputy secretary, will serve as acting secretary until a successor is named.

"I am very sad to lose someone with the drive and enthusiasm that Secretary Walker has displayed, but I know he will do an outstand-

ing job in Ukraine. He is an expert in the agricultural affairs of the former Soviet Union and he has helped us in Maryland to forge agricultural alliances and exchange programs with the emerging nations in that part of the world. I wish him nothing but the best, and thank him for a job well done," Governor Schaefer said.

Walker became Maryland's Secretary of Agriculture in 1991 succeeding Wayne A. Cawley, Jr. He has been at the Maryland Department of Agriculture since 1985, both as executive assistant to the secretary and deputy secretary.

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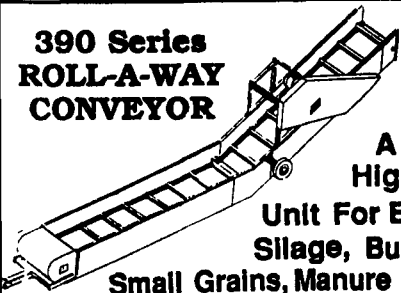
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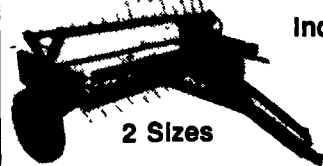


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