

Consolidation Proposal Would Eliminate Waste

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Beef industry leaders spoke out in favor of a plan that would consolidate the four major beef organizations into a single, unified organization, saying the effort will help producers more effectively meet consumer demands through efficient use of checkoff dollars and dues funds.

Members of the Beef Oversight Committee—the group charged with implementing the consolidation of the National Cattlemen's Association, Beef Industry Council, U.S. Meat Export Federation and Cattlemen's Beef Board—addressed broadcast journalists at the recent National Association of Farm Broadcasters convention in Kansas City.

The panelists said that the proposal will enable the industry to spend dollars more efficiently on programs that directly benefit producers—instead of on administrative overhead or duplication of effort as is currently the case. They underscored that, even by conservative estimates, the proposed restructuring would save cattle producers \$2.5 million annually. "That's \$2.5 million that can be put into programs to build demand for beef in a coordinated, focused, cost-effective approach," said panelist Monte Reese, CEO of the Beef Board.

Committee members explained that the process leading to the plan's development began two years ago when officers of each of the four organizations together embarked in formulating the industry's long-range plan. They stated that much of the motivation behind the effort came from increasing competition from pork and poultry and subsequent decreasing domestic market share for beef.

"I don't believe the beef industry can afford to have four of everything," said panelist Virgil Huseman, a cattle producer from Ellsworth, Kan., and a member of the task force which developed the long range plan. "We now have

four sets of committees, four boards of directors, four sets of officers and four different staffs. The governance structure that we have forces conflict between the various organizations—especially over the use of checkoff dollars. And the industry desperately needs to speak with one voice on issues confronting beef production."

Panelist Robert Foster, a dairy producer from Middlebury, Vt., said that the vast majority of dairy and veal producers back the plan, seeing it as a vehicle that will improve profitability for all segments involved in beef production. "As a dairy producer, I am comfortable with the expanded voice that my industry has had and will have in the new organization," Foster said. "I think we owe it to the grassroots producer, whether he or she be a cattleman, dairyman or a veal grower, to see that we most effectively, efficiently and productively use the dollars that are contributed either by dues or checkoff. I firmly believe that a consolidated structure is the correct move for the beef industry today."

Foster said that a recent national survey of cattlemen, dairymen and veal producers, indicated that 68 percent of dairymen support a consolidated industry organization structure.

Panelists emphasized that the oversight committee has given extensive consideration to legal issues, separation of dues from checkoff funds, equitable representation, appropriate fees for membership, and a host of other details. Checkoff dollars, for example, cannot be used for lobbying purposes, and the committee has built appropriate checks and balances into the proposed structure to ensure no overlap between dues and checkoff dollars occurs.

Under the proposed structure, state beef councils will lose none of their autonomy and authority for local expenditures of checkoff

dollars; at the same time, they will gain greater authority over the use of checkoff dollars at the national level.

All four of the industry organizations have endorsed the concept of the long-range plan and are participating in the oversight committee's implementation of the plan. The organizations will vote on a consolidated structure proposal before January 30.

The oversight committee was formed to initiate the implementa-

tion of the Beef Industry Long-Range Plan and facilitate the investigation of the consolidated structure. The oversight committee consists of three elected officers and the CEO from each of the four major beef industry organizations (BIC, NCA, MEF and CBB) plus four at-large members elected from the Beef Industry Long-Range Planning Task Force, for a total of 20 members.

Serving on the Oversight Committee are Rick Allen, Wyo.;

Ralph "Buck" Bell, Jr., S.C.; Bob Carter, Texas; Ron Curtis, Iowa; Max Deets, Kan.; Bob Drake, Okla.; Burton Eller, Colo.; Robert Foster, Vt.; Mardie Hanson, Colo.; John Huston, Ill.; Dan Koons, Ill.; Jack Maddux, Neb.; James A. Mullins, Iowa; Ellard "Butch" Pfaelzer, Ill.; Monte Reese, Colo.; Phil Seng, Denver, Colo.; Roger Stuber, N.D.; Jim Webb, Ariz.; Clark S. Willingham, Texas; and Dave Wood, Calif.

President Addresses Ag's Future

CALLICOON, N.Y. — In his last annual address as leader of the state's leading farm and rural advocacy group, N.Y. Farm Bureau President Charles Wille challenged the state's farmers to seek out new agricultural opportunities, take advantage of cutting edge science and technology, work to protect the rights of private property owners, and improve relations with non-farm neighbors.

Wille said that "the growing regulatory climate, at the state and local level, with its fines and legal challenges, is destroying the industry it is trying to keep." He reported that Farm Bureau "will have to stay vigilant at all levels to protect our farmers' interest and property rights in the years ahead."

"The farmer of tomorrow knows full well that knowledge is the key to future success," said Wille. "Farm Bureau can play an important role in assuring science to be the farmer's friend. Research and the delivery of the research findings to the farm must receive ample funding in the years ahead, if the American farmer is to maintain a competitive edge in our world markets."

The Farm Bureau president said that science and technology is already benefiting agriculture, yet there is a need to be cautious. As an example of an advance, he cited the Global Informational Systems (GIS), a system which uses satel-

lite imaging to determine crop yields and fertilizer needs. He said, "However, this same technique can locate...items which historically we have considered private. Farm Bureau is presently addressing farmers' rights in regards to this new system."

Speaking to farmers, Wille said that in the years to come, "Neighbor relations skills will be essential. The farmer of tomorrow will have to be a good neighbor."

Wille, who has been president of the 25,000 member New York Farm Bureau since December 1985, decided not to seek re-election. His address also cited the many accomplishments of the organization during his tenure, including the signing of the Agricultural Protection Act of 1992 and the recent repeal of the petroleum business tax on fuels used in farm production.

Md. Scholarships Awarded

HAGERSTOWN, Md. — Chairman Rodman Myers of the Maryland State Grange Agriculture Scholarship committee announced at the annual Maryland State Grange agriculture banquet, that \$2,500 was awarded.

Recipients of the Past Masters Community College scholarships were Carrie Ann Sellman, of Owings Mills, Paula Davis of Middletown, Lonette Luther of Damascus, Jason Hose, of Williamsport, Mark Spurrier of Union Bridge, and Kimberly Milder of Swanton, Garrett County.

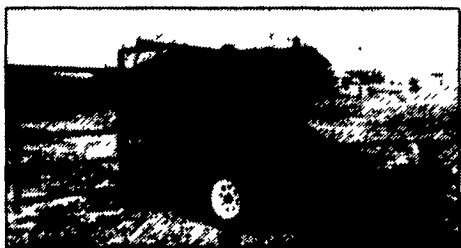
Recipients of the Edward F. Holter, University of Maryland, IAA or UMES Scholarships were

Dawn Knill, Woodbine; Laurie Zimmerman of Frederick; Marie Speak, Taneytown; Jeffery Reiley, Woodsboro; Mark Iager of Fulton; and Vernella Mitchell of Cambridge. Also present was Greg Scott of Hurlock, recipient of the Patapsco Grange IAA scholarship.

Maryland Secretary of Agriculture Lewis R. Riley was the guest speaker. Receiving the Service to Maryland Agriculture Award was Robert Keenan, who has been instrumental in the promotion of the Ag in the Classroom program.

Mary Bachtell of Leitersburg Grange received the Granger of the Year Award.

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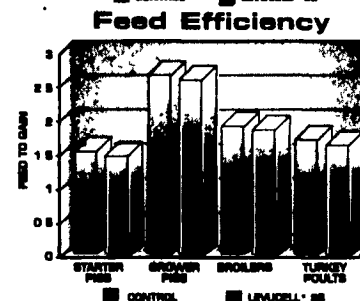
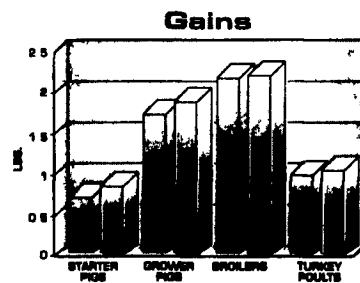
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