

NFU: Checkoff Reforms Are Big Step In Right Direction

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A slate of USDA recommendations to improve accountability in federal checkoff programs is a big step in the right direction, the National Farmers Union (NFU) said recently.

NFU has long advocated for

comprehensive checkoff reforms and has endorsed the adoption of recommendations made by a special USDA task force.

"These reforms will build accountability into the checkoff programs," said NFU President Leland Swenson.

"Producers fund these programs

and should have the right to vote them out if they are not operating in their best interests.

"We urge USDA to immediately hold referendums on the pork and beef checkoff since they have tens of thousands of signatures requesting a vote."

"We commend Secretary Glick-

man and Under Secretary Mike Dunn for backing all of the task force's recommendations," Swenson stated.

USDA Secretary Dan Glickman announced Dec. 15 he is backing all 21 recommendations of a task force set up to find ways to enhance oversight of agricultural

commodity research and promotion programs. Key recommendations include holding mandatory referendums at least once every five years to determine whether to continue checkoff programs and to require a super majority vote to establish new programs.

Other task force recommendations include requiring at least one public or consumer voting member on each board, improving diversity on the boards, requiring boards to use accepted auditing standards and competitive bidding, requiring written policies on travel and expense reimbursement, and providing more training.

Many of the recommendations will be published for comment in the Federal Register. Others will require legislative action.

Glickman Names Members

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman has appointed 37 members to the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board.

All members will serve 3-year terms beginning Jan. 29, except for David J. Means, Mo., who will serve a 1-year term because of a resignation.

The board is composed of 110 members representing 37 states, three multistate units, and importers. The secretary of agriculture selects appointees from cattle producers and importers nominated by organizations representing beef, dairy, veal, and importer interests.

Appointed members representing cattle producers by state and unit are Alabama — Gregg P. Blythe; Arkansas — John W. Thomas; California — Paul T. Cameron; Colorado — Danny P. Todd; Florida — Kay M. Richardson; Idaho — James A. Little; Illinois — David W. Bateman; Kansas — Duane L. McHenry, Constance M. Kuhlman, and Richard J. Benoit; Kentucky — Joseph L. Burke, Jr., and James A. Tipton; Minnesota — Jon M. Gorder; Missouri — Benny D. Farrell and David J. Means; Montana—Lawrence A. Descheemaeker and Jane H. Lindgren; Nebraska — Alan J. Svajgr, Norman A. Guenther, and William

H. Rishel; New York — Justin J. Martin, Jr.; North Dakota — L. Jon Erickson; Oklahoma — Lisa K. Hefner and Terry L. Wyatt; Pennsylvania — Robert K. Hay; South Dakota — Arnold L. Wienk; Texas — John L. Cook, Robert E. Carter, Janet Lee G. Helm, Leonard H. Cornelius, Jr., and Vera E. Harrington; and Virginia —

Joseph W. Wampler; and Wisconsin — Wayne L. Danielson.

Richard H. Atkinson, Andrew A. Ralph, Mitchell Pincus, and Andrew N. Burt have been appointed to represent importers.

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, an agency of the marketing and regulatory programs mission area, monitors operation of the board.

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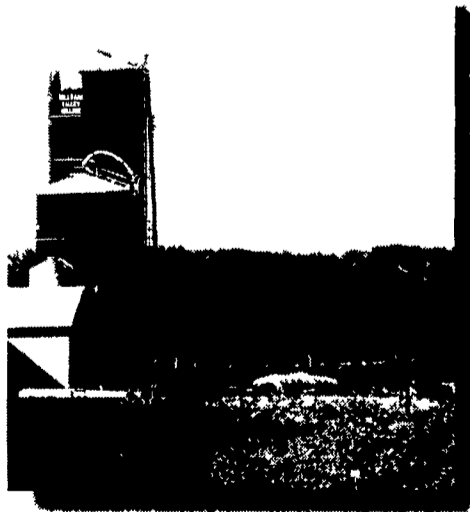


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