

Plaintiffs Pleased With Checkoff Stay

DENVER, Colo. — The U.S. Court of Appeals' decision to grant a stay and allow the beef promotion program to continue without interruption during appeal is a good one, according to the Cattlemen's Beef Board, one of the defendants in the case.

Defendants also include the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Nebraska Cattlemen, and a group of producers who are intervening in the case.

"We are pleased that the court recognized the importance of continuing the Beef Checkoff Program through the appeal process," said Beef Board Chairman Dee Lacey, a cow-calf producer from Paso Robles, Calif. "This will allow continuance of promotion efforts on behalf of beef producers during challenging market conditions."

During the appeal process, Lacey said, the Beef Board will continue — as it has throughout the course of this litigation — to work to strengthen the position of beef in the marketplace and expand uses for beef and beef products.

While this certainly is good

news for those who support the Beef Checkoff Program, Lacey said, it is one step in what promises to be a lengthy court battle.

"It's definitely disappointing that industry resources continue to be diverted from beef marketing and promotion efforts to spend money and time in the courtroom instead. But this appeal is one more step forward in a lengthy battle, and we're in it for the long haul."

In annual independent surveys conducted since the launch of the beef checkoff 15 years ago, producers have repeatedly voiced strong support for the program, Lacey said. In the latest survey, released in January 2002, about 68 percent of producers said they approved of the Beef Checkoff Program.

NCBA Responds

In a related press release, the president of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), Wythe Willey, a cattleman from Cedar Rapids, Iowa, called the ruling "a significant victory for the majority of beef producers who have continued to support the industry's dynamic self-help program."

"We are gratified the Appellate Court has recognized the magnitude of the national beef checkoff program," said Willey.

The motion to stop the injunction was filed by the Justice Department on behalf of the United

States Department of Agriculture on July 8. The Eighth Circuit granted the motion less than 48 hours later.

"Every prior attempt to undermine the constitutionality of the beef checkoff has failed, and we

are confident that in the end this effort too will fail," said Willey. "In the meantime, cattlemen, through NCBA, will not rest in our resolve to protect the beef checkoff that has served the cattle and beef industry so well."

WORC Statement Regarding Kornmann's Ruling

BILLINGS, Mont. — Judge Kornmann's ruling of the unconstitutionality of the beef checkoff was "a victory for independent cattle producers," according to the Western Organization of Research Councils (WORC).

In conjunction with the Livestock Marketing Association, WORC was an original plaintiff in the case.

In response to that ruling Linda Rauser, a WORC spokesperson and North Dakota rancher, made the following statements.

"Judge Kornmann found that the checkoff is unconstitutional because it forces producers to pay for speech with which they dis-

agree. This decision is a victory for cattle producers, WORC and the Livestock Marketing Association."

"WORC challenged the mandatory, \$1 per head tax on cattle sales because we believe it is unfair, undemocratic, and unconstitutional. It is unfair that producers are taxed to support the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, an organization that consistently opposes their interests — most recently on mandatory country of origin labeling, banning packer ownership of livestock, and fast track trade legislation. Nearly nine of every ten dollars in the NCBA's budget comes from the beef checkoff."

"The checkoff is undemocratic because the producers who pay the checkoff did not have a vote in selecting those who decide how the money is spent, and have been denied the right to vote on continuation of the beef checkoff."

"With today's ruling, independent cattle producers have triumphed over the beef packers and packer-led institutions in the battle to take back control of our livestock markets."

"We appreciate Judge Kornmann's well thought-out decision. Now we can go about the business of creating beef promotion programs that truly benefit U.S. ranchers and producers."

Pork Producers Invited To AI School

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Workers' job satisfaction, working conditions, technical skill and attitude can affect the success of artificial insemination (AI), according to recent studies at North Carolina State University. Producers of show pigs may pay up to \$500 per dose of semen, making the success of AI programs an important investment.

To help Ohio's pork producers increase the efficiency of their AI programs, the Ohio Pork Industry Center (OPIC) is holding an AI school July 24, in the Animal Science Building of the Ohio State University, 2029 Fyffe Road, Columbus, Ohio. The school is designed to give hands-on training in artificial insemination and practices that will increase reproductive efficiency.

The Ohio Pork Industry Center is an arm of The Ohio State University Extension that brings together expertise from an array of disciplines to help sustain the profitability of the Ohio pork industry by establishing leadership in information, technology, product quality, and sound relations with urban and rural neighbors.

Designed for employees and decision makers involved with the breeding and gestation area of pork producing operation, the day will consist of demonstrations on collecting boar semen, and inseminating estrous sows as well as sessions addressing key issues in pork reproduction.

One such issue is the effect inseminators have on reproductive performance, a significant problem according to Don Levis, coordinator of OPIC. "The No. 1 problem I see with AI is people," he said. "People get in too big of a hurry, they don't have the proper training, or they don't understand what they are trying to accomplish."

Studies have shown that overworked or disgruntled workers can greatly decrease

the farrowing rate of gilts. The farrowing rate decreases by almost 15 percent when a technician inseminates more than 15 gilts without taking a break. Also, unpleasantly handled gilts had a farrowing rate almost 55 percent lower than pleasantly handled gilts. Participants of OPIC's AI school will learn more about these effects and how to minimize their influence in their operation.

They also will learn about the influence of biological variation on inseminations, selection of AI boars and emerging AI technologies, such as sexed semen and embryonic transfers.

The school is organized into a morning, afternoon and evening program to accommodate the schedule of producers. The demonstrations will be held in the morning and evening and the educational sessions will make up the afternoon program. Participants can register for morning and afternoon, afternoon and evening, afternoon only, or all three sessions.

The registration fee is \$40 per person, which includes meals, refreshments and reference materials. The deadline to register is July 17 and enrollment is limited to 60 people. For more information or to register for the school, contact OPIC at 1-800-398-7675 or contact Don Levis at (614) 292-1351.

Candidates Solicited For National Board On Rural America

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced recently that USDA is accepting applications for the newly created National Board on Rural America. Responsibilities of the board include developing a national strategic investment plan for rural America and overseeing the delivery of planning and innovation grants to regional boards.

"Continuing to strengthen America's rural communities is an important priority for the Bush Administration," said Veneman. "This board will provide valuable input as we examine ways to expand opportunities and investment in rural areas throughout the nation."

The National Board, which consists of 14 members appointed

by the Secretary with staggered four-year terms, was created with the recent passage of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002. The Board will oversee the Rural Strategic Investment Program, which includes \$95 million of planning and community development grants.

Among those considered for Board positions will be representatives of: nationally recognized entrepreneurship organizations, regional planning and development organizations, community-based organizations, elected members of county governments, elected members of State legislatures, the rural philanthropic community, and Indian tribes.

Recommendations by elected members of federal, state, or

county governments, and nominations from organizations will be accepted. Nominations from individuals will not be considered. Nominations should be written on the organization's letterhead. An AD Form 755, Nominee Background Information, is required for each nominee and is available on the USDA Rural Development Website at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd/farmbill2002.html>.

Completed applications are due by 5 p.m. on July 19. Applications should be submitted to the Office of the Under Secretary, Rural Development, Attn: Duane Ischer, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Room 206-W, STOP 0107, Washington, D.C. 20250-0107. To ensure timely delivery, applications may be faxed to (202) 720-2080.

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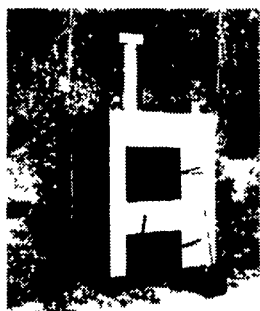
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