Operating Committee Reviews Priorities For Checkoff Funding

The Beef Promotion Operating Committee recently heard a report about how cattle producers throughout the country want their beef checkoff dollars invested during the coming year.

The report is part of an inclusive process than began in December 2002, when the Beef Checkoff Program engaged an independent market-research firm to survey more than 1,200 producers nationwide about several topics, including how they believe checkoff dollars should be spent.

Volunteer members of joint industry advisory committees then met at the annual cattle industry convention in January to identify their program priorities, which were, in fact, extremely similar to those voiced by their fellow producers via the survey.

The report of those priorities to the Operating Committee served as the first step in its development of a budget recommendation for checkoff programs to be conducted in fiscal 2004.

"Producers repeatedly told us that they want us spending their checkoff dollars on programs that relate to information and research about nutrition and beef safety issues," said Cattle-men's Beef Board Chairman Andy Tucker, who also chairs the Operating Committee.

They also want to make sure that we continue our efforts in the area of new-product development and other promotional efforts that aim to continue the upward trend in beef demand that began in 1998.

"It's very important that we have this grassroots input to kick off our annual budget process." Tucker continued. "And as committees and prospective contractors of checkoff dollars prepare proposals for next year's programs during the next several months, it will be important that they keep these producer priorities in mind."

The Operating Committee will meet again in June 2003 to

develop a budget recommendation to the Beef Board for fiscal 2004, subject to USDA approval.

Advisory committees and subcommittees then meet again in July to prepare recommendations for specific program proposals, which then are considered by the Operating Committee and USDA in September, before the Oct. 1 beginning of the fiscal year.

In other action this week, the Operating Committee rejected a proposal from the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) to redirect beef checkoff funds previously approved for implementation expenses associated with beef promotion efforts in South Korea and Japan to pay instead for expansion of those same programs.

The committee voted 11-6 in favor of the proposal, with three members absent, thus falling one vote short of the required twothirds majority for a vote by the committee to pass.

American Gelbvieh Association Seeks **SmartCross Calves For Tag Program**

WESTMINSTER, Colo. ---The American Gelbvieh Association is aggressively seeking calves that qualify for its new tagging program. The AGA's SmartBuy program works to identify and promote calves with the profitable blend of Gelbvieh and Angus genetics (SmartCross calves).

SmartCross calves must be sired by a registered Gelbvieh, Balancer or Gelbvieh-Angus hybrid bull and out of an Angusbased cow (red or black).

The calves must be vaccinated using either the VAC 34 or VAC 45 program and producers must follow Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) guidelines.

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If a producer has calves that qualify for the SmartCross tag program, he or she should call Dennis Fennewald at the AGA office, (303) 465-2333, to order SmartCross tags and learn more about the program.

SmartBuy provides a cash incentive to the buyers of SmartCross-tagged calves. For a limited time, the American Gelbvich Association will directly pay buyers \$2 per head for every SmartCross-tagged calf purchased.

Buyers simply need to fax or mail the AGA the bill of sale including the seller's name, the weight, sex and number of head of cattle, price, deliver date, and contact information of the feeder (if different from the buyer), along with the SmartCross tag numbers.

SmartBuv and SmartCross tag program provide buyers with source-verified, pre-conditioned calves, while adding value to SmartCross calves with Gelbvieh and Angus genetics.

For more information on the SmartBuy program, visit the WebSite AGA www.gelbvieh.org www.gelbvieh.org or call Dennis Fennewald at the AGA office, (303) 465-2333.

Lancaster Farring

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