

Kansas Cattlemen's Association Applauds Proposed Checkoff Rule

For more than ten years, the Kansas Cattlemen's Association has advocated on behalf of producers to ensure that the Beef Checkoff is administered with transparency and accountability. As well, KCA has contended that opening up Beef Checkoff contracts to industry organizations is not only in the best spirit of the law but also allows for additional program ideas and provides for more benefit to the industry as a whole.

Earlier this month, USDA announced a proposed rule that would expand the contracting authority as established under the Beef Promotion and Research Order. Currently, the Order requires that all contractors be established national non-profit industry-governed organizations that were in place prior to the Act and Order. This proposed rule would change the date requirement in the Order so that organizations, that would otherwise qualify, could be eligible as long as they have been active and ongoing for at least two years.

At this time, there is an estimated 100 organizations that are qualified to contract for Checkoff funds. These organizations include the American Farm Bureau, American Meat Institute, American National CattleWomen (ANCW), American Veal Association (AVA), Livestock Marketing Association, Meat Importers Council of America (MICA), national breed associations, National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) Federation Division, National Livestock Producers Association (NLPA), National Farmers Union and the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF). However, the largest contractor is NCBA.

Since 1985, multiple national organizations such as the Ranchers - Cattlemen's Action Legal Fund (R-CALF USA) and the United States Cattlemen's Association (USCA) have risen to represent cattle producers' interests within the industry. KCA believes that organizations such as these should qualify as contractors. KCA is pleased with this proposed rule, applauds USDA for listening to the people who pay into the Beef Checkoff and appreciates the department for acting in the best interest of the industry. KCA looks forward to submitting comments to support this change.

Anyone interested in submitting comments may post them online at www.regulations.gov, mail them to Craig Shackelford, Agricultural Marketing Specialist, Marketing Programs Division, Livestock and Seed Program, Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA, Room 2628-S, STOP 0251, 1400 Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20250-0251, or fax them to (202) 720-1125. All comments should reference the docket number (Doc. No. AMS-LS-11-0086), the date (3-2-2012), and the page number (12752-12754) of this issue in the Federal Register. Comment deadline is May 1, 2012.