

Producer Meetings Address Checkoff Concerns



By Scooter Pursley for the North Dakota Beef Commission



Promoting beef as a healthy, safe and versatile protein option to the world doesn't come easy or cheap. That's where the Beef Checkoff Program comes in handy to do the heavy lifting.

The North Dakota Beef Commission (NDBC) recently held producer meetings in Medora and Towner and participated in an Extension beef meeting in McLeod. At each, NDBC representatives shared information on the ways Beef Checkoff dollars are used to drive demand for beef.

"The Beef Checkoff is vital to our efforts to serve North Dakota cattle producers," NDBC Consumer Marketing and Industry Relation Specialist Nicole Wardner said. "The purpose of these presentations was to share how Beef Checkoff funds are used to enhance beef as the protein choice around the world."

Topics covered included Beef Checkoff Basics, Driving Demand for Beef and Where Does the Money Go? Presenters were Wardner, NDBC Chairman Mark Voll, past chairman Weston Dvorak and board member Jason Zahn.



Nicole Wardner,
NDBC Consumer
Marketing and
Industry Relations
Specialist

Beef Checkoff Basics

The Beef Checkoff was created under the 1985 Farm Bill as a way to fund beef promotion, research and education. Under the current Beef Checkoff, \$2 is collected from every head of cattle that changes ownership in North Dakota. Of that, 50 cents is allocated to the Cattlemen's Beef board for the national program and \$1.50 goes to the North Dakota Beef Commission, a state agency implementing and overseeing the program along with the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Driving Demand for Beef

This presentation focused NDBC's strategy for driving demand for beef using national and state Checkoff dollars. Understanding the ever-changing consumer domestically and abroad is critical in determining the best use of funds. Presenters explained NDBC's strategic priorities and how the board uses those as a guideline in decision-making. The goal is to remind consumers beef is a premier protein through promotion, research and education focuses.

Where Does the Money go?

Voll explained that money raised through the Checkoff is used strategically to enhance beef's standing among consumers and producers. A recent Cornell University study showed that the Checkoff returns \$11.91 to the industry for every dollar invested and without the national Checkoff, U.S. beef demand would have been 14.3 percent lower.

The NDBC hosted the events as a way to be fully transparent in how Checkoff dollars (both for the state and national programs) are being invested. Voll shared the board's past fiscal year spending and explained why the board chose to fund the projects it did at the level they were funded.

Future producer Checkoff meetings around the state will be planned for the next fiscal year.

