

N.D. Beef Commission Steps Up Research



By JaCee Aaseth for the N.D. Beef Commission

The N.D. Beef Commission (NDBC) distributes the \$2-per-head beef checkoff investment in three areas: promotion, research and consumer information. The area of research has seen some of the most explosive growth with the implementation of the additional state checkoff dollar in 2015. In the last four years, the NDBC has invested approximately \$1.7 million in 21 research projects related to beef in human health, beef product development and beef quality.



Travis Maddock
NDBC Secretary/
Treasurer

Since 2015, NDBC has funded research projects that range from exploring the dietary reversal of Type 2 diabetes by incorporating beef in a high-protein diet, to the impact of larger carcass size on meat quality, and the gastrointestinal health of omnivores (beef eaters) versus vegetarians.

“There is an old saying ‘you can’t manage what you don’t measure,’” says Dr. Travis Maddock, NDBC secretary/treasurer and a beef producer. “Research gives us more information, and the more information we have, the better our management decisions will be.”

Maddock owns a cow/calf operation in Benson County with his parents and brothers. He also owns Dakota Global Consulting, LLC, working with food and feed manufacturers on safety and quality issues. Maddock lives with his wife, Mistte, and two children, James and Lauren, in Davenport. In addition to his NDBC responsibilities, he was recently elected to represent N.D., S.D., Neb. and Kan. beef councils as the Region 7 Federation Vice President on the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA) Executive Committee. He became involved with the NDBC because he believes in the work being done to make the beef industry successful. With a Ph.D. in animal science from NDSU, he is specifically passionate about beef industry research and has worked as a research scientist investigating beef safety and quality.

“Research is the tool that provides baseline data for managing the beef supply chain,” says Maddock. “From taste, convenience, safety and nutrition, research gives us the information to make the best possible decisions on how to improve consumer

satisfaction and drive demand for our beef products.”

The NDBC primarily works with North Dakota State University (NDSU) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) as it allocates its research dollars. In addition, the NDBC has also successfully collaborated on important beef research with scientists at Purdue, Duke, the University of Illinois, the University of Alabama-Birmingham, and the University of Texas.

“All research proposals go through a request for proposals (RFP) process. They are then reviewed by scientists for merit and to avoid duplication,” says Maddock. “NDBC collects that information and determines if the project meets our NDBC research priorities and initiatives. Then, the researchers present their projects to the NDBC members who score them, and the ones receiving the highest scores are funded.”

National Checkoff

NCBA, a national beef checkoff contractor for research, has established a research-based website, www.beefresearch.org, which lays out the national research program. The mission of the program is to build demand and optimize the business climate for beef through research and dissemination programs that serve as the foundation for sustaining the beef industry’s success. Research is conducted in the areas of beef safety, human nutrition, product quality, sustainability and market research.

“The national checkoff is a huge asset to North Dakota beef producers, because we can pool our dollars and conduct much larger scale and robust research across a much broader scope of topics,” says Maddock.

