

Livestock Markets Provide Positive Voice for Beef Checkoff



By Kylie Blanchard for the N.D. Beef Commission

The North Dakota Beef Commission (NDBC) conducts and funds beef promotion, research and education programs at the state, national and international level. The organization's mission is to enhance consumer demand for beef, increase consumer awareness of beef, and strengthen consumer trust in the beef industry. These programs are funded by beef producers through a national and state beef checkoff, an important system also supported by the state's livestock markets.



Matt Lachenmeier,
NDBC board
member

Matt Lachenmeier has worked at Kist Livestock Auction in Mandan, N.D., as a field representative for six years and has been a NDBC board member for the past year and a half. He grew up on a livestock operation and hauled cattle and worked as a licensed livestock dealer and buyer prior to joining Kist Livestock. "The value of the beef checkoff is highly important," he says. "The NDBC is one of the only organizations working for the producer and going out and marketing beef to consumers. It is the voice for the value of beef."

He says the support and promotion of the beef checkoff at the state's livestock markets is important to help producers understand the checkoff program and its benefits. "You've got your livestock markets where a lot of people gather and there are just a lot of questions about the checkoff raised here as people visit," he says, noting the livestock markets collect the \$2 per head checkoff assessment with each sale. "You have to have that support on the livestock market side

and have a positive voice in there."

Lachenmeier says one of the challenges of promoting the checkoff program at the market is helping producers see their dollars at work. "In North Dakota, everyone wants to see the beef advertisements and their dollars at work," he notes. "While that would be nice, beef producers are already eating lots of beef. Those dollars need to be targeted at consumers that aren't eating beef or aren't eating as much beef as they might if they knew more about the benefits of our product and trusted the beef producers providing it. That means focusing on the state's urban communities more than our rural areas."

The beef checkoff dollars fund beef promotion, research, education, and consumer information programs that help to tell the story of beef to today's consumers. "If we can increase consumer demand for beef, we will sell more beef, the cattle prices should trend upward, and more beef on consumer plates more often is good for every producer," says Lachenmeier.

The livestock markets' support of the beef checkoff program is also important to the continued success of the NDBC's efforts, he says. "We all are part of the beef industry team. The livestock markets assist with collecting the beef checkoff and listen to producers so market representatives like me can provide producer feedback to the NDBC board members as well as take the great success stories of the checkoff program back to the producers."

To learn more about the work of the North Dakota Beef Commission, visit www.ndbeef.org or "Like" us on Facebook.

