

NORTH DAKOTA BEEF COMMISSION MINUTES

December 17, 2025

Call to Order

North Dakota Beef Commission (NDBC) Chair Joy Patten called the meeting to order at 9:58 a.m.

Directors Present: Patten, Jess Nehl, Denise Rohweder, Carmel Miller, Austin Henderson, Lane Marshall, Brian Amundson, Jason Zahn. Ex-Officio Director Travis Maddock. Absent: Val Wagner
Staff present: Wendy Masset, Jessi Hummel, Jenna Paul and Nicole Wardner.

Guests present: Allen Lund – Independent Beef Association of North Dakota, Mary Graner – Cattlemen’s Beef Board, Brad Thykeson – ND Farm Service Agency SED, Kyle Smith – Dickinson State University Foundation, Matt Sagsveen and Elizabeth Mayans – Assistant Attorneys General.

Miller moved to approve the agenda, second by Rohweder. Motion approved.

Patten called for disclosure of any conflicts of interest. None were declared.

Zahn moved to approve the November minutes, second by Miller. Motion approved.

Financial Update

Nehl gave an update on the November 2025 financials. **Nehl moved to receive and file the November financial reports, second by Rohweder. Motion approved.**

Compliance Report

Hummel presented the quarterly collections and compliance report. The current remittance after notice is 44%. Backlogged records are almost complete.

Audit Committee Report

Nehl, Chair of the Audit Committee, gave a report on the committee meeting. The audit had no findings. **Nehl moved to accept the audit report and the committee’s recommendation. Second by Henderson. Motion approved.**

North Dakota Farm Service Agency State Executive Director Thykeson joined the Board to provide an update on staffing limitations across FSA offices statewide. He shared information on current commodity programs, including SDRP II and FBA, and noted that emergency livestock programs will be implemented if needed. Thykeson also requested director recommendations for appointments to the FSA State Committee.

Wardner requested that the board review the current compensation time policy, which allows full-time, non-exempt, salaried employees to earn compensation time for hours worked over 40 in a workweek, with a maximum allowable balance of 40 hours. Wardner explained that due to the volume of work during the fall tailgating season, an employee’s compensation time balance exceeded the current cap. To ensure compliance ahead of an upcoming audit, Wardner recommended a temporary policy adjustment to address existing balances above 40 hours. **Zahn made a motion to increase the maximum allowable compensation time balance to 80 hours through June 30, the end of the fiscal year. Seconded by Nehl. Motion approved.**

National & International Program Updates

Nehl reported on the Finance & Audit committee meeting held in December and reported the annual audit showed no findings. A discussion was held on what internal audit measures are taken by NCBA for Checkoff funds. Once approved at the annual meeting, the audit will be available. Maddock gave an update on the Federation of State Beef Councils and how updated facilities will impact future national programming.

The annual meetings for the Federation and the Cattlemen's Beef Board will be February 3 to February 5 in Nashville, TN. Wardner shared a preliminary director schedule with the board and asked to be updated with any changes in travel plans. Maddock will be interviewing for the Chair of the Federation of State Beef Councils and Amundson will be interviewing for a second term on the Beef Promotion Operating Committee.

An update on the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture STEM curriculum was shared with the directors regarding materials that have recently received public attention. Wardner presented the curriculum to the board, reviewed the specific components that had been questioned, and summarized the scientific research and sources used in its development. Wardner also provided board members with prepared talking points to support awareness and consistency in any related conversations.

Wardner led a discussion with the board regarding current beef market conditions, including high consumer demand and limited beef supply. Wardner shared that current price levels reflect market fundamentals and that the beef industry is experiencing strong demand amid historically low supply. Wardner noted that beef consumption remains strong and provided several articles and resources for context.

The board discussed producer communications and social media engagement related to beef prices, emphasizing the importance of perspective and professionalism when addressing market conditions.

Patten invited questions or comments from guests prior to the lunch recess.

Dickinson State University Proposal

Kyle Smith, Development Officer for the DSU Heritage Foundation, presented a proposal to the board outlining opportunities related to meat processing education at Dickinson State University, as well as potential advertising within the new DSU rodeo arena. The board discussed the proposal, including program opportunities and potential measurables. DSU representatives indicated they would provide additional follow-up information to the Beef Commission as needed.

Zahn moved to refer the proposal to the Marketing Committee for consideration in fiscal year 2027 budgeting. Rohweder seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Litigation Update

Assistant Attorneys General Matthew Sagsveen and Elizabeth Mayans provided an update on ongoing litigation involving the North Dakota Beef Commission. The attorneys reviewed recent developments in the case, outlined the anticipated timeline, and discussed next steps. Directors were given the opportunity to ask questions; no questions were raised. No action was taken.

USMEF Proposal

The board reviewed the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) proposal. The proposal included an investment for foreign promotion and education in South Korea, Taiwan, and South America, as well as a request of \$50,000 for promotion and education in the Japanese market. Discussion included that, dependent on fiscal year collections, the board may revisit potential funding for Japan later in the fiscal year. Following discussion, the board elected to proceed with the \$100,000 investment as budgeted for South Korea, Taiwan, and South America.

Marshall moved to invest \$100,000 as budgeted. Second by Rohweder. Motion carried.

Program Updates

Wardner presented an opportunity to invest in a national health professional toolkit campaign. **Rohweder moved to fund the national campaign at \$15,000. Second by Zahn. Motion carried.** Directors reviewed national campaign reports including results from digital advertising during live sporting events and streaming television programming, audio advertising for *Beef. It's What's for Dinner.* on streaming platforms, and targeted big-box retail campaigns designed to influence beef purchases at the point of sale.

Paul presented a social media report for North Dakota Beef Commission platforms and shared insights from her first three months, along with planned direction for future content. Paul also shared the annual report. It will be published for review on the NDBC website. Paul provided a mini-grant program update, noting that the majority of funds had been disbursed. An update on the Powered By Beef program was presented, including recent Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) agreements with collegiate athletes across NAIA, Division II, and Division I levels, as well as efforts to expand participation among winter sport high school athletes.

Wardner reported the budgeted contract with BEK Television was complete and shared preliminary results. An option to increase and continue advertising related to producer communications was available. The board discussed the proposal and elected to take no action, maintaining the existing budgeted amount for the fiscal year.

Living Ag Classroom events were presented, which will mark the program's 26th year, and noted that the Beef Commission will participate alongside other commodity groups. The board directed Paul and Wardner to serve on a joint NDSA–NDBC partnership board for the Red River Valley Fair Ag Education Center to support and enhance beef education materials.

Wardner shared a Beef Quality Assurance update from NDSU BQA specialist, Lisa Pederson which included scheduled dates for certification.

Directors listened to new audio spots produced by the Federation Creative Services team. These spots are for producer communication efforts and will air during the Cattle Industry Convention coverage on the Red River Farm Network.

A request was made for NDBC to sponsor a nominee for the North Dakota Agriculture Hall of Fame. **Henderson moved to submit a nomination for former NDBC board member Larry Schnell, sponsored by the North Dakota Beef Commission. Second by Zahn. Motion carried.**

Wardner requested direction on continued participation in the Fargo Beef Burger Battle promotion. The board directed Wardner to continue in the promotion with a request for improved measurables for the next year.

The University of Mary submitted a proposal for NDBC to support a fueling station in its new athletic facility. **Rohweder moved to refer the proposal to the Marketing Committee for consideration in fiscal year 2027. Second by Marshall. Motion carried.**

Upcoming Events

Wardner shared the ND Dairy Convention is scheduled for January 14, NDBC will be represented by Rohweder and Wardner. The ND Livestock Alliance is holding its Summit on January 27th at the Delta Hotel in Fargo. The NDSU Extension Medora Beef Meeting will be held January 28th. Patten will represent NDBC at the event. ND Reserve Veterinary Corp meeting is being held on January 29th in Bismarck.

Meeting Dates

Directors set the following dates for upcoming meetings In-person meeting dates will be March 18, June 24, September 16 and December 16. If needed, virtual meetings will be at 8:00 a.m. January 21, February 18, April 15, May 20, July 15, August 19, October 21, and November 18. Chair of Committees will organize meeting dates for their committees.

3 items from this meeting:

- NIL opportunities with Collegiate athletes and sharing their enthusiasm for beef
- The successful results from the national campaigns and the positive work driving demand for beef
- Keep working at sharing beef's value to consumers

Patten adjourned the meeting at 3:18 pm.