

NORTH DAKOTA BEEF COMMISSION MINUTES
March 25, 2026

Call to Order

North Dakota Beef Commission (NDBC) Chair Joy Patten called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

Directors present: Patten, Lane Marshall, Brian Amundson, Jess Nehl, Jason Zahn, Denise Rohweder, Valerie Wagner, Austin Henderson, and Ex-Officio Travis Maddock. Absent: Carmel Miller

Staff present: Wendy Masset, Jessi Hummel, Jenna Paul and Nicole Wardner.

Guests present: Russ Makelkey, Julie Ellingson – EVP, ND Stockmen’s Association, Kylie Lusk and Kaitlyn Swope – Northeast Beef Promotion Initiative.

Amundson moved to add corrections to the November 2025 and January 2026 minutes and approve amended agenda, second by Nehl. Motion carried.

Patten called for conflicts of interest. None were declared.

Public Comment – Agenda Items Only

Patten provided an opportunity for public comment on agenda items in accordance with the board’s updated public comment process. No public comment was offered.

Minutes

Directors reviewed the February 18, 2026 meeting minutes. A correction was noted to revise a title from Vice Chair to Chair. **Zahn moved to approve the February minutes as corrected, second by Rohweder. Motion carried.**

Nehl moved to amend the November 2025 minutes to reflect the absent director and the January 2026 minutes to correct the title of the Chair. Second by Marshall. Motion carried.

Financial Update

Nehl provided an update on the financial status of NDBC. **Nehl moved to receive and file the February financial report, second by Marshall. Motion carried.**

Nehl informed the board there is a Certificate of Deposit (CD) scheduled to expire before the April meeting. **Nehl moved to reinvest the balance of the CD at the highest rate available for 12 months. Second by Rohweder. Motion Carried.**

Specialist Jessi Hummel provided the board with a Collections and Compliance report. This included participation in quarterly conference calls in the Cattlemen’s Beef Board, information on non-assessed cattle and Non-Producer Status forms, a report on private treaty sale letters, and an update on tasks she will be working on in next 3 months. The board thanked Hummel for her work and dedication to the Checkoff program.

Office Manager Wendy Masset provided the board a report on refunds requested and processed in the month of February.

Office Update

Wardner reported to the board the office remodel project is complete, staff is sorting and organizing printed materials and promotional products. The building is owned by a new group, Brandt Holdings. The new landlords toured the building and have improvements planned. Wardner also informed the board the current lease is through June of 2027.

Committee Reports

Amundson provided a report from the Marketing Committee meeting held Tuesday, March 24, 2026. **Wagner moved to accept the minutes of the committee. Second by Henderson. Motion carried.**

Contractor Report

Kaitlyn Swope and Kylie Lusk, staff from the Northeast Beef Initiative, reported on the partnership NDBC invested with the Massachusetts High School Activities Association. Facts about the geographical area include: The NE region of the US is home to 25% of the country's population. The ratio of cows to people is 1:16. Over 231,000 athletes and over 368,000 fans were reached in the promotion activation using the Powered By Beef brand.

National & International Program Updates

Wardner shared the CBB Impact Report handed out to the board members to help understand the impact national contractors have on the beef industry. The report is available for all producers wanting more information on national contractor programming.

The CBB appointments still have not been made. Wardner reported all commodities have seen a delay in their Checkoff board appointments. CBB orientation is on hold until board members are named.

Directors who attended the annual convention all gave reports on items they either found interesting or information they learned by going.

Staff and directors who attended the Federation Orientation meeting included Hummel and Marshall. They shared the 2-day meeting provided information on checkoff structure, and consumer research.

Nehl gave a report on the Federation Finance and Audit Committee. Amundson provided a report from the Beef Promotion Operating Committee (BPOC) orientation held in conjunction with Federation orientation meeting. Maddock gave a Federation of State Beef Councils report including stakeholders will see an emphasis on research funded by the Checkoff this year. This includes the research which supports the Dietary Guidelines for Americans changes. Efforts continue to bring states together to help extend national programming.

Amundson and Wardner will attend the USMEF Strategy Meeting, April 7, in Denver. This meeting provides opportunity for feedback in global beef promotional efforts.

Meeting Report

Rohweder gave a meeting report on the ND Ag Coalition. Paul shared the ND Barley Council has reached out to partner again in a consumer-focused event. The intent is to drive demand for beef and beer consumption by pairing the two products together. The Barley Council shared the greatest market share opportunities in non-alcoholic beer sales. This is being driven by Gen Z consumer choices. Wardner reported she was invited to give an update to the ND Stockmen's Association on Checkoff programs and investments.

Event/Programming Update

Directors reviewed reports submitted by the North Dakota CattleWomen on activities and promotional events. Paul reported on the Living Ag Classroom events for 2026. Staff and collegiate student volunteers helped educate 4,000 4th graders about the beef industry.

NDBC social media data and analysis was evaluated. Followers, engagement and reach have all increased, and for the first time the website is receiving organic click through engagement from social posts to the Powered by Beef page on www.ndbeef.org.

Paul presented the board with NIL (name, image and likeness) videos created with Powered by Beef collegiate athletes from 3 different universities across the state. Efforts to share the videos, increase brand awareness and reach consumers were outlined. Assets will be utilized on various platforms with assistance from the staff at the Federation of State Beef Councils.

Directors were presented May is Beef Month programming for 2026. Plans include school lunch promotions, grilling with the Governor at the state capitol, engagement with the running community at the Fargo Marathon with the Powered By Beef brand and efforts to engage consumers with beef month bingo. NDBC will be participating at the ND Academy for Physicians Assistants at the beginning of the month with the vast beef positive messaging available through the Checkoff.

Paul introduced the board to a new event for North Dakota. Girls Who Grill is a coordinated state effort to extend national programming. 16 states will host events this summer providing education on beef and cooking method instructions for influencers and content creators. The purpose is for the influencers to extend their knowledge with their followers and reach a second level of beef education. The event will be held the end of June in Carrington. More details will be available as plans are finalized.

The Barley and Beef consumer event was discussed from a program standpoint. This event will target men, ages 30-55, includes a celebrity chef and specific beef cuts paired with craft brewed beer. This event will also include second and third level consumer reach with video and earned media. This event will be held before Father's Day in Fargo. More details will be available as plans are finalized.

Staff updated directors on the Powered By Beef running team, FFA Signing Day, Ranch Signs, and the Beef Checkoff STEM tour for educators.

Wardner shared a ND Checkoff article will be in the most recent edition of the Working Ranch Magazine. This is part of a series, highlighting all the state beef councils.

An in-depth discussion was had about producer communications in-state. Reaching producer stakeholders, communication tactics and messaging was discussed. Directors provided insights and potential tactics. Strategies will be considered for programming in the upcoming fiscal year.

3 Take-aways from this meeting:

1. NIL commercials, Powered by Beef brand messaging, and engaging local athletes to be spokespeople for beef is positive and exciting.
2. Cooperation with other organizations and groups, leveraging producer dollars by working together to achieve goals is a highlight for both commodities.
3. The efforts and work completed by all the NDBC staff, which are driven, and purposeful in their work, keep the mission of the Beef Checkoff front and center, brings value and returns to the beef industry and the producer stakeholders.

The next meeting will be held virtually on April 22, 2026, at 8 am central time.

Rohweder moved to adjourn the meeting, second by Nehl. Patten adjourned the meeting at 2:40 p.m.