



ACTION ALERT



Vote "NO" on California Cattle Council



California Dairy Campaign and California Farmers Union urge beef and dairy producers to vote "NO" in the ongoing statewide referendum to double the beef checkoff from \$1 to \$2 per head.

The deadline for beef and dairy producers to vote in the referendum is Friday, March 22, 2019. So far just 12.5% of the referendum ballots have been returned to the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA). Despite the extremely low participation rate, the referendum could pass unless more beef and dairy producers vote "NO" by next Friday. There is no minimum level of participation required so beef checkoff fees could double even if very few beef and dairy producers actually vote.

If you have not received or misplaced your ballot you can obtain a provisional ballot on the California Department of Food and Agriculture web site today.

Web Link for ballot: **California Cattle Council Referendum**
or go to the CDFA web site for more information:
California Cattle Council Implementation Referendum
or contact the
California Dairy Campaign Office
at 209-632-0885.

In 2012, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) conducted a similar statewide referendum to double the beef checkoff from \$1 to \$2 per head. **That referendum failed making it clear that beef and dairy producers do not support a checkoff increase**, but proponents of this year's referendum lowered the threshold for passage to circumvent the

demonstrated will of beef and dairy producers statewide who oppose an increase in the beef checkoff.

The refund provision in the measure is overly cumbersome by requiring beef and dairy producers to request a refund each time a cow is sold. Instead beef and dairy producer should have the option to voluntarily contribute additional checkoff dollars instead of being burdened with time consuming refund requests.

Proponents of the “California Cattle Council” claim it would promote California cattle, but there is no way for consumers to know if beef is from California or even the United States because there is no mandatory country-of-origin labeling (COOL) of meat. Generic promotion of beef is failing to increase beef consumption and not benefiting cattle producers who have seen a more than **40% drop in cattle prices since 2014 and a more than 20% drop in their share of the consumer dollar.** Beef and dairy producers should not be required to contribute additional checkoff dollars on research and promotion efforts that are duplicative of the existing California Beef Council and the Cattlemen’s Beef Board. The “California Cattle Council” would fail to be open, transparent and participatory for all the beef and dairy producers who would be required pay more in checkoff fees.

California dairy producers already pay more than their fair share into the beef checkoff system due to the number of times that dairy cows are routinely sold and doubling the beef checkoff would create a greater financial burden. Dairy producers throughout California are facing extremely difficult financial circumstances due to low milk prices that do not come close to covering operational costs. Doubling the checkoff will further increase costs for struggling beef and dairy producers.

**For More Information
Contact Executive Director
Lynne McBride**

**California Dairy Campaign
California Farmers Union
325 Mitchell Avenue
Turlock, CA 95380
Phone: 209-632-0885**



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