

Testimony for HB 1487

Mr. Chairman and House Agriculture Committee Members, thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. My name is August Heupel. I am from Medina North Dakota and I am testifying in favor of House Bill 1487.

As a producer, I strongly feel our State Beef Checkoff should be a completely voluntary program. At time of sale, the producer should be able to “opt in” to support the checkoff if they so choose, or “opt out” if they choose not to support the checkoff.

I am not a member of the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association for a multitude of reasons, the main reason, however is that they will not support Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling. I struggle with the fact that the consumer can look at a tag on a piece of clothing in a store and see where that particular piece of clothing was made. When a consumer goes to the beef counter in their local grocery store they cannot distinguish between a particular cut of beef on whether or not it was grown and harvested in the United States or if it was grown in a number of different countries we import beef from. I feel these is completely misleading to the consumer. They assume it is a homegrown product because it has a USDA sticker on it, when in reality it could be an imported product. I truly believe if a consumer had a choice on a truthfully labeled product they would be more inclined to pick up a TRUE product of the USA to feed their families.

From a producer standpoint on labeling I am 100% for Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling. I want my product distinguished in the market place as a product of the USA. We as North Dakota producers along with producers from the rest of the country produce the best and safest beef in the world, and I want the consumer to have a right to select our beef in the supermarket.

The North Dakota Beef Commission sends a large portion of our producer funded checkoff dollars right to the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association and I feel this is working directly against producers.

From personal experience with the refund process through the North Dakota Beef Commission I am not satisfied with the results. I sent in my bill of sale to the North Dakota Beef commission with only my name, date and number of head showing. It was sent back to me and I was told they needed to see the whole bill of sale in order to issue a refund. This is a total invasion of privacy. The North Dakota Beef Commission did not need to see what I was selling, (steers, heifers, etc), the weight

at which I was selling said animal/animals or the price I received. They only needed my name, the date (to make sure I am within 60 days from time of sale), and the head count. They need to see nothing more in order to issue a refund. I feel the rest of the bill of sale is my information and strictly my own. Not the North Dakota Beef Commissions information.

Again, I am in Favor of HB 1487, and I thank the Committee for reading my testimony.

August Heupel