

Dear N.D. House Agriculture Committee,

Please vote YES on HB 1487.

We are cattle producers and cattle feeders from Adams County, North Dakota.

We would like to see the state checkoff become voluntary rather than mandatory.

A significant amount of the state beef checkoff is sent on to NCBA's Federation of State Beef Councils. NCBA has worked against policies that would help cattle feeders such as ourselves. We often struggle to market our finished cattle. We are finding that NCBA promotes policies that encourage more vertical integration by pushing feeders like us to seek "formula agreements" with packers that reduce the number of cattle sold on the cash market. The result of the increased number of formula agreements is that the cash market is difficult if not impossible to decipher. So we are at the mercy of the packers when it comes to marketing our cattle, and, for example, this year, even when they packers claimed they were too full to slaughter US cattle because of COVID, they imported more cattle in 2020 than they did in 2019.

NCBA has supported the policies that have made this happen, and they have opposed policies such as a proposed strengthening of the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Act (GIPSA) which would have tightened up USDA's anti-trust oversight, in order to try to put more control in the hands of the cattle producers and less in the hands of the packers.

Because the ND state beef checkoff has funded NCBA, and because I did not get to vote on the state checkoff in 2015, I urge you to please vote YES on HB 1487 which makes this program voluntary instead of mandatory.

Thank you,

Kevin and Lynette Symanowski