

At the local markets, our cattle are selling for roughly 50% of what they did six years ago. So when the Beef Commission in its fiscal note predicts a 50% reduction in collections with the passage of this bill. All I can say is welcome to the world of commodities. Also, six years ago in this committee I and others pointed out the vast amounts of checkoff dollars that were sent out of state to the Federation (a non-legal entity). According to the Federation website North Dakota contributions to this non-legal entity went from \$142,906.00 in 2015 to \$738,648.00 in 2020. Even after being warned by this committee to use North Dakota collections in North Dakota.

The one bright spot is the 2015 bill allowed for a refund; well a sixty day refund any way. So, in order to get a refund, applications need to be made every 60 days if sales are made in that time frame. My wife and I own cattle together. We both sign our operating note together each year. She and I are both listed as owners of the brand on these cattle; but if the cattle are consigned at the sale barn in my name, the co-owner and ranch bookkeeper cannot even request the refund form. That process is hardly user friendly.

My son, who ranches with me, whose cattle are co-mingled with mine at all times also has to make a refund form request separately. I believe the refund process is more difficult than necessary with the Beef Commission being Rule Maker, Judge, and Jury.

Anything less than a voluntary system is quite simply an injustice to those of us paying the tax.