

**FIRST ENGROSSMENT**

**ENGROSSED HOUSE BILL NO. 1207**

Introduced by

Representatives Hauck, Henderson, S. Olson

Senators Boehm, Schaible, Van Oosting

1 A BILL for an Act to create and enact four new sections to chapter 4.1-03 of the North Dakota  
2 Century Code, relating to the creation of districts, district commission member nomination and  
3 election procedures, the costs of elections of district representative commission members, and  
4 the referral of cattle assessments; to amend and reenact sections 4.1-03-01, 4.1-03-02,  
5 4.1-03-03, 4.1-03-04, 4.1-03-12, and 4.1-03-17 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to  
6 the definition of a cattle industry representative, the election and terms of members to the North  
7 Dakota beef commission, commission vacancies, and requiring livestock auction markets and  
8 livestock dealers to forward names of cattle sellers, and the refund of assessments; to provide a  
9 penalty; and to provide an effective date.

10 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

11 **SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Section 4.1-03-01 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
12 amended and reenacted as follows:

13 **4.1-03-01. Definitions.**

14 As used in this chapter:

- 15 1. "Beef producer" means any person that has an ownership interest in cattle.  
16 2. "Cattle" means live domesticated bovine animals.  
17 3. "Cattle feeder" means a person in the business of feeding cattle for the purpose of  
18 adding weight to the cattle prior to slaughter.  
19 4. "Cattle industry representative" means an individual who is or has been a beef  
20 producer, cattle feeder, dairy producer, or representative of a public livestock market in  
21 the state.  
22 5. "Commission" means the North Dakota beef commission.

- 1     ~~5-6.~~ "Dairy producer" means any person in the business of producing and selling milk from  
2           cows.
- 3     ~~6-7.~~ "Director" means the director of the North Dakota state university extension service.
- 4     ~~8.~~ "Eligible voter" means a beef producer who is at least eighteen years of age.
- 5     ~~9.~~ "Livestock auction market" means a public market or private buying station in which  
6           livestock is offered for sale or sold.
- 7     ~~7-10.~~ "Livestock dealer" means a person that purchases cattle and is required to be licensed  
8           under chapter ~~36-044.1-83.~~
- 9     ~~8-11.~~ "Participating producer" means a beef producer that has not obtained a refund of any  
10          assessment paid on the sale of cattle under this chapter for the preceding ~~three-~~  
11          ~~years~~year.
- 12    ~~12.~~ "Public livestock market" means a livestock auction market, public market, or private  
13          buying station in which livestock is offered for sale, auctioned, or sold and is required  
14          to be licensed under chapter 4.1-27 or 4.1-28.

15        **SECTION 2. AMENDMENT.** Section 4.1-03-02 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
16    amended and reenacted as follows:

17        **4.1-03-02. North Dakota beef commission - Membership - Qualifications.**

- 18        1. ~~The North Dakota beef commission consists of:~~
- 19           a. ~~Three beef producers;~~
- 20           b. ~~One cattle feeder;~~
- 21           c. ~~One dairy producer;~~
- 22           d. ~~One representative of a public livestock market; and~~
- 23           e. ~~Three at-large representatives.~~
- 24        2. ~~The governor shall appoint:~~
- 25           a. ~~Each beef producer from a list of at least two names submitted by the North-~~  
26           ~~Dakota stockmen's association;~~
- 27           b. ~~The cattle feeder from a list of at least two names submitted by the North Dakota-~~  
28           ~~stockmen's association feeder council;~~
- 29           c. ~~The dairy producer from a list of at least two names submitted by the milk-~~  
30           ~~producers association of North Dakota;~~

1           d. ~~The representative of a public livestock market from a list of at least two names-~~  
2                     ~~submitted by the North Dakota livestock marketing association; and~~

3           e. ~~The three at-large representatives.~~

4       3. ~~a. The commission consists of one cattle industry representative elected from each of~~  
5         ~~the districts under section 6 of this Act. The chairman, vice chairman, and secretary-~~  
6         ~~treasurer of the commission, serving on December 31, 2025, may continue to serve in~~  
7         ~~their respective positions as provided under section 4.1-03-03.~~

8       2. Each member of the commission must:

9           (1)a. Be a United States citizen and a resident of this state;

10          (2)b. Physically reside in the district the member represents; and

11          c. Be an actively engaged in that phase of the cattle industry the member-  
12          represents; and

13          (3) ~~Have been actively engaged in that phase of the cattle industry for a period~~  
14             ~~of five years~~representative.

15       b.3. Each member of the commission, ~~except~~unless the member is a representative of a  
16         public livestock market, must be a participating producer.

17       e.4. For purposes of this subsection, "actively engaged" means that the individual:

18           (1)a. Has an ownership interest in ~~an~~ a cattle operation that is ~~qualifies the individual as~~  
19             a cattle industry representative;

20           b. Is engaged in an activity of sufficient scope and significance as to constitute a  
21             distinct activity; and

22           (2)c. Has ~~and regularly exercises~~exercised direct control of the cattle operation for the  
23             preceding year.

24       **SECTION 3. AMENDMENT.** Section 4.1-03-03 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
25         amended and reenacted as follows:

26       **4.1-03-03. Term of office.**

27       1. ~~The~~Except as otherwise provided in this section, the term of office for each member is  
28         three years and begins on ~~July~~January first. The terms must be staggered so that no  
29         more than three terms expire each year.

- 1       2. The terms of all commission members, except the members serving as chairman, vice  
2       chairman, and secretary-treasurer of the commission on December 31, 2025, expire  
3       on December 31, 2025.
- 4       a. The chairman of the commission, serving on December 31, 2025, shall represent  
5       district six, as described under section 6 of this Act, until December 31, 2027.
- 6       b. The vice chairman of the commission, serving on December 31, 2025, shall  
7       represent district one, as described under section 6 of this Act, until  
8       December 31, 2028.
- 9       c. The secretary-treasurer of the commission, serving on December 31, 2025, shall  
10       represent district nine, as described under section 6 of this Act, until  
11       December 31, 2026.
- 12       d. The chairman, vice chairman, and secretary-treasurer of the commission, serving  
13       on December 31, 2025, each serving their respective term under this subsection,  
14       have the same rights, duties, and privileges as elected commission members.
- 15       3. Between October 1, 2025, and December 31, 2025, districts two, three, four, five,  
16       seven, and eight, as described under section 6 of this Act, each shall elect a  
17       commission member with a term, beginning January 1, 2026. The initial terms of  
18       individuals elected to begin serving as commission members on January 1, 2026, are:
- 19       a. One year for commission members representing districts two and five;  
20       b. Two years for commission members representing districts three and seven; and  
21       c. Three years for commission members representing districts four and eight.
- 22       4. Between October first and December thirty-first of the calendar year in which a  
23       commission member's term is to expire, the respective district shall elect an individual  
24       to serve as a commission member to represent that district for the succeeding term.
- 25       5. ~~A member of the commission may not serve more than two consecutive terms. If an-~~  
26       ~~individual is appointed after August 1, 2009, to complete a vacancy, that~~~~The service is-~~  
27       ~~not counted as aof the initial term, for purposes of this section, unless the duration of-~~  
28       ~~that service exceeds one year~~ under subdivision a of subsection 3 for commission  
29       members of districts two and five is not counted for purposes of this subsection.

30       **SECTION 4. AMENDMENT.** Section 4.1-03-04 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
31       amended and reenacted as follows:

1       **4.1-03-04. Vacancy.**

2       If a member's office is vacant, the position must be filled, for the remainder of the term, in  
3 the same manner as the original appointment. A member's office is vacant if:

4       1. At any time during a member's term the member ceases to possess any of the  
5 qualifications provided for in this chapter;

6       2. Any event enumerated in section 44-02-01 occurs; or

7       3. ~~The commission determines that a member has failed to attend three consecutive~~  
8 meetings of the commission without justification a commission member fails to meet the  
9 qualifications required to serve as a commission member under this chapter or a vacancy under  
10 section 44-02-01 occurs, the commission, by majority vote, shall appoint a qualified cattle  
11 industry representative for the remainder of the term. If an individual is appointed by the  
12 commission to complete a vacancy, that service is not counted as years of service under  
13 section 3 of this Act, unless the duration of that service exceeds one year. An individual  
14 appointed under this section has the same rights, duties, and privileges as an elected  
15 commission member.

16       **SECTION 5. AMENDMENT.** Section 4.1-03-12 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
17 amended and reenacted as follows:

18       **4.1-03-12. Collection of assessment.**

19       1. Each livestock auction market and livestock dealer shall:

20       a. Collect the assessments due under this chapter by deducting the assessments  
21 from any credit given or payment made to the seller of the cattle, at the time of  
22 the transaction; and

23       b. Forward the assessments to the commission in accordance with section  
24 4.1-03-13.

25       2. a. If a person sells North Dakota cattle outside this state or if a person sells North  
26 Dakota cattle to an out-of-state buyer, the person shall forward any assessments  
27 due under this chapter to the commission in accordance with section 4.1-03-13.

28       b. This subsection does not apply if the assessment has been paid to a brand  
29 inspector in another state or to another qualified state beef council.

30       3. Any other person selling cattle in this state shall forward any assessments due under  
31 this chapter to the commission in accordance with section 4.1-03-13.

1       **SECTION 6. AMENDMENT.** Section 4.1-03-17 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
2 amended and reenacted as follows:

3       **4.1-03-17. Permitted refunds of assessment - Refunds requiring certification by**  
4 **attorney general.**

5       1. a. When the attorney general certifies to the commission that refunds of assessments  
6 paid under subdivision a of subsection 1 of section 4.1-03-11 are no longer precluded  
7 by federal law, the commission may provide to producers refunds of assessments paid  
8 under subdivision a of subsection 1 of section 4.1-03-11.

9       b. ~~Refunds of assessments paid under subdivision b of subsection 1 of section~~  
10 ~~4.1-03-11 are available, subject to the requirements of this section.~~

11       2. a. To receive a permitted refund of any assessment paid in accordance with this  
12 chapter, a producer shall request a refund application from the commission within  
13 sixty days after the date of the sale. The request may be made orally, in writing,  
14 or in electronic form.

15       b. The producer must complete the refund application and return the application to  
16 the commission, together with a record of the assessment paid, within ninety  
17 days after the date of the sale. The application may be returned to the  
18 commission in person, by mail, or in electronic form. The commission shall then  
19 refund the net amount of the assessment that had been collected.

20       c. If a request for a refund is not submitted to the commission within the prescribed  
21 time period, the producer is presumed to have agreed to the assessment.

22       **SECTION 7.** A new section to chapter 4.1-03 of the North Dakota Century Code is created  
23 and enacted as follows:

24       **Geographical districts.**

25       1. The state consists of the following districts:

26       a. District one: Barnes, Cass, Cavalier, Eddy, Foster, Grand Forks, Griggs, Nelson,  
27 Pembina, Ramsey, Steele, Towner, Traill, and Walsh Counties;

28       b. District two: Dickey, LaMoure, McIntosh, Ransom, Richland, and Sargent  
29 Counties;

30       c. District three: Kidder, Logan, and Stutsman Counties;

31       d. District four: Burleigh, Emmons, Sheridan, and Wells Counties;

- 1 e. District five: Benson, Bottineau, McHenry, Pierce, Renville, and Rolette Counties;  
2 f. District six: Burke, Divide, McKenzie, McLean, Mountrail, Ward, and Williams  
3 Counties;  
4 g. District seven: Billings, Dunn, Golden Valley, Oliver, and Mercer Counties;  
5 h. District eight: Adams, Bowman, Hettinger, Slope, and Stark Counties; and  
6 i. District nine: Grant, Morton, and Sioux Counties.
- 7 2. The commission shall review the nine district boundaries and tally the number of cattle  
8 in each district at least once every seven years to ensure accurate producer  
9 representation. If the commission determines the nine districts do not accurately  
10 represent cattle industry representatives in the state, the commission may enact a  
11 redistricting plan to amend district boundaries, provided each district contains at least  
12 three undivided counties. If two-thirds of the elected commission members vote in  
13 favor of the proposed redistricting plan, the commission shall adopt the plan. If the  
14 commission adopts a redistricting plan, the commission shall submit a bill to the next  
15 legislative assembly to amend subsection 1 in a manner consistent with the results of  
16 the redistricting plan. The redistricting plan becomes effective on the date the  
17 amended district boundaries under subsection 1 become effective.

18 **SECTION 8.** A new section to chapter 4.1-03 of the North Dakota Century Code is created  
19 and enacted as follows:

20 **Director of the North Dakota state university extension service - Nomination and**  
21 **election of district commission candidates.**

- 22 1. a. The director of the North Dakota state university extension service shall oversee  
23 district representative commission member nominations and elections.  
24 b. Between October first and December thirty-first of each year, the director shall  
25 conduct the nominating and election process to elect successors for districts with  
26 terms expiring that fiscal year.  
27 c. The director shall notify all known cattle industry representatives in the respective  
28 district and request nominations for district representative commission candidates  
29 no fewer than forty-five nor more than sixty days before the district representative  
30 commission election. The notice must be published in all official county  
31 newspapers within the district or by reliable electronic means.

- 1           d. To be eligible as a candidate in a district commission election, at least five cattle  
2           industry representatives who reside in the district shall nominate the candidate in  
3           writing. A cattle industry representative may not self-nominate.
- 4           e. Upon receiving the district commission nominations, the director shall certify that  
5           nominated candidates meet the requirements of section 4.1-03-02. The director  
6           shall prepare the election ballots with the names of the certified nominated district  
7           commission candidates. Each ballot also must include a statement indicating:  
8           (1) The date, time, and location the director will open the ballots and tabulate  
9           the results;  
10          (2) The last date by which the ballots must be postmarked or filed with the  
11          director; and  
12          (3) Any cattle industry representative in the district may be present at the time  
13          the ballots are opened and tabulated.
- 14          f. The director shall hold the district commission election by mail paper ballot. The  
15          director shall mail the ballots to each known cattle industry representative in the  
16          district at least thirty days before the election.
- 17          g. The director shall canvass the votes. The director shall notify the commission and  
18          the governor that the election has taken place, and provide to the commission  
19          and the governor the name and address and term of the newly elected district  
20          representative commission member.
- 21          2. If the cattle industry representatives in a district fail to elect an individual, as required  
22          by this section, the director shall notify the commission and the governor. The  
23          governor shall appoint a cattle industry representative who meets the requirements of  
24          section 4.1-03-02 to serve as the district commission member for the district. An  
25          individual appointed under this subsection has the same rights, duties, and privileges  
26          as an elected commission member.
- 27          3. Each eligible voter is entitled to one vote and must vote in the district in which the  
28          voter's livestock operation headquarters is located. If an eligible voter has multiple  
29          livestock operation headquarters in more than one district, the eligible voter shall cast  
30          their vote in the district in which the voter physically resides.



- 1       4. To determine whether an individual is eligible to vote under this chapter, the  
2       commission may:  
3       a. Obtain a list of livestock producers from the United States department of  
4       agriculture farm service agency through the process under title 7, Code of  
5       Federal Regulations, part 798; or  
6       b. Require the beef producer to certify to the North Dakota state university  
7       extension service the producer is an eligible voter under this chapter.

8       **SECTION 9.** A new section to chapter 4.1-03 of the North Dakota Century Code is created  
9 and enacted as follows:

10       **Election costs - Responsibility.**

11       All costs of holding district commission member nominations and elections under section 7  
12 of this Act are the responsibility of the commission.

13       **SECTION 10.** A new section to chapter 4.1-03 of the North Dakota Century Code is created  
14 and enacted as follows:

15       **Referendums - Assessments.**

- 16       1. If petitioned by at least fifteen percent of the cattle industry representatives of the  
17       state, the commission shall conduct a referendum among the cattle industry  
18       representatives to determine the amount by which the assessment imposed under  
19       section 4.1-03-11 should be adjusted.  
20       2. No more than fifty percent of the cattle industry representatives who signed the  
21       petition may reside in the same district.  
22       3. The commission shall hold an assessment referendum by mail paper ballot. The  
23       commission shall prepare the ballots with the petitioned amount by which the  
24       assessment imposed under section 4.1-03-11 is proposed to be adjusted and  
25       distribute the ballots to each cattle industry representative at least thirty days before  
26       the last date for filing ballots.  
27       4. Each ballot must include a statement indicating:  
28       a. The date the petition was filed and the number of signatures on the petition;  
29       b. The date, time, and location the commission will open the ballots and tabulate the  
30       results;

- 1           c. The last date by which the ballots must be postmarked or filed with the  
2           commission; and
- 3           d. Any cattle industry representative may be present at the time the ballots are  
4           opened and tabulated.
- 5           5. The date selected by the commission for the opening and tabulation of the ballots  
6           must be at least five days after the date by which the ballots must be postmarked or  
7           filed with the commission.
- 8           6. The commission shall canvass the votes. If the majority of voting cattle industry  
9           representatives vote in favor of the proposed change, the commission shall submit a  
10          bill to the next legislative assembly to amend the statutory assessment in a manner  
11          consistent with the results of the vote.
- 12          7. All costs of holding an assessment referendum under this section are the responsibility  
13          of the commission.

14          **SECTION 11. EFFECTIVE DATE.** Section 2 of this Act becomes effective on January 1,  
15          2026.