

Dear North Dakota House Agriculture Committee,

I urge a “yes” vote on HB 1487.

I am a farmer and rancher from rural Bucyrus, North Dakota.

I did not get the opportunity to vote on the state beef checkoff when it was implemented in 2015. While some checkoff supporters may tell you this is already a voluntary checkoff, that is not the case. It is mandatory, and most of my neighbors are not even aware of the fact that they have the option of requesting their money back.

I have not seen the ND state beef checkoff promote North Dakota beef and I have not seen research projects that will help my operation.

While the concept sounds nice, the reality is that too much of the funding gets caught up in red tape along the way, rather than helping North Dakota ranchers and the North Dakota economy. I would prefer a voluntary approach, which I believe would give the overseers of the checkoff more incentive to be accountable to those who are paying the bill.

Cattle prices have done nothing but decline since this checkoff was implemented and I have not seen any programs this checkoff has funded that will help me as a North Dakota producer. They are geared toward selling generic beef, which is increasingly being imported from 20 different countries.

Please vote yes on HB 1487 so that North Dakota producers can vote with our dollars.

Thank you,

Jon Markegard