



"Serving Michigan's Cattlemen Since 1960"

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Michigan Cattlemen Tell USDA: Don't Hijack the Checkoff

Okemos, Michigan (Oct. 14, 2014) – Today, the Michigan Cattlemen's Association along with 43 state cattlemen's associations sent a [letter](#) to Agriculture Secretary Vilsack, urging him to cease any efforts to establish an additional beef checkoff under the 1996 General Commodity Promotion, Research and Information Act. Dennis Peterson, Michigan Cattlemen's Association President and Niles, Michigan cattleman says cattle producers in Michigan are highly concerned that this effort by the Secretary will harm the success of the current checkoff and erode producer support.

"Cattlemen and women will under no circumstances support any attempt to supplement, replace, or enhance the Beef Checkoff with the 1996 Act," said Peterson. "The Beef Checkoff has served our industry well, it is supported by 4 out of 5 producers, and it returns \$11.20 for every dollar producers invest. We will not stand idly by and allow this administration to jeopardize our industry's research and promotion efforts for political gain."

Secretary Vilsack announced to representatives of various stakeholder groups on Sept. 30 that he intended the USDA's Agriculture Marketing Service to begin drafting a proposed rule to implement a supplemental checkoff under the 1996 Act.

"The foundation of the 1985 Beef Checkoff is the participation of state beef councils," said Peterson. "Through the state beef councils, grassroots producers invest and direct programs that build demand for their product and help direct research and promotion dollars on the state and national level. By comparison, the 1996 Act is a top down, federally controlled program that not only fails to recognize the role of the states, but places the control and administration of promotion dollars in the hands of bureaucrats in Washington D.C. We oppose greater government control of our industry and heavy-handed, federally-mandated action by giving more power to the federal government."

More information can be found at www.beefUSA.org and producers can sign a petition directing the administration to abandon their efforts to take over the Checkoff [here](#).