

George Brett began promoting Kansas beef in 1988 and has since appeared on beef billboards, such as the one above. He has also touted beef in commercials on Royals Radio Network.

KANSAS BEEF COUNCIL

A Royal Success

The national beef checkoff effort begins at the grass-roots level - the state beef councils. The Kansas Beef Council is an excellent example of an organization that strives to be a leader in beef promotion and consumer education.

by Julie Grimes Albertson

When you think of Kansas, "the wheat state", the first thing that comes to your mind is probably not beef. However, the Kansas Beef Council (KBC) is trying its best to change that.

KBC began changing attitudes about beef early in the checkoff game. In 1973, the Kansas Livestock Association established the beef council as a promotional arm of the association. It has grown from a budget of around \$55,000 in 1973 to \$1.2 million in 1992.

Joe Linot Jr., executive director of KBC says the producers of the state are responsible for the early beginnings and continued success of the council. "The philosophy of Kansas producers has always been that we have to be aggressive in the areas where there are far more people than cattle. So the largest

percentage of our dollar collected, about 86 cents, is spent nationally in all of the different program areas," says Linot.

The Kansas Livestock Association (KLA) shares its offices with KBC which is beneficial to producers paying the bill. "We have one strong voice, and clearly, I think it's the leadership we have in the state from producers that encourages us to be aggressive," says Linot. KBC relies on both KLA and *Kansas Stockman* magazine staff members to assist in the council effort.

Kansas, second only to Texas in checkoff dollars collected, brought in \$8.5 million checkoff dollars in 1991.

Although some might credit the success of the Kansas Beef Council to the size of its budget, the attitude and determination of the producers and staff members is what keeps this council on

the cutting edge of promotion and education.

Some of the national programs funded through the checkoff include advertising and consumer information. Television commercials, print ads and network radio commercials are continuing to improve public perception of beef. The checkoff's consumer information program targets doctors, nurses, dietitians, teachers and the media with positive messages about beef.

Research programs sponsored by the checkoff include new product technology which has yielded the development of low-fat beef products. Industry information and producer communication programs attempt to preserve and improve beef's positive image and keep producers informed and educated.

One way the Kansas Beef Council maintains its progressiveness is by including national committee members from Kansas on the KBC executive committee. Kansas is somewhat unique because any time a member is on a national committee (Cattlemen's Beef Board, Beef Industry Council) deciding how checkoff dollars are going to be spent, they're always a member of the Kansas Beef Council.

"Our producers believe it's important for national representatives to know how the state program runs, and what the state council is doing. So when money is allocated for programs nationally, members will know how it will affect the state program," says Linot.

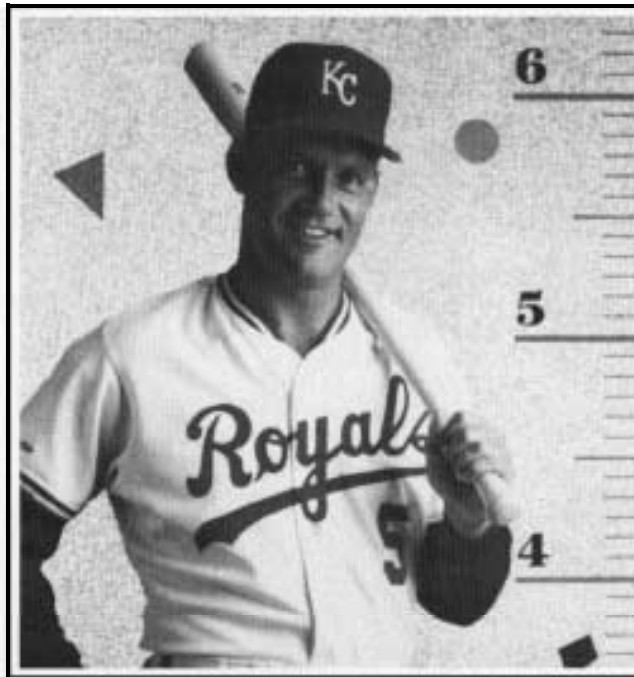
There are 25 producer members on the executive committee, representing all aspects of the livestock industry including: dairy, cow-calf, stocker, purebred, feeder, livestock market and order buyer interests. Eight members are appointed by the president of the Kansas Livestock Association. The remaining members sit on the National Cattlemen's Beef Board or Beef Industry Council committees.

One KBC committee member is Jan Lyons, of Lyons Angus Ranch, Manhattan, Kan.

Lyons attributes part of KBC's success to the diverse representation of the executive committee. "The committee is very close to the industry because of its composition. We have every segment of the industry represented," says Lyons.

She also credits the KBC staff for its efforts in not only promotion, but for its response to inaccurate health claims criticizing beef. That's why the staff dietitian is so important, Lyons says.

KBC was one of the first states to hire a full-time dietitian. Linot says Kansas producers have always believed it is important to get accurate, scientific information out to physicians, dietitians, hospitals and county health departments. KBC staff provides them with the necessary information to give to their patients when they have questions on fat or cholesterol.



KBC, in keeping with its tradition of creating educational nutrition posters for Kansas schools, launched this season's poster, a growth chart, featuring a life-size photo of Kansas City Royals All-Star, George Brett. Every physical education teacher in Kansas received the poster.

professionals and dietitians I work with realize I'm sincere and credible."

Elias carries out national nutrition programs as well as those KBC develops such as a recent mineral symposium for health professionals held in Kansas City. KBC, along with the Dairy Council and the Missouri Beef Industry

Council, sponsored the workshop which included a panel of seven internationally recognized experts of mineral nutrition.

Because fat is such a prevalent dietary issue today, Elias has created a display called "Where's the Fat?" which shows how much fat popular snack foods have in comparison to balanced meals that contain beef. Vials of fat accompany each snack-food entry to graphically display how many grams of fat are consumed in snack foods.

A 3-ounce portion of roasted eye of round containing 4.2 grams of fat is compared to 2 ounces of potato chips containing 20 grams of fat.

The display was provided to several libraries in the state during March, nutrition month, and will be introduced to Kansas schools this spring.

The Kansas Beef Council was the first state council to develop a brochure with the American Cancer Society called "Eat Smart With Beef." They also have a beef certificate program with 211 middle and high schools providing home economics classes with beef to learn how to prepare it properly.

"We receive letters from some students saying the steak we provided was the first one they'd ever eaten," says Elias.

"It's all in developing relationships, much like with the American Heart Association. We worked with them for



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-Jan Lyons

Dianna Elias, a registered dietitian, acts as coordinator of consumer affairs and nutrition for KBC. Elias spends much of her time developing relationships with health care professionals. "I stay active in associations, such as the American Heart Association and the American Cancer Society, so the health

several years. We didn't develop the first brochure with them in the very first meeting," Linot says.

Another element of KBC is its coordinator of retail and foodservice programs. Trudi McGlasson oversees all aspects of beef merchandising within the retail and foodservice sectors.

She works with grocers as well as restaurants and foodservice distributors to promote beef as a high-quality, nutritious product.

In order to fund these programs, Kansas has aggressively sought ways to increase compliance and collection of checkoff dollars.

The council is constantly thinking of new ways to approach collections and compliance because it's important that everyone contribute. "Producers voted in favor of the program because everyone pays, regardless of size. It's fair, a dollar each time an animal is sold, so we're vigorously monitoring our collections each month," says Linot.

Bryce Schumann, coordinator of industry relations, is responsible for monitoring the collection process. Schumann visits many of the council's 731 collection points each year. "That's the fun part of my job, being around producers and providing them with information about the checkoff," says Schumann.

Many purebred breeders don't think about checking off a dollar when they sell animals privately. KBC recently sent out 1,300 remittance forms to members of the state's breed associations. So far they've had a 44 percent response rate, with \$4,500 new dollars collected.

"I'd say at least two-thirds of the people responding asked for more remittance forms," says Schumann. "That's a real positive sign that breeders want to contribute."

"Some producers don't realize how fierce the competition is with competing meats. Even though we've made a lot of progress, we still have a lot of work to do in providing the consumer with a consistent product that's convenient," says Linot.

The Kansas Beef Council is an example of how aggressive and forward thinking producers can affect change. Producers support a staff dedicated to the promotion of beef and expect nothing less than the best. So far, that's what they've gotten.

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KBC dietitian Dianna Elias has been selected as one of two Kansas Recognized Young Dietitians for 1992 by the Kansas Dietetic Association. Elias coordinates KBC activities in consumer affairs and nutrition.

Beef. It's What's for Dinner.

On May 18, the national Beef Industry Council and Meat Board will ask America "What's for dinner?" as they launch a new multi-million dollar advertising and promotion campaign.

"Beef. It's What's for Dinner" is designed to satisfy consumer hunger for new beef recipes. It also extends the beef council's message to consumers by offering new, quick and simple recipes for making delicious family meals with beef.

"Our research tells us that consumers are tired of being told what to eat and what not to eat. Instead, they generally embrace the concept of moderation and look for positive information on how they can continue to enjoy the foods they love-like beef," says the national Beef Industry Council.

The new advertising was created to speak to the increasingly diverse tastes and interests of consumers today, people who love hamburgers and steaks but want to experiment with new recipes, too.

"Beef. It's What's for Dinner" builds upon the "Real Food For Real People" campaign which has been highly successful. The campaign won prestigious awards from both *Advertising Age* and *Adweek* magazines, as well as from the National Agri-Marketing Association.