



Satisfaction in Beef Checkoff Slips

Cattlemen's Beef Board Executive Committee reviews survey results revealing producer attitudes toward the beef checkoff.

by **Troy Smith**, field editor

Among the events scheduled during the 2017 Cattle Industry Convention in Nashville, Tenn., were meetings involving members of state beef councils and the Cattlemen's Beef Board (CBB), the group of beef producers and importers tasked with directing investment of beef checkoff dollars toward national programs for research, education and promotion. The convention agenda included a meeting of the CBB Executive Committee at which CBB Chairman Brett Morris and CEO Polly Ruhland presented results of the most recent survey of producer attitudes regarding the checkoff.

The survey, conducted in December 2016, was based on responses from 1,200 cattle producers chosen at random from across the United States by an independent company.

Survey results suggest that 70% of producers look favorably upon the beef checkoff. That approval rating is down 7 points from the year previous. During the past five years, producer approval has ranged between 69% and 78%.

Of survey respondents, 67% considered themselves well-informed about the checkoff's purpose and how checkoff monies are used, which is consistent with the average of the last five years' surveys. One in three producers admitted to knowing little or nothing about the checkoff. Familiarity with "how it works" would appear to be strongly associated with a favorable attitude toward the checkoff.

According to the survey, 66% of producers felt the checkoff enhanced the profitability of their operations — 7% fewer than the year

previous. About two-thirds said the program does a good job of representing their interests, down 9% from last year.

Committee members talked about why the checkoff has lost traction among some producers, with lower cattle prices and market volatility mentioned as possible influences on producer attitudes. However, Ruhland explained that, historically, there is no clear connection. Perhaps a stronger influence, she suggested, is the fact that trust in government and nongovernment organizations is at a new historic low.



Editor's Note: *Troy Smith is a freelance writer and cattleman from Sargent, Neb. This article was written as part of Angus Media's coverage of the 2017 Cattle Industry Convention. For further coverage, visit www.angus.media.*