

# Federation Tackles Issues at Summer Conference

Group celebrates 50 years of helping build beef demand through voluntary, mandatory checkoffs.

by **Walt Barnhart**, Federation of State Beef Councils

**R**educed U.S. cattle numbers and state beef council efforts to maximize effectiveness were among the topics Aug. 8 as the Federation of State Beef Councils conducted sessions at the 2013 Cattle Industry Summer Conference in Denver, Colo. In addition, the Federation celebrated its 50th anniversary during the meeting, recognizing the many contributions of state beef councils to state and national beef checkoff programs since 1963.

“This was a chance to recognize the significant impact our grassroots research, promotion and education programs have made on building beef demand for 50 years,” said Richard Gebhart, a beef producer from Claremore, Okla., and chairman of the Federation of State Beef Councils. “At the

same time, we were able to address the continuing need of state beef councils and the national program to address some serious industry issues. It’s a true partnership between 45 state beef councils and their representatives at the national level.”

A Federation “state sharing” session Aug. 8 started the day’s events, giving state beef council representatives an opportunity to connect with other councils and national Federation Services staff about both common and unique issues. Design, IT and communications needs and challenges were identified and ideas for resolution discussed.

At the first general session, John Huston, executive vice president emeritus for the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA) and former president of the National

Live Stock and Meat Board, provided a historical backdrop for the program and his thoughts for the future of checkoff-funded beef promotion efforts to nearly 600 summer conference attendees. Huston said he supports the industry’s efforts to enhance checkoff resources, as long as those efforts come from the grassroots up, not from the top down. At the same time, he stressed the need for the industry to get behind the concept of “one vision, one plan, one voice.”

Huston also moderated a panel that afternoon at the Federation Forum at which state beef council executives and volunteer leadership described how their states modified their efforts in light of decreasing revenues and increasing industry promotional needs. Individuals from councils in California, Kansas, Nebraska, Nevada and Texas participated in the panel to share their experiences of balancing needs with resources.

## Celebrating 50

That evening, the Federation celebrated its 50th anniversary of helping build beef demand through both voluntary and mandatory checkoff programs with a reception for current and past staffs and volunteers.

The Federation was created in 1963 as the Beef Industry Council (BIC), which was housed at the National Live Stock and Meat Board. When the Meat Board merged with the National Cattlemen’s Association in 1996, the Federation became housed at the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA).

The partnership between state beef councils and national beef checkoff efforts during the past 50 years is chronicled in a new booklet available through the Federation of State Beef Councils and online. The booklet explores beef industry volunteers that made beef checkoffs possible, provides a timeline for actions that moved checkoffs forward, and establishes the foundation for grassroots-oriented initiatives that made the National Beef Checkoff Program what it is today. A digital copy of the booklet is available on the [www.beefusa.org](http://www.beefusa.org) website under the Federation tab. To receive a hard copy of the booklet, contact Walt Barnhart at [wbarnhart@beef.org](mailto:wbarnhart@beef.org) or 303-850-3347.

“The Federation events Aug. 8 combined a celebration of the past with needs of, and possibilities for, the future,” said Gebhart. “We’re very excited about what the Federation can do over the next 50 years to further showcase beef to our consumers.”



**Editor’s Note:** *Walt Barnhart is director of communications for the Federation of State Beef Councils, which provided this article.*

## State beef councils receive grants to build beef demand

The Federation of State Beef Councils has awarded seven grants totaling \$60,400 to six state beef councils to boost their beef-demand programs. The awards, part of the Federation Initiative Fund program, were announced at the Federation Forum at the 2013 Cattle Industry Summer Conference in Denver Aug. 8.

The Federation Initiative Fund was established in 2006 to help move beef-checkoff funds from states with heavy cattle numbers to states with heavier consumer populations. The six states receiving awards for 2014 are:

- ▶ **Arizona Beef Council**, for a gate-to-plate influencer tour (\$7,400) to conduct farm and ranch tours for influencers, addressing the myths surrounding the beef feeding sector.
- ▶ **Florida Beef Council**, for a ProStart Education Initiative (\$12,300) to launch a high school culinary education initiative with Florida ProStart teachers and students.
- ▶ **Georgia Beef Board**, for a Beef 101 Seminar and Farm Tour (\$5,200) to conduct farm and ranch tours for influencers, addressing the myths surrounding the beef feeding sector; and provide training to retail meat departments or foodservice staffs on beef.
- ▶ **Michigan Beef Industry Commission**, for a Beef Value Seminar (\$6,000) to provide training to retail meat departments and foodservice staffs on new beef cuts, nutrition and healthy diets utilizing the Beef University and Beef Training Camp.
- ▶ **New York Beef Industry Council**, two grants, one for Local Expert Social Media Outreach (\$20,000) to conduct social media marketing outreach to improve consumer preference for beef and strengthen the image of beef and the beef industry; and a Social Media Marketing — Retail Partner Program (\$5,000) to provide state extension to consumers on preparing beef.
- ▶ **Pennsylvania Beef Council**, for Beef Quality Assurance (BQA)/Dairy Beef Quality Assurance (DBQA) Training (\$4,500) to conduct BQA/DBQA certification training and tour packing plant with future industry influencers, addressing beef industry issues throughout all sectors, as well as industry advancements. Also address myths regarding food safety and animal care and handling either on the farm or at harvest.

State beef councils voluntarily invest in the Federation to help strengthen the national effort to build demand for beef. Since it was created, the Federation Initiative Fund has awarded about \$2.2 million to 22 states conducting 180 programs.