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May 2, 2011

Cattlemen's Beef Board  
9000 E. Nichols Ave., Suite 215  
Centennial, CO 80112

Chairman Jones, Officers, and Executive Committee Members;

On behalf of the membership of the United States Cattlemen's Association (USCA), I would like to express our sincere gratitude for your efforts to improve the Beef Checkoff. Since its inception, USCA has been an ardent supporter of the checkoff and our membership acknowledges the significance of the work performed and its importance to the profitability and health of our industry.

We are familiar with USDA's Final Guidelines for AMS Oversight of Commodity Research and Promotion Programs and the Beef Promotion and Research Act and Order and have watched with great interest the progress towards implementation of the CBB's Committee on Roles and Responsibilities 2010 recommendations for enhancing the checkoff. We greatly appreciate and applaud the committee's diligence and continued commitment to checkoff improvement. USCA commends all of those on the committee for conducting a much needed update of the CBB's roles and responsibilities, a process that has not been attempted for almost fifteen years. We fully support these efforts to make the checkoff a more inclusive entity.

Our organization currently has no interest in performing contract work for the checkoff. However, as checkoff-paying producers, we are extremely interested in being able to participate in the long range planning and goal setting process that precedes the contracting process. We hope that you can bring this to fruition.

The present Joint Committee System between the Committee and NCBA is not conducive to participation from the vast majority of checkoff paying cattle producers who are not members of NCBA or one of its affiliates. In recent years, there have been instances in which our members, as well as non-affiliated producers, have attempted to gain access to CBB meetings at the NCBA Annual Meeting. These checkoff-paying producers were met with heavy resistance upon requesting to attend and view the proceedings of a CBB meeting unless they paid registration fees for the convention to NCBA. Upon admittance, which was only secured through CBB staff, these individuals were of course not given the ability to cast a vote in any committee decisions. Our membership, along with additional agriculture groups and the majority of cattle producers who are not affiliated with any organization, should have the opportunity to participate in the checkoff planning process without having to attend a meeting that is visibly dominated by members of any one particular organization. Your present efforts have made significant strides toward expanding the "ownership" of the checkoff and your continued commitment to this cause will ultimately enhance producer approval of the national beef checkoff program.

We wholeheartedly endorse your efforts to implement these improvements to the checkoff and urge you to stay the course until it is done. We are willing to help in any way that we can, and as an organization, look to remain an active participant in the future of our checkoff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jen Abate".

President, U.S. Cattlemen's Association