

DRAFT MINUTES

Joint Producer Communications Committee Meeting Sheraton Hotel – Denver, Colorado; Friday, July 31, 2010

1. Call to Order

Chairman Wesley Grau called the meeting to order at 8:04 a.m., reviewed the meeting purpose, and had the committee approve the meeting agenda by consensus.

2. Introductions

Chairman Grau requested introductions of committee members and staff.

Members Present

- Chairman Wesley Grau, CBB
- Vice Chairman Hank Maxey, Jr., CBB
- Danni Beer, CBB
- Virginia Davis, CBB
- Bob Drake, CBB
- Ross Garwood, CBB
- Rodney Gray, Federation
- Danny Hermann, CBB
- Larry Jeffcoat, Federation
- Frank Phelps, CBB
- Phyllis Snyder, CBB
- Linda Joy Stovall, Federation
- State Beef Council staff (non-voting): Carol Gillis, New York Beef Industry Council; Kathleen Hawkins, Michigan Beef Industry Commission; and Richard Wortham, Texas Beef Council

Members Absent

- Chris Burris, Federation
- Jon Ferguson, Federation
- Janet Moyer, Federation
- Buddy Smith, Federation
- Dave Maples, Executive Vice President, Kentucky Beef Council

Guests Present

- Destry Brown, Nebraska
- Andrew Burt, Importer
- Marcus Creasy, Arkansas
- Janel Fisher, NCBA staff
- Therese Hicks, Arizona
- Tucker Hughes, Montana Stockgrowers Association
- Todd Johnson, NCBA staff
- Maxine Jones, South Dakota
- Tom Troxel, Arkansas

Staff Present

- CBB: Lynn Heinze, staff liaison to committee; Diane Henderson, Melissa Slagle, Polly Ruhland
- McCormick Company: Suzi Sutton-Vermuelen
- Craig Shackelford, USDA

3. Approve Minutes

Linda Joy Stovall moved and Phyllis Snyder seconded to approve the minutes of the Jan. 29, 2010 meeting as presented. Motion approved unanimously.

4. Progress Reports

CBB Executive Director of Communications Lynn Heinze, Trade Media Manager Melissa Slagle and Communications Manager Diane Henderson provided an overview of producer communications efforts for the year, including paid and earned media elements, direct communications and other efforts. In addition, NCBA State Services staff representative Janel Fisher updated the committee on how it coordinates with the CBB producer communications team to produce state-national annual reports, auction-market cards, customized ads and auction-market posters.

Committee member Rodney Gray said there is a need for some “fence-mending” at some auction markets in Nebraska that have refused to use auction market cards because of hostility to the checkoff; Committee member Danni Gray said she hasn’t seen the materials in the auction markets in her area; and Chairman Grau said staff and producer leaders need to encourage all states to use these materials.

Committee members discussed ways to extend the reach of producer communications messages – especially the new “flip book,” created at the request of Chairman Grau and developed in cooperation with the Masters of Beef Advocacy program. Larry Jeffcoat said that the Mississippi Beef Council provides burgers and hot dogs for a local blood drive and can give out the flip book through that venue; Danny Hermann suggested distributing it through feedyards to their customers; and Vice Chairman Maxey suggested asking if packers are interested in distributing them.

Ross Garwood suggested that check stuffers might be a good tactic for getting checkoff messages to some of those producers who do not get checkoff information in other ways. Virginia Davis said that Indiana found that people did not like to stuff anything, so that state printed envelopes with a fact/message about the checkoff and covered the cost of printing the envelopes. Chairman Grau said he ‘really liked the idea’ of printing envelopes, and Danni Beer suggested that putting the My Beef Checkoff Can Logo and website address on them would be useful.

Heinze noted that finding an envelope size that fit everyone’s needs was a difficulty, and Phyllis Snyder suggested providing something that people could download and print on their own envelopes would work in place of providing envelopes. Heinze said he would look into that.

5. Producer Communications Tracking (print, online)

Heinze, along with Suzi Sutton-Vermeulen of McCormick Company provided a summary of the many procedures in place to measure the effectiveness of current programs, including Readex, readership surveys and dedicated research efforts.

6. Results of Producer Attitude, QSBC, and Media Surveys

Heinze presented results of surveys completed with Qualified State Beef Council executives to measure perceptions and ideas for coordination in checkoff producer communications; Slagle

presented highlights of a recent survey of agricultural trade publication editors and writers aimed at measuring success of trade media communications.

Danni Beer suggested asking producers to fill out some sort of “how are we doing?” survey on the website to solicit input about what producers like and don’t like in receiving information about the checkoff.

Heinze presented results of the latest Producer Attitude Survey, noting that about 72 percent of producers said they approve of the checkoff, up from 69 percent six months ago. Heinze also went over results about producers’ awareness of and knowledge about the checkoff and the value they see in it.

7. Overview of the External Project Evaluation, FY 2009 Producer Communications AR

CBB Director of Evaluations Polly Ruhland provided an overview of the external evaluation of the Producer Communications program, as completed by Demeter Communications. One of the keys to overall evaluation of the checkoff, she said, is that each program evaluates the environment in which they operate and adjust their programs accordingly. She noted that the Producer Communications evaluation found that PC performs a healthy amount of market research and makes changes along the way, which helped it earn high marks from evaluators.

There were a few suggestions for improvements, Ruhland said, but many of those have already been incorporated by the producer communications team, since the evaluation looked at the FY 2009 program, and adjustments have been made since. Overall, she said, the evaluators found the program “so good” that it was difficult to come up with too many suggestions. While it gave the MyBeefCheckoff website high compliments, it also suggested finding ways to drive more traffic there. Ruhland encouraged committee members to be sure and read the entire evaluation report.

The committee discussed the evaluators’ suggestion that producer communications develop a more specific strategic plan but noted that until the overall checkoff has a new strategic plan in place, that would be premature.

8. QSBC-SHARE Program Update

Chairman Grau asked for updates from state beef council staff about current SHARE programs. Jim Handley of Florida, John Freitag of Wisconsin, and Kathleen Hawkins of Michigan each addressed the committee with reports about SHARE programs under way in their states.

Heinze presented suggested changes to the SHARE program for Fiscal 2011, mapping out regional programs in areas where state beef councils may not be able to afford even to participate in cost sharing because of budgetary constraints. Heinze said the producer communications team is currently looking at some options in the Northeast and the Southeast, as well as some possible opportunities in the West or Pacific Northwest. The team is going back to media to get the best possible deals and coverage for those areas, he said, so that the national program can provide some direct benefits to state programs by way of paid media efforts and value-add interviews.

9. Discuss/Recommend FY2011 Authorization Request

Heinze presented the FY2011 Producer Communications Authorization Request (AR) to the Joint Producer Communications Committee.

In discussion about coordination with state beef councils, Vice Chairman Maxey moved and Rodney Gray seconded a motion to direct CBB staff to plan an annual meeting with state beef council execs and staff to go over the producer communications media plan and state-coordinated efforts, such as the online toolkit. Carol Gillis suggested development of an e-mail address list of all state beef council staff who work on producer communications. The motion was approved unanimously.

Danni Beef made a motion, seconded by Virginia Davis, to recommend approval of the producer communications Authorization Request for FY 2011, as submitted. The motion was approved unanimously.

10. Adjourn

The committee adjourned at about 11:50 a.m.