

Cattlemen’s Beef Board

AR# 2550-PC

AR Title: Producer Communications of Beef Checkoff Programs

AR Purpose and Description:

The programs defined in this AR align with the Stakeholder Engagement Program Committee’s purpose to “engage beef community stakeholders in programs that enhance understanding of the Beef Checkoff and the advance of the beef industry.”

Lack of knowledge, as well as misinformation, about Beef Checkoff-funded programs can negatively impact the implementation of and participation in the program. Research consistently shows that the better-informed producers and importers are about the programs they fund, the more they support and engage with the goal of driving demand for beef. The Producer Communications (PC) program ensures producers understand how their investment is working for them, what it is doing to support the industry, and how it positions beef in a crowded field of many other proteins. As the key conduit to engage and inform the nearly 880,000 payers into the program - beef producers and importers - PC has provided a consistently strong platform for disseminating information about both state and national Beef Checkoff efforts. *The Drive*, the cornerstone publishing platform of PC, continues to strengthen its reach to producers through print, email, video, digital, and social spaces. A focus on outward facing relationships with key stakeholders will push communications toward additional audiences that seek better understanding of how the program operates. Beef Checkoff program updates and dispelling program misinformation continue to be a top priority.

CBB Budget Category: Producer Communications

Start Date: 10/1/2024

End Date: 9/30/2025

FY25 CBB/BPOC Funding Request		
Direct Costs	Implementation	Total
\$1,602,000.00	\$198,000.00	\$1,800,000.00

Beef Industry Long Range Plan (LRP) Core Strategies Addressed by this AR:

- Safeguard and Cultivate Investment in Beef Industry Research, Marketing and Innovation

TACTIC DESCRIPTION:

This listening tactic identifies different aspects and traits of farmers and ranchers to create more targeted, purposeful messaging that can be shared and leveraged across national and state Beef Checkoff programs.

Data-Driven Producer Listening

The Producer Attitude Survey - The annual Producer Attitude Survey is a national, quantitative, random, independently administered survey of producers. It provides key data and insights on the understanding, or lack thereof, among producers about Beef Checkoff programs and is used to determine much of PC's outreach messaging. The sample size is a statistically valid representation of producers and participants spread across six regions of the U.S. The annual survey provides valuable benchmarks of producer awareness, affinity for the Beef Checkoff, identifies current hot topics among producers, and tracks changes how and where producers gain their day-to-day information. Additionally, each Qualified State Beef Council (QSBC) may further fund expansion of this study within its respective state to gain deeper producer insights specific to their location.

The Drive Producer Content Survey - With a focus on gathering opinions from *The Drive* platform content and *DrivingDemandForBeef.com* website, this survey invites current subscribers to *The Drive* as well as to other cattle and beef producer groups (who are then given an opportunity to receive *The Drive*) an opportunity for input, including top preferences regarding how Beef Checkoff dollars are invested. In FY25, more outreach is planned to encourage QSBCs and other beef industry organizations to invite their members to participate in surveys that will allow the PC program to broaden producer listening efforts and grow *The Drive* subscriber list.

One-on-One Producer Input

Checkoff Discussions - Discussions with various Beef Checkoff and industry groups continue to be invaluable in gaining a deeper understanding of gaps in producer knowledge about Checkoff programs and setting content for the PC program. The PC team will continue to conduct quarterly discussions between QSBCs, national Checkoff contractors, and other ag groups. This allows the PC team to share updates and seek program input into current and future programming.

Direct Producer Feedback - Success for any program includes the opportunity for stakeholders to express opinions, ask questions, and share feedback. The PC team continues to seek convenient ways for individual producers to share their thoughts regarding the program. The program plans for expanded feedback opportunities in the digital space through the Beef Checkoff website, ongoing targeted digital surveys, tracking and organizing producer calls, exploring new local outreach opportunities, and attending events where producers gather.

Key Insights Reporting By compiling different types of producer data, more targeted messaging can occur. Key producer data will continue to be tabulated and shared with state and national Checkoff programs through digital dashboards and regular updates to enable more efficient producer communications programs – both at the national and state level.

Measurable Objectives:

Measurable Objective #1

Include feedback and insight gained from producers and influencers into more targeted, purposeful Beef Checkoff messaging that is shared and leveraged across national and state programs.

Measurable Objective #2

Conduct one independent, national quantitative study/survey of producers to gauge input and sentiment of the Beef Checkoff and the Producer Communications program.

Measurable Objective #3

Plan, develop and share insights to the QSBCs and Stakeholder Engagement Committee members about how to engage with producers and key beef audiences to encourage greater consistency in Producer Communications programming across the national and state level.

Performance Efficiency Measures:

General Target Audience

- Producer Reach Goal: 168,000
- Producer Engagement Goal: 9,000

Key Opinion Leaders

- Key Opinion Leaders Reach Goal: 386
- Key Opinion Leaders Engagement Goal: 145

LRP Initiatives Addressed by this Tactic:

Safeguard and Cultivate Investment in Beef Industry Research, Marketing and Innovation

- Educate producers, lawmakers and industry stakeholders on the benefits and impact of the Beef Checkoff

Checkoff Program Committee(s): Stakeholder Engagement

TACTIC DESCRIPTION:

The Drive is PC's cornerstone monthly email and quarterly hard-copy publication sent out to producers and Checkoff stakeholders around the country. *The Drive in Five* is a five-minute video version that further delves into corresponding topics covered in *The Drive*. Complementary messages are also disseminated with related social media properties, through the website *DrivingDemandForBeef.com*, print and radio multimedia campaigns via ag media channels, and more to ensure this platform reaches as many producers and importers as possible with timely Beef Checkoff program updates and results.

The Drive Publishing Platform

The producer publishing platform is centered around *The Drive*, a quarterly print newsletter, which won national first place in 2024 for best ag newsletter from the National Agri Marketing Association. *The Drive's* messaging is further extended by regular enewsletters, *The Drive in Five* video series, the website *DrivingDemandforBeef.com*, and social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn. This multi-faceted platform serves as the communication juggernaut for current Beef Checkoff programming dissemination to those who pay into the program, and the beef industry. With approximately 880,000 producers and importers in the country, it is a monumental task to reach as many of these stakeholders as possible. *The Drive* team will continue to nurture existing relationships with cattle organizations, breed associations, and other groups to increase our direct reach as well as to get *The Drive* content inserted or printed within their own publications.

Growth and accessibility to *The Drive* platform, as well as consistent, quality, and original content remain top priorities. Creating timely and educational content featuring a variety of programs gives producers access to the information they consistently request. New in FY25, *The Drive* team will employ mobile phone text notifications, alerting subscribers to new and additional content.

The Drive is an important communication tool for Qualified State Beef Councils (QSBCs). State content is shared through the national distribution channels – mailed inserts inside the print newsletter, and state content inside of *The Drive's* enewsletters. This partnership provides valuable, cost-effective opportunities for QSBCs to extend their messages to a broader producer audience within their state, along with providing the reader with more local flavor alongside the national Beef Checkoff content, too.

The Drive Audio Library

As Podcasts and audio content continue to become more popular among producers, *The Drive* publishing platform will launch an audio library to showcase Beef Checkoff program updates and educational content in yet another medium to reach more stakeholders. Planning includes content planning and rollout, using original and curated stories alongside previously recorded pieces for efficiency. Much of this content will leverage the voice of our producers and feature leaders throughout the country. This type of content is shown to resonate well with the target audience.

DrivingDemandForBeef.com Updates

Websites are one of the best ways to provide current information and develop a brand for an organization's content. However, it has been shown that to maintain interest and relevancy, content and website design must constantly be changing and evolving, or the users fail to return. *DrivingDemandForBeef.com* is the key repository of Beef Checkoff program work. The website acts as a vehicle for transparency for program updates, *The Drive* content, Beef Checkoff financials, frequently asked questions, videos, collections, and other aspects of the program. This website has grown significantly in traffic and content in the past five years since its first rejuvenation, and more recently has seen visitors spending more time looking into the site for committee workings information and other opportunities for higher understanding of the Beef Checkoff (as seen through the site's background analytics software, updated daily). Updates to the overall user experience for producers and other users, including more moving content and graphics, a refined homepage experience (for desktop and mobile users), updated program and committee overviews, a revamped FAQ section, more Checkoff collections support, and other areas will expand and refresh the web platform to ensure it remains a relevant and key tool for PC.

Social Media

Social media channels that (with their own audience and content strategy) carry the "Beef Checkoff" name - Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube – are increasingly valuable mediums to reach a multitude of producer audiences. Producer-facing social media carries different messaging style and tone compared to consumer audience posts, and many QSBCs seek to replicate and share what works on these national producer-facing digital platforms for their own state social media channels.

Producer Awareness and Engagement Campaign

Limited paid media can be an important tool to reach farmers and ranchers outside of everyday Beef Checkoff channels. Use of the nationally award-winning *Your Dollar Does* print, digital, radio and social campaign will continue is limited and highly-targeted venues. New focus in FY25 will be to create more paid content into publications and onto platforms where Beef Checkoff information is currently unavailable or limited to readers.

Measurable Objectives:

Measurable Objective #1

Continue to strengthen the distribution platforms for *The Drive* print and email newsletters, *The Drive in Five*, social media properties, *DrivingDemandForBeef.com*, multimedia campaigns, and other outreach efforts to ensure Beef Checkoff program updates and results reach as many producers and importers as possible, leading to a deeper understanding of the Beef Checkoff program.

Measurable Objective #2

Develop and distribute timely content for *The Drive* platforms, including enewsletters, printed newsletters, *The Drive in Five* video series, social posts, and Beef Checkoff website articles.

Measurable Objective #3

Continue the production of audio files for use on *DrivingDemandForBeef.com* and across other channels, with at least 12 new files being created and posted, and extended for external use.

Performance Efficiency Measures:

General Target Audience

- Producer Reach Goal: 1,723,074
- Producer Engagement Goal: 96,206

Key Opinion Leaders

- Key Opinion Leaders Reach Goal: 9,609
- Key Opinion Leaders Engagement Goal: 10,656

LRP Initiatives Addressed by this Tactic:

Safeguard and Cultivate Investment in Beef Industry Research, Marketing and Innovation

- Educate producers, lawmakers and industry stakeholders on the benefits and impact of the Beef Checkoff

Checkoff Program Committee(s): Stakeholder Engagement

TACTIC DESCRIPTION:

The Beef Checkoff plays a key role in developing demand for beef amid an increasingly competitive protein market both in the U.S. and abroad. However, a generation of producers have been born and raised since the Checkoff was first implemented in 1986, and many do not fully understand the important role the program plays in the industry. The goal of this tactic is to communicate the Beef Checkoff's efforts in driving beef demand by connecting key voices with those who can amplify the message -- especially trade media and industry influencers.

Checkoff Thought Leadership & Spokesperson Development

Established thought leaders are identified as CBB and Federation of State Beef Council officer teams, Checkoff Program and Administrative Committee leadership, select board members, and CBB staff. These thought leaders are extremely reliable sources of information and are highly trusted among producers. By developing and positioning these key thought leaders for speaking opportunities around the country -- as resources for print, for online, radio, podcast interviews, and for social media -- we can educate beef industry stakeholders about the Beef Checkoff. Extensive media training and Beef Checkoff spokesperson development programs will continue for these individuals, supporting their knowledge of how to tackle important issues.

Media Relations

Developing relationships with editorial staff and broadcasters is critical for media coverage. A strong media relations effort can support transparent communications, foster media relationships, and help tell the Beef Checkoff story. It also helps ensure that the media includes CBB executives and Checkoff members when developing their own stories about current topics affecting the beef industry. Ag trade media will be supported with data and valuable access to regional or local Beef Checkoff insiders to ensure that they are able to present their producer audiences with the most transparent and accurate updates and information.

Industry Outreach

Efforts will continue to build relationships with beef industry organizations and sectors who often communicate and interface with producers and importers. Together with QSBCs, development of engaging, customizable outreach materials, talking points, best practices, videos, and in-person meetings will continue. As the outreach program is developed and implemented, feedback from QSBCs will determine where customization is needed.

Measurable Objectives:

Measurable Objective #1

Broadly communicate the program's efforts in driving beef demand by connecting educated and media-trained Beef Checkoff voices with those who can amplify their message -- especially trade media and industry influencers – which will illicit earned trust and credibility among producer and importer peers.

Measurable Objective #2

Conduct three media training and/or Checkoff spokesperson development sessions, reaching new CBB board members and officers, Checkoff Program Committee Co-Chairs, QSBC staff and boards, and Checkoff stakeholders.

Measurable Objective #3

Maintain a consistent total number of Checkoff media pickups and placements across ag-industry print and broadcast publications including grassroots letters to the editor / op-ed pieces sent to local media.

Measurable Objective #4

Grow industry relationships through attendance and participation of CBB board members and staff at various national and regional cattle industry events and meetings.

Performance Efficiency Measures:

General Target Audience

- Producer Reach Goal: 45
- Producer Engagement Goal: 34
- Producer Voice: 41,573,440

Key Opinion Leaders

- Key Opinion Leaders Reach Goal: 64
- Key Opinion Leaders Engagement Goal: 49

LRP Initiatives Addressed by this Tactic:

Safeguard and Cultivate Investment in Beef Industry Research, Marketing and Innovation

- Educate producers, lawmakers and industry stakeholders on the benefits and impact of the Beef Checkoff

Checkoff Program Committee(s): Stakeholder Engagement

Supplemental Information for This AR

1. Please explain significant changes from the FY24 approved AR.

FY25 will be a continuation of successful producer communications efforts, with expansion in the following areas:

Tactic A: Launching a revamped state-level producer survey program to aid QSBCs in learning more specific insight into their local farmers and ranchers;

Tactic B: Expanding efforts for the printing and/or inserting of *The Drive* in state cattle association magazines / breed association magazines and newsletters / industry publications; expanded mobile texting of *The Drive* content to producers

Tactic C: Growth opportunities to have CBB and Federation members on successful ag podcasts to reach new demographics and extended reach of Checkoff topics and programs

2. List any proposed vendors/agencies that will be used to complete the work in this AR.

- Swanson Russell, ad agency, Lincoln/Omaha, Nebraska
- Baxter Communications, video production, Indianapolis, Indiana
- Made In Design, graphic design, Denver, Colorado
- Luce Research, producer research, Colorado Springs, Colorado

3. Will all work with vendors/agencies be competitively bid? If no, please provide a brief description as to why.

The Cattlemen's Beef Board regularly goes out for RFP for vendors. Agencies of record have been vetted through this process, and are used for their highly specialized knowledge in their respective fields, particularly in producer communications.

4. Has this AR built upon past work or projects that have been previously funded by the BPOC? If yes, please provide a detailed list and background information on the project and contractor(s) involved.

The AR is a continuation of CBB's Producer Communications program, ongoing in its current format since FY19.

5. If applicable, explain how this AR can be extended by state beef councils or other contractors.

Noted throughout this AR, QSBCs are vital partners in successful producer communications. Each tactic explains how state beef councils will be able to expand, replicate, reuse, personalize, and learn from our program. Specialized training and support is also noted. State Beef Councils can play a role in consumer awareness and help extend the on-farm veal production story including VQA through their communication and education efforts.

Detailed Budget Summary

The tables in the following three sections report program budget information from the following funding sources:

- Cattlemen's Beef Board/Beef Promotion Operating Committee (CBB/BPOC) Funding
- Other Funding sources such as:
 - Federation of State Beef Councils (FSBC) Funds
 - Individual Qualified State Beef Council (QSBC) Funds
 - Government Funds (e.g., Market Access Program, Foreign Market Development)
 - Grain/Oilseed Funds (e.g., National Corn Growers Association, American Soybean Association) Corporate Funds (e.g., tech and pharma companies)
- Other

Section 1 – FY25 Funding Requested by Tactic

FY25 CBB/BPOC Funding Requested by Tactic

The following table outlines the amount of CBB/BPOC funding that is being requested for each tactic within this AR, and the committee(s) that has been selected to score each tactic.

FY25 CBB/BPOC Funding Requested by Tactic					
Committee Name	Tactic	Tactic Name	Direct Costs	Implementation	Total
Stakeholder Engagement	Tactic A	Key Audience Insights and Action Platform	\$144,000.00	\$56,000.00	\$200,000.00
Stakeholder Engagement	Tactic B	Producer Publishing	\$1,366,000.00	\$104,000.00	\$1,470,000.00
Stakeholder Engagement	Tactic C	Industry and Media Collaboration	\$92,000.00	\$38,000.00	\$130,000.00
		Total	\$1,602,000.00	\$198,000.00	\$1,800,000.00

FY25 Other Funding Sources Requested by Tactic

The following table reports the amount of proposed and/or anticipated Other Funding sources that would be applied to this AR's tactics. The funding information in this table is for informational purposes only and demonstrates external collaboration as delineated in the 2021-2025 Beef Industry Long Range Plan.

FY25 Other Funding Sources Requested by Tactic <i>(Informational Only)</i>			
Funding Source	Tactic	Tactic Name	Total
Other: N/A	Tactic A	Key Audience Insights and Action Platform	
Other: N/A	Tactic B	Producer Publishing	
Other: N/A	Tactic C	Industry and Media Collaboration	
Other Funding Total			

Use the space below if you wish to provide additional comments/information on the FY25 CBB/BPOC or Other Funding amounts that are being requested for this AR's tactic(s).

N/A

Section 2 – Summary of FY24 AR Budgets and Expenses

Classification:

This AR is a continuation of, or builds upon, program work from last year. CBB will report information in the "FY24 CBB/BPOC Funding" table and the contractor will provide information for the "FY24 Other Funding Sources" table.

FY24 CBB/BPOC Funding

This table reports the amount of awarded and expended CBB/BPOC funding for this Authorization Request in FY24.

FY24 CBB/BPOC Funding			
<i>Note: The Cattlemen's Beef Board completed the fields in this table.</i>			
	AR# 2450-PC		
	Direct Costs	Implementation	Total
Funds Awarded	\$1,608,000.00	\$192,000.00	\$1,800,000.00
Actual Expenses <i>(October 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024)</i>	\$1,030,613.00	\$132,646.00	\$1,163,259.00

FY24 Other Funding Sources

The following table reports the amount of committed and expended "Other Funding Sources" for this AR in FY24. The funding information in this table is for informational purposes only and demonstrates external collaboration as delineated in the 2021-2025 Beef Industry Long Range Plan.

FY24 Other Funding Sources <i>(Informational Only)</i>			
	AR# 2450-PC		
	Other Funding Source	Funds Committed	Funds Expended <i>(October 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024)</i>
A	Other: N/A		

Use the space below if you wish to provide additional comments/information on the FY24 CBB/BPOC or Other Funding amounts that are being requested for this AR's tactic(s).

N/A

Section 3 – Historical Summary of AR Budgets and Expenses

Classification: This AR is a continuation of, or builds upon, program work from the last two years or more. CBB will report information in the "CBB/BPOC Historical Summary" table and the contractor will provide information for the "Other Funding Sources Historical Summary" table.

CBB/BPOC Funding – Historical Summary

The following table reports the amount of awarded and expended CBB/BPOC funding for this AR in FY21, FY22, and FY23.

CBB/BPOC Funding - Historical Summary				
<i>Note: The Cattlemen's Beef Board completed the fields in this table.</i>				
		FY23 AR# 2350-PC	FY22 AR# 2250-PC	FY21 AR# 2150-PC
AR Period¹	<i>Start Date:</i>	<i>Oct. 1, 2022</i>	<i>Oct. 1, 2021</i>	<i>Oct. 1, 2020</i>
	<i>End Date:</i>	<i>Dec. 1, 2023</i>	<i>Sep. 30, 2022</i>	<i>Sep. 30, 2022</i>
Funds Awarded		\$1,850,000.00	\$1,850,000.00	\$1,689,915.00
Actual Expenses²		\$1,845,699.00	\$1,827,194.00	\$1,680,817.00

¹For multiyear ARs, the "End Date" reflects the date that the AR is scheduled to be completed.

²If the AR "End Date" has not occurred, actual expenses will be reflective of the following time period:
AR Start Date - June 30, 2024.

Other Funding - Historical Summary

The following table reports the amount of "Other Funding Source" expenditures for this AR in FY21, FY22, and FY23. The funding information in this table is for informational purposes only and demonstrates external collaboration as delineated in the 2021-2025 Beef Industry Long Range Plan.

Other Funding Sources – Historical Summary (Informational Only)						
	FY23 AR# 2350-PC		FY22 AR# 2250-PC		FY21 AR# 2150-PC	
	Other Funding Source	Total Expenditures	Other Funding Source	Total Expenditures	Other Funding Source	Total Expenditures
A	Other: N/A		Other: N/A		Other: N/A	

Use the space below if you wish to provide additional comments/information on the historical CBB/BPOC or Other Funding budget and expense summaries.

N/A