Meat Import Council of America

AR# 2620-CI
AR Title: Northeast Nutrition & Health Expert, Consumer, and Athletic Program Outreach and Engagement

Amount Requested: $1,000,000.00

Organization Information

Name of Contractor:	Meat Import Council of America
Name of Subcontractor:	Northeast Beef Promotion Initiative
Primary Contact:	Kaitlyn Swope
Primary Signatory:	Michael Skahill

Full Application

AR Purpose and Description:
The Northeast Beef Promotion Initiative (NEBPI), established in fiscal year 2005–2006, continues to play a vital role in extending nationally developed Beef Checkoff messaging to a critical region: the Northeast United States, spanning 12 states from Maine to Virginia.

In this region, people outnumber cattle 16 to 1, making it one of the most consumer-heavy markets in the country—with over 74.6 million residents.[1,2] Yet, despite this immense population, only 2.7% of national Beef Checkoff dollars are collected here.[3]

Six of the twelve Northeast states have no State Beef Council (SBC). Without NEBPI, they would have no consistent access to grassroots outreach and Checkoff-funded resources—a missed opportunity in a region full of influential consumers, nutrition and health professionals, and retail and foodservice partners.

The NEBPI exists to bridge that gap—delivering science-based nutrition messages, sustainability stories, beef meal inspiration, and beef promotion efforts to the audiences who shape public perception, purchasing decisions, and dietary habits.

Strategic Impact, Powered by Collaboration
The NEBPI works hand-in-hand with regional SBCs, other national Checkoff contractors, and industry partners to maximize impact and efficiency. We focus Beef Checkoff investment where it has the greatest potential return—engaging:

- Supply chain experts and retail/foodservice influencers
- Nutrition and health professionals
- Everyday Northeast consumers
- Student athletes, coaches, athletic staff

Through targeted activations like promotions, immersive experiences, digital outreach, and educational events, NEBPI positions beef as the protein of choice while reinforcing the values that producers live every day—quality, safety, and sustainability.

This Authorization Request, and the funding granted by the Beef Promotion Operating Committee, is what powers NEBPI's ability to reach this high-potential audience, while growing demand for beef. Support from SBCs and industry partners amplifies our footprint, but their contributions cannot carry this work alone.

It's a true partnership—Checkoff dollars unlock access, while local and regional partners help us go farther.

2023 Northeast Dashboard Survey: The importance of strategically connecting with our Northeast audiences is an on-going need as we continue to thoughtfully put Checkoff dollars to work to increase beef demand within the region. The foundation for all programming executed in the region is the Beef Industry Long Range Plan (LRP). We also leverage consumer demand drivers derived from the Northeast Dashboard Survey.

To keep a pulse on consumer confidence and attitudinal shifts, the NEBPI invested in a heavy-up of the National Consumer Beef Tracker Survey, conducted by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), a contractor to the Beef Checkoff. The regional data was collected in three sets – the Mid-Atlantic states (NY, NJ, MD, DE, VA), the New England states (ME, RI, CT, MA, NH, VT), and Pennsylvania. High-level findings from the survey revealed the following:

- Consumers in the Northeast Region are **actively eating beef**, with **most (72%) doing so at least once a week** and are unlikely to change their consumption habits in the future.
- Consumers in the Northeast seem more **nutrition-oriented** since their top 3 consideration factors when choosing a meal with protein are **taste**, **value for money**, and a **healthy choice**.
- **29% of consumers have purchased beef directly** from a beef producer at least once, and the main driver is to receive a better-quality product, followed by the desire to support the local economy.

While this research helps to capture differing opinions among our Northeast consumers, it also highlights key opportunities for continued programming success. Our research shows **health** continues to be the main barrier within the Northeast, followed secondarily by production-related aspects. We also know that our regional consumers are far removed from agriculture.

Utilizing research-based consumer insights allows us to better align programs and outreach with the needs of our Northeast consumers while addressing desired outcomes of the Beef Industry's LRP. We will also continue to leverage the expertise of our credentialed registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) to communicate beef's nutrition and health message to Northeast consumers and subject matter experts in a fresh and meaningful way. Throughout the fiscal year, NEBPI program staff will continue to position beef as a trusted, high quality and consistently satisfying protein for consumers.

Source: Consumer Beef Tracker August 2023; National n=504. Qualtrics/PureSpectrum State Dashboard August 2023; Northeast Region n=503

To ensure that messaging resonates with our target Northeast consumers through program outreach, including digital, in-person, retail/foodservice promotions, etc., we can implement learnings from the various data sets included within the 2023 Northeast State Dashboard, based on the specific state/area of focus. This continues to confirm that our strategy is comprehensive and well-rounded to maximize the reach of program dollars within the region.

NEBPI program staff will collaborate with the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) Market Research team to ensure that a timely Northeast Dashboard study is compiled during the 2025-2026 fiscal year to measure any new attitudinal shifts and behavior trends among Northeast consumers. Study findings will be integrated into programming to ensure that Northeast consumers are continually met with messaging that resonates with their needs and continues to move the needle when it comes to increasing demand for beef.

Citations:

[1]Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for the United States, Regions, States, District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico: April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2024 - https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/popest/tables/2020-2024/state/totals/NST-EST2024-POP.xlsx

[2]USDA NASS Cattle Data from January 1, 2025 - https://downloads.usda.library.cornell.edu/usda-esmis/files/h702q636h/sf26b275x/h989sz55j/catl0125.pdf

[3]Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board, Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Assets, September 30, 2024 - https://www.beefboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/CBB-FY24-FS-Final.pdf

CBB Budget Category: Consumer Information

Start Date: 10/1/2025

End Date: 9/30/2026

FY26 National Beef Checkoff Funding Request		
Direct Costs	**Implementation**	**Total**
$650,000.00	$350,000.00	$1,000,000.00

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

- Grow Consumer Trust in Beef Production
- Promote and Capitalize on the Multiple Advantages of Beef

Tactic A | 2620-CI
Empowering Influential Nutrition and Health Professionals to Inspire Consumer Trust in Beef

TACTIC DESCRIPTION:

Nutrition and health professionals play a vital role in communicating beef's positive story as it relates to health, nutrition, culinary applications, production practices, and sustainability to consumers. In an era when less than half of Americans (38%) report trusting food- and nutrition-related science, it's more essential than ever to leverage the trusted voice of credible and influential subject matter experts to cut through confusion and build confidence in lean beef's place in a healthy dietary pattern.[1] We also know that compared to other regions in the country, Northeast consumers tend to be more engaged with health, sustainability, and food transparency and are actively seeking science-based nutrition information straight from the source.

By engaging credentialed health professionals, including registered dietitians, medical doctors, physician assistants, nurses, and nurse practitioners who rank highly among the most trusted sources for dietary guidance, beef producers can be confident that messages shared on their behalf are clear, consistent, and rooted in science.[2] The Northeast has a high concentration of these professionals, presenting a clear opportunity for scalable, peer-to-peer education. Our own Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) will serve as the primary liaison, continuing to nurture relationships established through previous Checkoff-funded initiatives, while also forging new, impactful connections among target audiences.

Tactic A's program efforts will focus on delivering high-impact educational opportunities designed to enhance nutrition and health professionals' understanding of beef's role on the plate for all life ages and stages, while helping to dispel common myths surrounding nutrition and production practices. These education opportunities will be intentionally built to foster trust in beef and empower influential audiences to help their patients and clients overcome guilt and fear associated with enjoying foods, like beef, that they find comforting, delicious, affordable, culturally meaningful, or traditional yet often misunderstood or unfairly stigmatized.

Additionally, we find there is tremendous value in collaborating with other Checkoff contractors and regional partners to expand our reach and ensure the efficient use of Checkoff dollars. This strategy will continue in the fiscal year ahead as we explore partnership opportunities where there is a natural synergy.

Engagement and Outreach Strategy

Our strategy to elevate beef's reputation as a nutritious, sustainable protein choice will center on outreach and engagement with nutrition and health professional audiences and key opinion leaders who are uniquely equipped and well-positioned to translate complex research into simple, actionable guidance their clients and patients can use wherever they are making food choices. Through the strategic sharing of Checkoff-funded beef nutrition research, tools, and resources, we aim to inspire informed advocacy that cascades from professional to consumer and beyond.

Program efforts will be structured into three different categories, including **Educational**, **Relationship-Building**, and **Engagement Driving**, to utilize Checkoff dollars in the most effective and cost-conscious way.

Educational programs, such as speaker placement at professional conferences, exhibits, print/digital ad content, and toolkit distributions are intended to broadly reach and educate as many individuals in our target audiences as possible with key messaging and the latest research to elevate their knowledge base and awareness of available resources related to beef nutrition.

Relationship-building programs, such as immersive beef farm tours, culinary experiences, or panel discussions are interactive and curated for select members from a target audience, giving us an opportunity to foster new relationships and collaborative partnership opportunities with these individuals. Through past efforts of this kind, we have found this exclusive type of outreach to be highly effective at building trust, enhancing knowledge, creating long-lasting relationships, and ultimately growing our network.

Lastly, **Engagement Driving** programs include leveraging key opinion leaders in our network with whom we have established relationships to engage their respective circles of influence by way of social media campaigns, broadcast media appearances and other digital communications like a podcast or eblast. A unique advantage of collaborating with nutrition and health professionals in this manner is the dual benefit of reaching both their consumer audiences and peer networks, creating a ripple effect that enhances beef's reputation across multiple touchpoints.

We will continue to leverage nationally developed Checkoff content that's highly recognized for its relevance and alignment with the latest beef nutrition science and tailor it to meet the specific needs of health professionals and the diverse populations they serve. We will also utilize relevant programs and resources developed by fellow contractors, such as NCBA's Nutrition Seminar Program, and others.

Measures of Success

Program effectiveness will be measured using pre- and post-engagement surveys to capture shifts in behavior, perceptions of beef, knowledge, and willingness to recommend and use lean beef, informing continuous improvement and demonstrating return on investment. We will also assess how beef resources are being used after specific outreach and engagement efforts.

Investing Beef Checkoff dollars in nutrition outreach in the Northeast ensures that beef has a credible voice in one of the nation's most influential and high-impact regions. It protects beef's place on the plate by putting accurate, evidence-based information in the hands of the experts that consumers trust most. Without intentional nutrition outreach and engagement efforts, misinformation and confusion may fill the void, undermining consumer confidence in beef's role in a healthy, sustainable diet. This tactic ensures we remain proactive in supporting the professionals who shape nutrition guidance and public opinion.

Citations:

[1] International Food Information Council

[1] International Food Information Council

[1,2] International Food Information Council

Measurable Objectives:

Measurable Objective #1

By September 2026, engage a minimum of 800 nutrition and health professionals through at least four in-person, education-based events, such as professional conferences, farm tours, or interactive culinary trainings, to disseminate Checkoff-funded nutrition research, content, and resources. As a result, at least 60% of participants will report increased knowledge and likelihood of recommending beef as part of a healthy, sustainable dietary pattern within their circles of influence.

Measurable Objective #2

By September 2026, partner with at least four influential nutrition and health experts to develop and distribute timely and relevant collaborative content via social media, broadcast media or podcast that focuses on beef's role in various life stages, nutrient profile, convenience, affordability and versatility. These efforts will achieve a cumulative reach of at least three million peer and consumer audience members with credible, research-informed messaging.

Measurable Objective #3

By September 2026, educate at least 5,000 nutrition and health professionals through a minimum of six strategic outreach efforts, such as nutrition e-newsletters, toolkit distributions, presentations, and targeted advertisements by providing turn-key content that highlights beef's nutritional benefits, emerging research, and practical, patient- and consumer-friendly messaging.

Performance Efficiency Measures:

General Target Audience

- Northeast Consumers Reach Goal: 2,500,000
- Northeast Consumers Engagement Goal: 50,000

Key Opinion Leaders

- Health & Nutrition Influencer Reach Goal: 8,000
- Health & Nutrition Influencer Engagement Goal: 2,000

LRP Initiatives Addressed by this Tactic:

Grow Consumer Trust in Beef Production

- Align and collaborate with traditional and nontraditional partners to tell the positive story of beef cattle production
- Educate medical, diet and health professionals about beef and beef production
- Engage positively in the sustainable nutrition conversation

Promote and Capitalize on the Multiple Advantages of Beef

- Promote the role of beef in a healthy and sustainable diet
- Develop targeted marketing programs focused on the highest opportunity market segments
- Cultivate collaborative promotion partnerships
- Engage consumers in a memorable beef eating experience

Checkoff Program Committee(s): Nutrition & Health

Tactic B | 2620-CI
Positioning Beef as a Protein of Choice Among Northeast Consumers

TACTIC DESCRIPTION:

The Northeast region is home to nearly a quarter of the United States population, representing a critical yet under-leveraged market in the national beef supply chain. Targeted outreach within the region can maximize the impact of Beef Checkoff investments, as we ensure that consumers have positive beef purchasing experiences, understand the value of beef as a protein choice and have a high-quality eating experience.

The imbalance in the Northeast, being high population, low beef producing makes the region critically dependent on the efficiency and strength of its beef supply chain to meet growing consumer demand for beef. The region is home to major metropolitan hubs like New York City, Boston, Hartford, Washington D.C. and Philadelphia. Outreach efforts will continue to focus on strengthening and building relationships across the supply chain – from processors to retailers to foodservice – this will ensure that beef remains top-of-mind and top-of-menu in a key consumer market, where there is a high consumption potential.

Many in the Northeast's supply chain, especially smaller distributors, independent retailers, and foodservice operators, are unfamiliar with today's beef industry practices, the diversity of beef cuts available to meet customer needs, marketing tools, and more. Outreach within this tactic will work to educate these supply chain partners, ultimately filling a knowledge gap and improving overall knowledge surrounding beef and how beef is raised for food, merchandising, and promotion, boosting beef's visibility in key channels.

Program efforts under this tactic will leverage and further solidify the trust audiences already have in credible experts with influence to positively impact the level of confidence our target audiences have in beef – nutrition, value, role in a sustainable diet, selection, preparation, and production practices. The goal of this tactic is to build consumer confidence and satisfaction in beef, therefore, increasing the frequency that beef is selected as the protein of choice among Northeast consumers.

Consumer Insights Support Continued Checkoff Investment in the Northeast
Consumer interest in beef is high—but so is the need for accurate, accessible information.

According to the **2023 Northeast Dashboard Survey**[1], consumers say they would eat more beef if they had:

- Quick and easy meal solutions
- Healthy recipes
- More information on how beef is raised and people who produces it

This is a clear opportunity for the Beef Checkoff to build **trust** and **purchase intent** through outreach and expert engagement.

Beef Checkoff-funded research[2] shows that:

- **57% of consumers** now buy groceries online
- **40% of those online shoppers** purchase fresh beef
- **76% order meals online** at least once a month to consume at home

This creates a strategic opportunity to reach consumers through e-commerce partnerships, online retail partnerships and/or meal delivery services.

Beef as a Nutritional Solution
Nearly **11.6% of Northeast consumers** lack access to nutrient-dense, complete proteins like beef[4]. While plant-based alternatives are sometimes promoted as a solution, beef remains unmatched in delivering essential nutrients across life stages.

The Checkoff can help bridge the gap between **food access** and **nutritional need** by positioning beef as a reliable, nutrient-rich option.

Utilizing Trust in Experts to Build Demand
Consumers increasingly trust **subject matter experts**:

- **86%** say their trust has increased or stayed the same over the past 5 years
- **26%** are influenced by experts when making purchases
- **33%** have purchased based on expert recommendations[3]

That's why the Checkoff partners with **retail and foodservice influencers**—such as:

- Retail Meat Department Supervisors and Managers
- Retail Marketing and Communications Professionals
- Retail Registered Dietitians
- Regional Butchers and/or Meat Cutters
- Foodservice Operators/Foodservice Distributors
- Executive Chefs
- Culinary Instructors
- Post-Secondary Culinary Students
- Food Insecurity Advocates

These trusted voices extend beef messaging through interactive outreach that builds trust and drives demand among regional consumers.

Strategy Moving Forward

Programming efforts within Tactic B will:

- Continue investing in relationships with experts already engaged through past Checkoff efforts
- Expand training opportunities (farm tours, sharing science-based nutrition information, sustainability, culinary demos)
- Equip influencers with clear, approved messaging on beef's nutrition, quality, safety, and sustainability

In a crowded protein market, these experts help consumers feel confident in choosing beef as their preferred protein.

With limited Checkoff dollars and a large, diverse consumer base, partnering with experts allows us to efficiently extend beef's story across the Northeast. It's a high-impact, scalable strategy that supports both consumer demand and producer trust in Checkoff investments.

Connecting Regional Consumers and Local Producers

While the region does not produce beef at large scale compared to population, there is growing interest in local and regional beef sourcing among consumers, in fact the 2023 Northeast State Dashboard revealed that Northeast consumers are seeking more information surrounding beef producers and beef production practices. By sharing meaningful messages surrounding these topics, this audience may ultimately be encouraged to consume more beef. We also found that nearly 30% of consumers have purchased beef products directly from a farm in the Northeast and do so because they believe they receive better-quality products and want to support the local economy. 58% of Northeast consumers have not purchased beef direct from a farm, but they would consider it. Herein lies a great opportunity for increasing knowledge and trust in beef, as 31% of those are in suburban settings, 15% urban and 12% rural[1]. There is a great interest among consumers to foster a direct relationship with a local beef producer and/or producers. This provides the conduit for increased awareness surrounding the beef production lifecycle and raising beef for food. Programming that aids in bridging the gap between regional beef producers and urban and suburban markets, will continue to build and strengthen resilient, diversified routes for additional beef sales, ultimately positively driving demand for beef.

Farmers and ranchers, as well as scientists are the most believable sources when it comes to beef sustainability messages.[5] Consumers across the Northeast region may be motivated to increase their beef consumption by having access to more recipe ideas and cooking methods, specifically those that are healthy, quick, and easy. These consumers express greater interest in information on where their beef comes from, local beef farmers and ranchers, nutritional material, and relevant safety information.[1] Engaging with beef producers provides the transparency that consumers desire. Producers equipped with the latest research, beef nutrition information, and more can aid in narrowing the rural/urban divide that is threatening agriculture. Beef producers within the Northeast region are much

more likely to direct market their product to consumers, therefore, they already have an established relationship with target consumers and can further grow trust for the entire industry.

During FY25, the NEBPI hosted its fourth Northeast Beef Producer Workshop, and had nearly twenty-five beef producer attendees, representing three states in the Northeast region. The Workshop was funded in part by the Farm Credit Northeast AgEnhancement program, as well as the National Cattlemen's Beef Association Beef Quality Assurance program. The day and a half event kicked off with a Beef Quality Assurance training, both classroom and hands-on chute side learning hosted at Boyden Farm in Cambridge, Vermont. Producer attendees then had the opportunity to network further during a curated beef dinner. The workshop hosted the next day provided regional beef producers with insights surrounding consumer trends, the importance of the Northeast Beef Directory as a resource for consumers to locate beef producers selling directly to consumers, and more. NEBPI staff focused on sharing the basics of the Beef Checkoff, the Beef Checkoff funding process, and current Beef Checkoff funded projects, as many attendees shared, they had limited Beef Checkoff knowledge prior to attending the event. The highlight of the workshop was an engaging keynote discussion with Dr. Marissa Hake, DVM.

NEBPI staff conducted a pre-survey and post-survey with producer attendees. The pre-survey results showed that the average understanding surrounding the Beef Checkoff was rated at 3/5.

Building greater understanding around the Beef Checkoff among Northeast producers will aid in ensuring that those that are direct marketing understand the need to remit, as well as the process to remit their Checkoff dollars.

The NEBPI is also presenting three sessions during the Virginia Beef Cattle University, July 21 – 23, 2025, in Blacksburg, Virginia. The sessions will share consumer trends and feature keynote speaker Amanda Radke, who will showcase the various avenues to direct to consumer market beef utilizing modern technology and more to reach regional customers.

We know, and the 2023 Northeast Dashboard Survey confirmed, that the Northeast Beef Directory has proven to be a valuable resource for consumers seeking local beef producers within the region. The Directory is an online resource designed to help connect Northeast-based families with local beef markets and producers selling beef directly. The Directory also contains robust educational resources that inform families about their options for choosing beef and allows them to discover that, regardless of where they purchase beef, their choices are wholesome, nutritious, and delicious. In FY25, the NEBPI received 27 new requests from regional beef producers to be listed on the Directory, which contains over 400 listings of beef producers in all 12 states, Maine to Virginia. To ensure that Northeast consumers are aware of and utilize the Directory as a resource, the NEBPI program in partnership with the National Cattlemen's Beef Association utilize a strategic digital campaign to reach regional consumers where they are already spending time.

Building upon the successes of these initial producer workshops, which centered around engaging a core group of beef producers within key geographic areas within the region, will provide the opportunity to further engage producers in collaborative partnerships. Due to the increased interest from regional producers in these workshop opportunities, NEBPI staff are looking to host a minimum of two workshops (one farther north within the region and one farther south). Workshops hosted in fiscal year 2025-2026 and beyond will continue to provide the latest insights surrounding consumer attitudes related to beef, how beef is raised, the latest science-based nutrition research, sustainability and more, all while ensuring collaborative partnerships are explored to accomplish these workshop opportunities. For fiscal year 2025-2026 NEBPI staff will again submit a grant request to the Farm Credit Northeast AgEnhancemant program to garner additional funding support of this program opportunity. NEBPI staff will also continue to collaborate with the national BQA team to reach underserved producers within the Northeast region. After completion of these workshops, regional beef producers will be better equipped to have impactful interactions with their customers, neighbors, and community, as they serve as industry spokespeople within the region and beyond. Examples of how these regional beef producers will be utilized to further engage with consumers, could include, but not be limited to, joining NEBPI staff at in-person consumer event opportunities, on-farm interactions with consumers, visiting farm stores to purchase beef, or on-air media opportunities, etc. Emphasis will be placed on bolstering representation and participation from beef producers within each state in the Northeast, to ensure that the Beef Checkoff has positive representation and touchpoints across the region as a whole. The inclusion of Beef Checkoff 101 information also ensures that beef producers who are direct marketing their product understand their responsibility to remit the Beef Checkoff, while gaining awareness of the Checkoff resources available.

Citations:

[1]Consumer Beef Tracker August 2023; National n=504. Qualtrics/PureSpectrum State Dashboard August 2023; Northeast Region n=503. Analysis: National Cattlemen's Beef Association, a contractor to the Beef Checkoff.

[2]State of Consumer Survey, 2020-2023. Survey designed and analyzed by National Cattlemen's Beef Association, a contractor to the Beef Checkoff.

[3]Venticinque, L. (2024, February 8). *Influencer research: What do consumers want?*. Bazaarvoice. https://www.bazaarvoice.com/blog/influencer-research-what-influence-do-influencers-have/#:~:text=26%25%20of%20consumers%20are%20most,increased%20or%20stayed%20the%20same.

[4]*Hunger & Poverty in America*. Food Research & Action Center. (2023, October 25). https://frac.org/hunger-poverty-america#:~:text=In%202022%2C%2014.7%20percent%20of,the%20West%20(11.2%20percent)

Measurable Objectives:

Measurable Objective #1

By September 2026, cultivate strategic partnerships with at least **6 key Northeast-based supply chain partners** by executing a minimum of **6 targeted outreach activities**—such as retail promotions, menu enhancements, staff trainings, conferences, immersive on-farm experiences, or virtual/in-person meetings. These efforts will aim to increase partner knowledge of beef's value, improve merchandising and menuing practices, and ultimately boost consumer confidence and demand for beef. Impact will be measured through partner engagement, post-activity evaluations, and available metrics such as sales or menu performance data.

Measurable Objective #2

By September 2026, leverage digital media platforms to deliver timely and seasonally relevant beef content – including recipes, meal solutions, nutrition insights, cut selection guidance, preparation tis, and storage advice – to consumers across the Northeast region. Messages will aim to positively influence beef purchasing decisions and strengthen consumer confidence in beef, with a year-end goal of achieving at least **1.5 million content views** while maintaining strong engagement with Checkoff messaging, as measured by platform analytics.

Measurable Objective #3

By September 2026, implement a minimum of **two regional e-commerce campaigns** in collaboration with retail and/or foodservice partners across the Northeast to promote beef through digital purchasing and ordering platforms. These campaigns will aim to increase online beef sales and/or consumer intent to purchase beef, with success measured by campaign engagement, partner analytics, and consumer interaction with beef-specific promotions or product placements.

Measurable Objective #4

By September 2026, engage at least **80 Northeast beef producers** through a minimum of **two in-person workshops**, designed to provide insights on consumer attitudes towards beef, production practices, science-based nutrition, sustainability, and Checkoff-funded resources. The goal is to equip producers with the knowledge and confidence to serve as informed advocates in consumer and industry conversations, as measured by participation numbers and post-event evaluations.

Performance Efficiency Measures:

General Target Audience

- Northeast Consumers Reach Goal: 3,000,000
- Northeast Consumers Engagement Goal: 55,000

Key Opinion Leaders

- Supply Chain Experts with Influence Reach Goal: 4,000
- Supply Chain Experts with Influence Engagement Goal: 475
- Producer Advocate Reach Goal: 23,500
- Producer Advocate Engagement Goal: 80

LRP Initiatives Addressed by this Tactic:

Grow Consumer Trust in Beef Production

- Align and collaborate with traditional and nontraditional partners to tell the positive story of beef cattle production
- Engage positively in the sustainable nutrition conversation

Promote and Capitalize on the Multiple Advantages of Beef

- Promote the role of beef in a healthy and sustainable diet
- Implement a marketing campaign that communicates beef's advantage compared to competing proteins
- Develop targeted marketing programs focused on the highest opportunity market segments
- Cultivate collaborative promotion partnerships
- Engage consumers in a memorable beef eating experience

Checkoff Program Committee(s): Domestic Marketing

Tactic C | 2620-CI
Aligning with Athletics to Capitalize on the Multiple Advantages of Beef

TACTIC DESCRIPTION:

Program efforts under this tactic will leverage and further solidify the multiple advantages of beef through strategic partnerships with athletics, enabling positive beef messaging and content to reach athletes, coaches, families, and fans across the Northeast.

Aligning with athletics has proven to be successful in improving the image of beef and the beef industry. It helps drive demand by reaching student athletes, families, coaching staff, athletic directors, athletic trainers, strength and conditioning coaches, team dieticians, and fans with credible, science-backed nutritional messaging.

The athletic and active lifestyle demographic in the Northeast, spanning high school to collegiate sports, is highly engaged, influential, and open to nutrition insights grounded in performance and science. These individuals are looking for trustworthy, high-performance fuel, making beef an ideal protein partner.

In a time when consumers are overwhelmed by conflicting messages about food, athletics offers a trusted, emotionally resonant platform to reinforce beef's benefits- strength, endurance, and energy. These partnerships allow us to showcase how beef is endorsed by professionals: from registered dietitians, coaches, and elite athletes. This helps shift the narrative from "beef as indulgent" to "beef as essential".

Whether the message is shared through high school or collegiate athletics, beef promotion reaches teens and young adults at critical life stages, as well as parents, who are typically the household's primary grocery shoppers- and active consumers focused on wellness. These are priority audiences for growing beef demand in the Northeast.

Moreover, these partnerships open doors to high-opportunity, densely populated markets like New York City and the greater Hartford Area that would otherwise be hard to reach at the same level. These partnerships provide year-round access to these key consumers, as athletic partnerships are a full year, with some elements surrounding key flagship sports (i.e. basketball or ice hockey). By activating in these areas, we maximize our reach and impact within the allocated budget, ensuring beef messages are seen by as many consumers as possible.

Aligning beef with athletic performance extends its reach beyond the field and into homes, dining halls, and communities.

Driving Long Term Impact to Lifestyle Beliefs and Purchase Behavior by Establishing Trust and Consistent Messaging

Brand sponsorships at sporting events are one of the most trusted advertising methods. According to a recent Nielsen Trust in Advertising Study, 81% of consumers report they either completely or somewhat trust brand sponsorships in sporting events. Only recommendations from people (89%) and branded websites (84%) rank higher.[1] Establishing trust is critical for driving long term changes in beliefs and lifestyle.

Unlike one-off events, athletic partnerships offer long-term, repeated touchpoints over multiple seasons, reaching priority target audiences. The extended visibility ongoing sports sponsorships offer enables consistent messaging that builds awareness, understanding, and preference for beef. Consistently reaching consumers over extended periods of time is crucial for long term changes to purchase behavior and beliefs.

Collegiate Athletics Engagement

Beef has proudly served as the Preferred Protein at two collegiate institutions within the Northeast. These partnerships have provided access to high-traffic venues and densely populated urban areas, offering meaningful reach and impact.

As a result of these efforts, NEBPI has reached millions of fans via on-site activations, in-game signage, digital advertising, and TV exposure. With strong media valuation and high return on spend, this approach continues to deliver measurable value.

Having now built strong consumer-facing partnerships, the next step is to pivot toward directly engaging student-athletes and key members of the athletics staff, where applicable, with focused beef nutrition messaging.

This approach additionally appeals to fans that are personally invested in the athletic space, who are personally invested in the athletic space—whether through raising young athletes or being deeply influenced by a sports-driven culture they strongly identify with.

Beef jerky and nutrition handouts will be provided to student athletes within their athlete refueling stations, spotlighting beef's nutritional benefits for strength, energy, and recovery.

NEBPI has also collaborated with campus foodservice partners and registered dietitians to execute beef-focused dining events. During one such activation, a lunchtime takeover featuring 1,000+ beef entrees engaged students through nutrition-forward signage and on-site staff interaction featuring the on-campus registered dietitian, whom the students are already engaging with on a frequent basis.

Future opportunities include video content series, interactive cooking demonstrations, and curated educational resources—all focused on delivering beef's nutrition story to student-athletes.

There is additional potential to collaborate with campus dining services, local restaurants, or grocery chains to highlight beef-forward dishes and track consumer response.

Expanding to New Collegiate Markets

NEBPI is actively identifying opportunities to expand its collegiate efforts to new regional markets by leveraging conference-level partnerships.

These new partners provide access to:

- Tens of thousands of enrolled students
- Millions of alumni and fan followers
- High in-person attendance at regular season and championship events
- Television and digital advertising opportunities

Through these engagements, NEBPI gains year-round access to athletic departments, campus wellness staff, and student-athletes, reinforcing beef's place in a balanced performance nutrition plan. This includes an exclusive event with nutrition staff at each member institution.

Engaging with High School Athletes

The NEBPI has also seen a large success in engaging with high school athletes, coaching staff, and fans through various high school interscholastic athletic association relationships. High school athletes are forming habits that will carry them into adulthood and beyond. Ensuring that these student athletes, their coaches, and parents have a positive image surrounding the nutritional profile of beef is essential to ensure that beef is a protein source of choice for these athletes during not only their training and performance, but also in everyday life.

High school athletics offer a dynamic audience, with athletes and their families continually cycling through the program. These partnerships center around state championships, promoting beef to top preforming athletes from across the state and their families who are more likely to value nutrition information and helping their athletes to succeed. High school teams foster a greater sense of community and support youth sports positions as a community ally, not just a product.

Beef has previously been the Preferred Protein of the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) in Pennsylvania, in which over 350,000 students participate as well as the New Jersey Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) in which 283,650 Student Athletes participate.
There are additional touchpoints for both the PIAA and the NJSIAA through Athletic Directors (ADs) who

interact with all students, teachers, and coaching staff throughout the state via AD meetings and their annual conference.

The PIAA will create a recipe guide that features ten beef recipes for athletes, and new this year they are open to creating a nutrition guide for athletes and coaches as well. These materials, as well as additional recipes, nutrition information, and more will be sent out weekly to coaches and Athletic Directors. Last year, we introduced the "Beef's Best Concession Stands Contest" in which High school concession stands applied to be the best concession stand in the state. Schools were evaluated based on the number of beef dishes and the marketing of those dishes. New this year, the Family and Consumer Education, or Home Economics, classes will be involved with the contest.

There is an additional opportunity with Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) to disseminate beef messaging to their high school sports communities, as well as providing a speaker to present beef's nutrition message at one of MIAA's youth leadership conferences.

Aligning beef with athletics is a strategic, science-based approach that meets consumers where they are, on the field, in the stands, or at the table. It positions beef as the trusted, essential performance food for active lifestyles, and builds year-round engagement with key demographics.

From TV screens to cafeterias, athletic partnerships offer NEBPI the opportunity to create an immersive, multi-touchpoint ecosystem that keeps beef top of mind, and on the plate.

Source: [1]https://www.nielsen.com/insights/2022/sports-sponsorships-are-raising-more-than-just-brand-awareness/

Citations

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Measurable Objectives:

Measurable Objective #1

By September 2026, support at least one collegiate-level athletic program located within key Northeast metropolitan centers, building upon existing partnerships to optimize beef messaging. Through a combination of educational activations targeting coaching staff, team dietitians, student athletes, and fans, aim to increase understanding of beef's role in strength, recovery, and overall performance nutrition—ultimately maximizing positive perceptions and demand for beef among Gen Z and Millennial consumers.

Measurable Objective #2

By September 2026, garner a relationship with at least one new athletics partner, whether collegiate-level, high school interscholastic athletic association, or youth-focused program—to broaden the reach of beef messaging. Through this partnership, implement strategic outreach that educates athletes, coaches, and fans on beef's nutritional benefits, optimizing engagement and maximizing long-term affinity for beef among emerging generations.

Measurable Objective #3

By September 2026, host a minimum of two in-depth beef immersion experiences for key representatives of athletic partner programs—such as team dietitians, strength and conditioning coaches, and student athletes. These activations may include nutrition workshops, farm tours, and beef culinary experiences, aiming to optimize participants' understanding of beef's nutritional value and production practices, while maximizing their ability to communicate beef's benefits to broader athletic and fan communities.

Performance Efficiency Measures:

General Target Audience

- Northeast Consumers Reach Goal: 1,934,000
- Northeast Consumers Engagement Goal: 65,800

Key Opinion Leaders

- Experts with Influence Reach Goal: 65
- Experts with Influence Engagement Goal: 23

LRP Initiatives Addressed by this Tactic:

Grow Consumer Trust in Beef Production

- Align and collaborate with traditional and nontraditional partners to tell the positive story of beef cattle production
- Engage positively in the sustainable nutrition conversation

Promote and Capitalize on the Multiple Advantages of Beef

- Promote the role of beef in a healthy and sustainable diet
- Develop targeted marketing programs focused on the highest opportunity market segments
- Cultivate collaborative promotion partnerships

Checkoff Program Committee(s): Domestic Marketing, Nutrition & Health

Supplemental Information for This AR

1. **Please explain significant changes from the FY25 approved AR.**
   The FY26 AR will continue to evolve and build upon the successes achieved throughout the FY25 AR, as well as previously funded program work. This will be achieved by continuously forging new relationships, as well as fostering existing relationships with our target audiences, Supply Chain Experts with Influence, Consumers and Nutrition Experts with Influence to ensure that positive beef messaging and content is effectively reaching each audience. Program work within the FY26 AR will continue to build upon the way Northeast consumers are consuming information, for example, taking advantage of digital, online opportunities like targeted social ads featuring beef, integrated e-commerce retail campaigns and/or engaging touchpoints with our targeted nutrition audiences to name a few.

2. **List any proposed vendors/agencies that will be used to complete the work in this AR.**
   2060 Digital, Learfield, Playfly Sports, Van Wagner, Teall Properties Group (TPG), Market Street Sports Group, The Promo Girl and Purple Martin Creative

3. **Will all work with vendors/agencies be competitively bid? If no, please provide a brief description as to why.**
   No. The Northeast Beef Promotion Initiative will continue to leverage the ongoing relationships with agencies/vendors who have historical knowledge with our program and its needs. New contracts, fees and deliverables are reviewed each year, and all agencies/vendors are expected to meet or exceed contractual goals. As needed, work may be contracted out with new consultants, who will be competitively bid at that time.

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 work outlined within this AR continues to build upon and enhance the work previously executed by the NEBPI through the previous 20 ARs. ARs continue to become more efficient, streamlined, targeted and focused on the work accomplished. Funding support from our State Beef Council (SBC) and industry partners continues to further enhance each of the program tactics.

5. **If applicable, explain how this AR can be extended by state beef councils or other contractors.**
   Programs and work executed within this AR can be extended by State Beef Councils, either through direct partnership and/or by taking the proven program(s) and associated learnings and then extending within their own state. Funding support from State Beef Council partners continues to further enhance each of our program tactics.

   This AR continually works to collaborate among Checkoff Contractors, as we extend nationally developed messaging and resources created through the Beef It's What's for Dinner program, as well as working alongside the Veal Promotion AR, when applicable to ensure that beef and veal are strongly represented through programs, where goals align.

Detailed Budget Summary

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

1. National Beef Checkoff Funding
2. Other Funding 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

Definitions

National Beef Checkoff Funding is divided into:

- **Direct Costs:** These are expenses directly associated with executing program activities, including advertising, promotional materials, consulting fees, travel, and other project-specific costs.
- **Implementation:** These are the expenses that provide the process and infrastructure needed to put program activities into action, including overhead allocations and staff compensation (i.e. salaries and benefits).

Section 1 – FY26 Funding Requested by Tactic

FY26 National Beef Checkoff Funding Requested by Tactic

The following table outlines the requested amount of National Beef Checkoff funding for each tactic and the committee(s) that has been selected to score it/them.

National Beef Checkoff Funding by Tactic					
Committee Name	**Tactic**	**Tactic Name**	**Direct Costs**	**Implementation**	**Total**
Nutrition & Health	Tactic A	Empowering Influential Nutrition and Health Professionals to Inspire Consumer Trust in Beef	$220,167.00	$116,660.00	**$336,827.00**
Domestic Marketing	Tactic B	Positioning Beef as a Protein of Choice Among Northeast Consumers	$220,167.00	$116,670.00	**$336,837.00**
Domestic Marketing, Nutrition & Health	Tactic C	Aligning with Athletics to Capitalize on the Multiple Advantages of Beef	$209,666.00	$116,670.00	**$326,336.00**
		Total	**$650,000.00**	**$350,000.00**	**$1,000,000.00**

FY26 Other Funding Requested by Tactic

The following table reports the amount of anticipated Other Funding that would be applied to each tactic. This information is for reference only and demonstrates external collaboration as delineated in the 2021-2025 Beef Industry Long Range Plan.

Funding Sources Requested by Tactic *(Informational Only)*			
Funding Source	**Tactic**	**Tactic Name**	**Total**
QSBC Funds	Tactic A	Empowering Influential Nutrition and Health Professionals to Inspire Consumer Trust in Beef	**$64,000.00**
QSBC Funds	Tactic B	Positioning Beef as a Protein of Choice Among Northeast Consumers	**$135,000.00**
Other: Farm Credit Northeast AgEnhancement Grant	Tactic B	Positioning Beef as a Protein of Choice Among Northeast Consumers	**$10,000.00**
QSBC Funds	Tactic C	Aligning with Athletics to Capitalize on the Multiple Advantages of Beef	**$18,000.00**
Other: Farm Credit Northeast AgEnhancement Grant	Tactic C	Aligning with Athletics to Capitalize on the Multiple Advantages of Beef	**$10,000.00**
		Total	**$237,000.00**

Section 1 - Additional Funding Comments:

Use the space below to provide any additional details about the FY26 National Beef Checkoff or Other Funding amounts requested, along with any anticipated third-party contributions* for this AR.

** Specify the type of third-party contributions, such as support from external organizations or in-kind goods and services (e.g., equipment, supplies, volunteer time, consulting), and their estimated value (individual or cumulative*

All funding requests are pending board approval.

Section 2 – Summary of FY25 AR Budgets and Expenses

Classification:

This AR expands upon previously funded program work from last year. While CBB will enter information into the FY25 National Beef Checkoff Funding table, we (the contractor) will report corresponding details in the FY25 Other Funding table.

FY25 National Beef Checkoff Funding

This table reports the amount of awarded and expended National Beef Checkoff funding for this Authorization Request in FY25.

FY25 National Beef Checkoff Funding *Note: The Cattlemen's Beef Board completed the fields in this table.*			
	AR# 2520-CI		
	Direct Costs	**Implementation**	**Total**
Funds Awarded	$550,000.00	$350,000.00	$900,000.00
Actual Expenses *(October 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025)*	$227,327.66	$176,860.14	$404,187.80

FY25 Other Funding

The following table reports the amount of committed and expended Other Funding for the FY25 AR. This funding information is for informational purposes only and demonstrates external collaboration as delineated in the 2021-2025 Beef Industry Long Range Plan.

FY25 Other Funding *(Informational Only)*			
	AR# 2520-CI		
	Other Funding Source	**Funds Committed**	**Funds Expended** *(October 1, 2024 –June 30, 2025)*
A	QSBC Funds	$152,000.00	$88,590.95
B	Other: Northeast AgEnhancement Grants	$10,000.00	$10,000.00

Section 2 – Additional Funding Comments:

Use the space below if you wish to provide additional comments/information on the historical National Beef Checkoff or Other Funding budget and expense summaries, as well as details on third-party contributions* that supported these ARs.

** Specify the type of third-party contributions, such as support from external organizations or in-kind goods and services (e.g., equipment, supplies, volunteer time, consulting), and their estimated value (individual or cumulative).*

N/A

Section 3 – Historical Summary of AR Budgets and Expenses

Classification:	This AR expands upon previously funded program work from the past two years or more. While CBB will enter information into the National Beef Checkoff Funding Summary table, we (the contractor) will report information in the Other Funding Summary table.

National Beef Checkoff Funding – Historical Summary

The following table reports the amount of awarded and expended National Beef Checkoff funding for the FY22, FY23, and FY24 ARs.

National Beef Checkoff Funding - Historical Summary *Note: The Cattlemen's Beef Board completed the fields in this table.*				
		FY24 AR# 2420-CI	**FY23 AR# 2320-CI**	**FY22 AR# 2220-CI**
AR Period[1]	*Start Date:*	*Oct. 1, 2023*	*Oct. 1, 2022*	*Oct. 1, 2021*
	End Date:	*Sep. 30, 2023*	*Sep. 30, 2023*	*Sep. 30, 2022*
Funds Awarded		$900,000.00	$550,000.00	$494,760.00
Actual Expenses[2]		$892,864.35	$549,519.58	$494,505.99

[1]For multiyear ARs, the "End Date" reflects the date that the AR is scheduled to be completed.
[2]If the AR "End Date" has not occurred, actual expenses will be reflective of the following time period: AR Start Date - June 30, 2025.

Other Funding - Historical Summary

The following table reports the amount of Other Funding expenditures for the FY22, FY23, and FY24 ARs. 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 – Historical Summary *(Informational Only)*						
	FY24 AR# 2420-CI		**FY23 AR# 2320-CI**		**FY22 AR# 2220-CI**	
	Other Funding Source	**Total Expenditures**	**Other Funding Source**	**Total Expenditures**	**Other Funding Source**	**Total Expenditures**
A	QSBC Funds	$167,350.00	QSBC Funds	$227,000.00	QSBC Funds	$270,999.83
B	Corporate Funds	$10,000.00				

Section 3 - Additional Funding Comments:

Use the space below if you wish to provide additional comments/information on the historical National Beef Checkoff or Other Funding budget and expense summaries, as well as details on third-party contributions* that supported these ARs.

** Specify the type of third-party contributions, such as support from external organizations or in-kind goods and services (e.g., equipment, supplies, volunteer time, consulting), and their estimated value (individual or cumulative).*

N/A