

ALABAMA BEEF CHECKOFF PROGRAM

COUNCIL MEMBER HANDBOOK



Funded by Beef Farmers & Ranchers





ALABAMA BEEF CHECKOFF PROGRAM

WELCOME TO THE BEEF CHECKOFF



Thank you for taking time to serve on the Beef Checkoff Council. This group will be responsible for overseeing the beef checkoff programs and budgets for the National and State Beef Checkoff programs in our state. Your role is vital to the success of the program, and you will be counted on by the staff to be a sounding board throughout the year.

This booklet will give you a guide to information about the National Beef Checkoff including our relationship with the Cattlemen's Beef Board. The National Beef Checkoff (\$1/head) dollars are used to extend the *Beef. It's What's for Dinner.* message through beef advertising, promotion, educating and research.

In Alabama, we are so fortunate to have the Alabama State Beef Checkoff (\$1/head) as well which expands the efforts of our program to also include youth programs, production research and producer education programs.

The following pages will entail more details about the programs to prepare you for your role on this council. Alabama has a history of leading when it comes to beef promotion, and this council will continue that effort for the years to come. If you have any questions always know Erin and the staff are happy to assist you.

Sincerely,

Larry Reeves

Larry Reeves
ACA President



BEEF CHECKOFF PROGRAM

HISTORY

Congress created the Beef Promotion and Research Act, the "Beef Checkoff," with passage of the 1985 Farm Bill. Collections began on October 1, 1986; producers approved making the Beef Checkoff mandatory in 1988, with 79 percent voting in favor of it.

Producers asked that the checkoff program be built on these tenets:

- All producers and importers pay the equivalent of one dollar-per-head every time a beef animal is sold throughout its lifetime.
- State beef councils collect the dollar-per-head and must submit at least half of those assessments— 50 cents of every dollar— to the Cattlemen's Beef Board (CBB) for investment in the national checkoff program. Each state beef council determines how to invest the remaining 50 cents-per-head in approved state or national programs.
- All national checkoff-funded programs are budgeted and evaluated by the Cattlemen's Beef Board, a stand-alone organization of check-off-paying producer volunteers and importers that administers the Beef Checkoff.
- Cattlemen's Beef Board members — beef, dairy and veal producers and importers— are nominated by producer organizations in their states and appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture.





ALABAMA BEEF CHECKOFF PROGRAM

FLOW OF THE NATIONAL CHECKOFF DOLLAR

Representation for your checkoff is more local than you might think

Did you know that the volunteers responsible for making decisions about your checkoff dollars at both the state and national levels are checkoff-paying, cattle farmers, ranchers and importers? By law, this structure is designed to ensure that producers at the ground level are responsible for directing, reviewing and approving expenditure of all checkoff dollars.

IT STARTS IN YOUR STATE

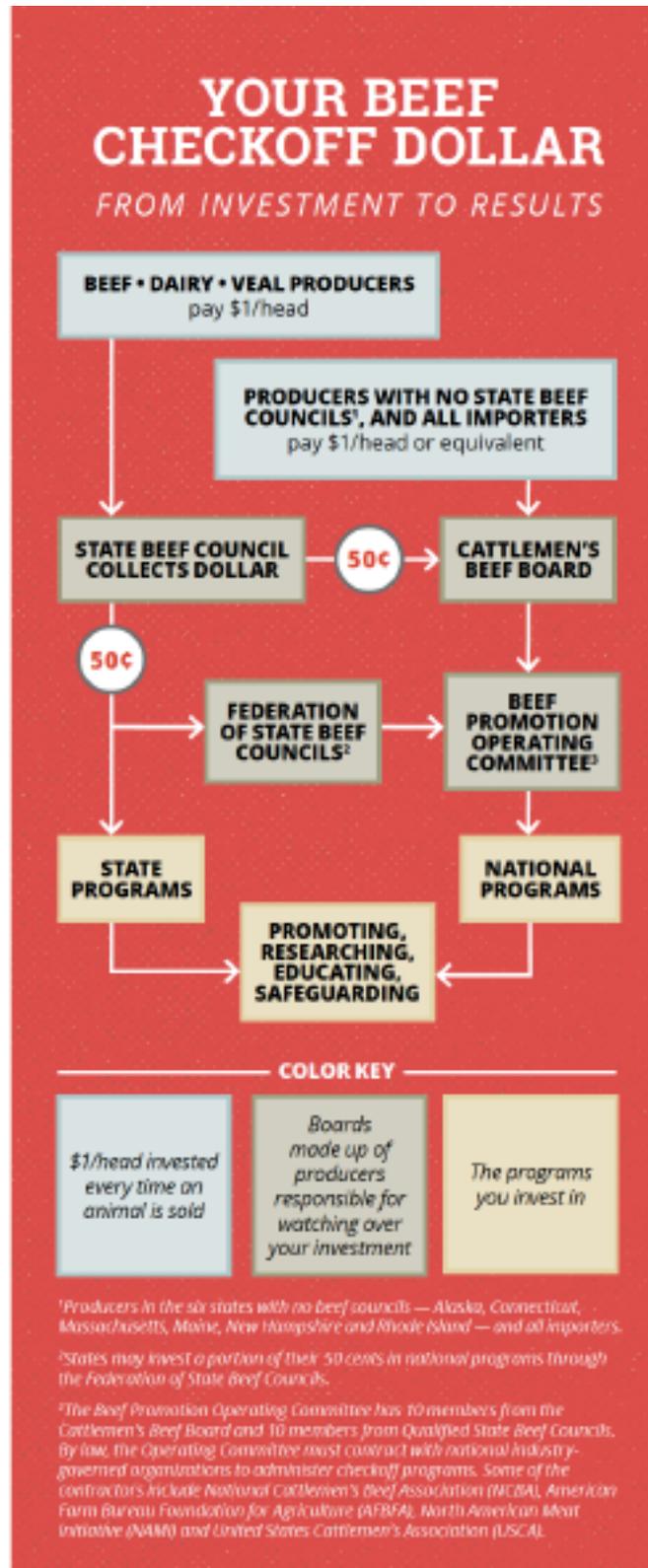
Your **Qualified State Beef Council** collects \$1 on each head of cattle every time it's sold. Fifty cents of that dollar goes directly to the Cattlemen's Beef Board for national programs, and up to 50 cents is retained by your state beef council. (In the six states without state councils, assessments go directly to the CBB.)

Producers sitting on your state beef council board determine how to invest the remaining 50 cents-per-head in approved state, regional, national or international checkoff programs. States may opt to invest a portion of their 50 cents in national programs through participation in the Federation of State Beef Councils, made up of producers chosen by individual state beef councils.

The role of the Cattlemen's Beef Board is to budget for and evaluate all national programs. 10 of these board members, along with 10 producers from the Federation of State Beef Councils, are elected by their peers to serve on the Beef Promotion Operating Committee, which is responsible for approving specific checkoff programs and contracting with national industry-governed organizations to implement them.

THE BOTTOM LINE

All checkoff oversight boards are comprised of producer and importer volunteers and, in all cases, include state representation.



Where are your checkoff dollars invested?



PROMOTION

Includes advertising, merchandising, and new-product development, as well as training and promotional partnerships with restaurants and supermarkets that stimulate sales of beef and veal products.



RESEARCH

Provides the foundation for virtually all checkoff-funded information and promotion projects by providing the science related to beef nutrition, beef safety and pathogen resistance. The checkoff also invests in quality enhancement and new-product opportunities, as well as analysis of consumer trends, perceptions, and concerns about beef and the beef ranching and farming community.



CONSUMER INFORMATION

Helps enhance beef's image by sharing nutritional data and other positive messages with targeted news media, food editors, dietitians, physicians and other individuals and groups who influence consumers' food knowledge and choices.



INDUSTRY INFORMATION

Strives for an accurate understanding of the beef industry and helps maintain a positive cattle-marketing climate. Also provides factual information to correct misleading or inaccurate publicity about beef safety and environmental and animal-welfare issues.



FOREIGN MARKETING

Identifies and develops international markets for U.S. beef and beef variety meats through programs aimed at expanding market penetration, gaining new market access, improving global consumer perceptions and building trust in U.S. beef.



PRODUCER COMMUNICATIONS

Informs producers and importers about how their checkoff dollars are invested and communicates specific program results. This includes an annual report, informational advertising, coordination with beef and dairy industry media, direct communication with producers and a survey of producers about what they want and expect from their checkoff.

Questions and answers about your checkoff

WHAT CAN THE CHECKOFF DO?

The Beef Checkoff's role is to drive demand for beef, both domestically and internationally, through a combination of initiatives, including consumer advertising, research, public relations and new-product development. To accomplish this, the checkoff acts as a catalyst for change and is designed to stimulate beef sales and consumption through a combination of these initiatives.

WHAT CAN'T THE CHECKOFF DO?

By law, checkoff funds cannot be used to influence government policy or action, including lobbying. The checkoff doesn't own cattle, packing plants or retail outlets. It can't control prices or single-handedly turn around a bad market.

DO PACKERS PAY?

Any packer who owns cattle for more than 10 days prior to harvest must pay the dollar-per-head checkoff on each animal. There are, however, no packer seats on the Cattlemen's Beef Board.

DO IMPORTERS PAY?

Importers pay the dollar-per-head checkoff or the equivalent on imported cattle, beef and beef products, amounting to millions each year.

DO CONTRACTORS MAKE MONEY FROM THE CHECKOFF?

No. The Cattlemen's Beef Board and USDA must approve all checkoff budgets and programs before any contractors are reimbursed for program costs on a cost recovery basis. Contractors pay program costs from their own organizational budgets, and then are reimbursed only for substantiated direct costs incurred in implementing approved checkoff programs.

For more about the checkoff, visit
DrivingDemandForBeef.com
or contact your state beef council.

CATTLEMEN'S BEEF BOARD
(303) 220-9890



FLOW OF THE STATE CHECKOFF DOLLAR

How are State Checkoff Dollars Collected?

Cattle are sold and \$1 per head is remitted for the State Beef Checkoff.

Collections are sent to the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries by auction markets.

Department of Agriculture and Industries sends request to Department of Finance and a check is sent to the Alabama Cattlemen's Association for deposit in the State Beef Checkoff account.

How are State Checkoff Dollars Spent?

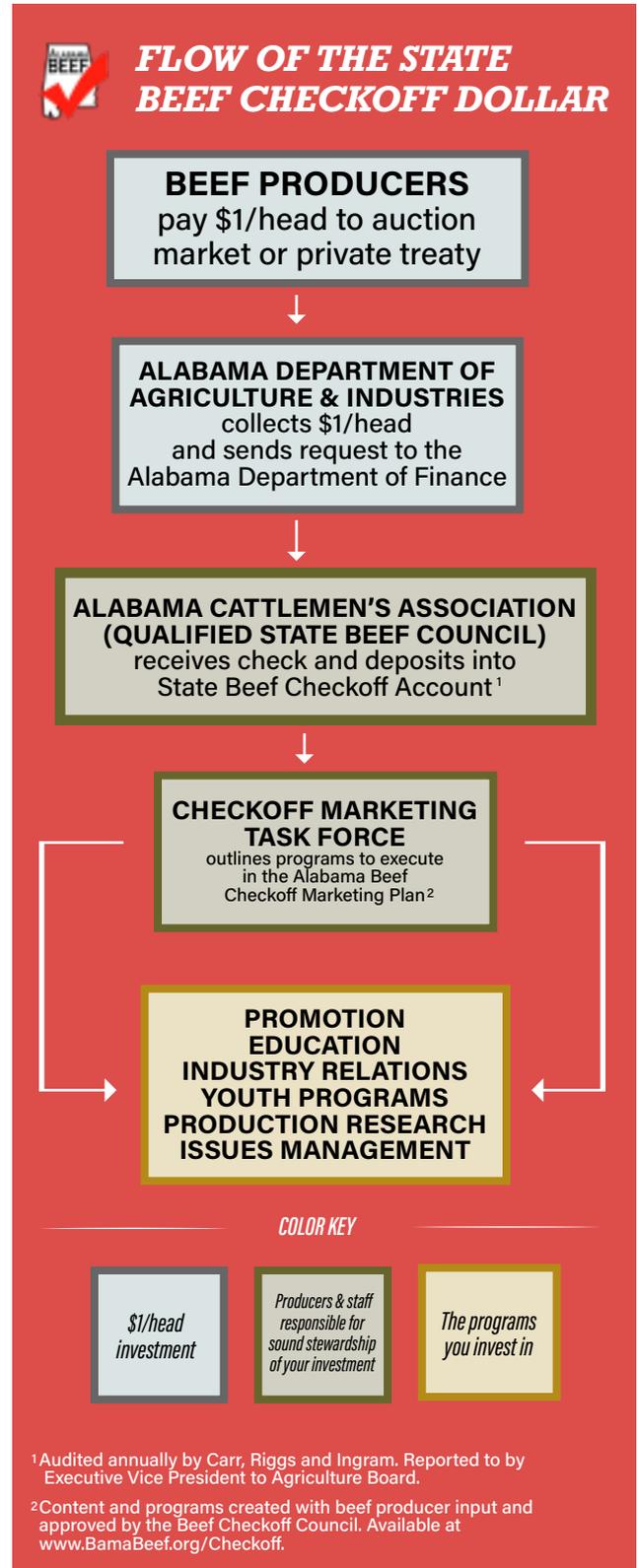
The dollars are used to pay for programs outlined in the Alabama Beef Checkoff Marketing Plan that include beef promotion, beef education, industry relations, producer education, youth programs and production research.

Who Provides Oversight to the State Beef Checkoff?

An annual audit is performed by Carr, Riggs and Ingram. The Executive Vice President also reports to the State Board of Agriculture & Industries with the audited financial review and an annual report of the programs completed using state beef checkoff dollars. Throughout the year, the Beef Checkoff Council oversees the programs funded by state checkoff dollars.

How Can Cattle Producers Get Involved?

Cattle producers are invited to contact the Alabama Cattlemen's Association to voice comments or concerns regarding checkoff dollars. Each year, the Beef Checkoff Council and staff host a Checkoff Task Force Meeting where any cattle producer in the state of Alabama can attend to brainstorm ideas and offer input for use of checkoff dollars. The proposed marketing plan and budgets are then approved by the Beef Checkoff Council. A copy of the Alabama Beef Checkoff Marketing Plan is available online at www.BamaBeef.org/Checkoff.



INVESTMENT CHECKLIST

An overview of the programs and services each checkoff account is lawfully permitted to fund.



NATIONAL CHECKOFF

- Beef Advertising
- Beef Promotion
- Beef Education
- Issues Management
- Producer Communication
- Beef Research
- Production Research
- Youth Education
- Producer Education



STATE CHECKOFF

- Beef Advertising
- Beef Promotion
- Beef Education
- Issues Management
- Producer Communication
- Beef Research
- Production Research
- Youth Education
- Producer Education

PLEASE NOTE:
Beef Checkoff dollars cannot and do not influence government policy or action.



ALABAMA BEEF CHECKOFF PROGRAM

STAFF DIRECTORY



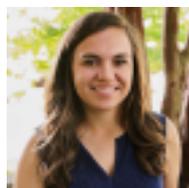
Your resourceful and capable staff is happy to help you understand your role on the council and our beef checkoff program. Learn about each staff position and call or email us if you can help you in any way.



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EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
ebeasley@bamabeef.org



Kayla Greer
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS
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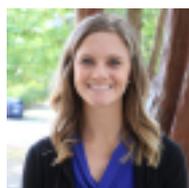
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Sydney Dougherty
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sdougherty@bamabeef.org



ALABAMA BEEF CHECKOFF PROGRAM

COUNCIL STRUCTURE



Purpose: A division of the association formed to approve all activities, marketing plans and budgets related to the Alabama Beef Checkoff program.

Council Structure: 15-person council serving one-year term, up to three (3) years consecutive beginning January 1 of current year. Council will meet quarterly in conjunction with ACA Board of Directors meetings. The council will have a chairman and vice chairman which will serve a one-year term as well.

15 Council Members:

- ACA Officer
- ACA Treasurer
- Alabama Livestock Marketing Association President
- Alabama CattleWomen's Association President
- Alabama Farmers Federation Beef Representative
- Commissioner of Agriculture-Rick Pate or designee
- Five (5) Appointed Cattle Producers
- Four (4) At-Large Positions representing retail, foodservice, academia, Extension and/or producer groups

Requirements for Council Members:

- All council members must be 18 years and older
- Recommendations to sit on the council should be sent via an application each year to the Executive Committee
- ACA President or Treasurer cannot serve as chairman or vice chairman of council.
- Council members can sit on annual Beef Checkoff Task Force which organizes footprint of Beef Checkoff Marketing Plan but is not required to participate.

Application to Council:

Each summer, applications will be open for at large positions and submitted to Executive Committee for approval before being considered by current council members for vote to serve.

The Beef Checkoff Council will meet quarterly in conjunction with ACA Board of Directors meeting to tend to the business of the Beef Checkoff programs.

Council will operate each year from January 1-December 31, except first council will operate from October 2020-December 31, 2021.



ALABAMA BEEF CHECKOFF PROGRAM

COUNCIL DIRECTORY



Chris Bell

CATTLE PRODUCER

Mickey Childers

CATTLE PRODUCER

Anthony Faggard

CATTLE PRODUCER

LD Fitzpatrick

ACA TREASURER

Ginger Gaines

CATTLE PRODUCER

Linda Godfrey

AT-LARGE, SAMFORD UNIVERSITY DIETETICS & NUTRITION

Jim Jordan

ACA OFFICER

Nathan Lipscomb

CATTLE PRODUCER

Theresa Long

AT-LARGE, CULINARY INSTRUCTOR

Bea Jai Merriman

ALABAMA CATTLEWOMEN'S ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT

Bob Plaster

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE & INDUSTRIES

Brady Ragland

ALABAMA FARMER'S FEDERATION BEEF REPRESENTATIVE

Rob Renfroe

AT-LARGE, GROCER

Jim Sealy

ALABAMA LIVESTOCK MARKETING ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT

Barney Wilborn

AT-LARGE, AUBURN UNIVERSITY MEAT LAB MANAGER

1. Brand Marketing & Communications

Objective A:	Consumer Communications & Advertising: Involve millennial consumers in the beef conversation by hosting events, supplying beef information and interacting on social media to increase awareness about beef and beef cattle production.
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Strategy 1: Host the Jr. & Sr. High School State Beef Cookoff for Family and Consumer Science (FACS) students to increase their knowledge and skill of working with beef cuts.

-  Action Step 1 Partner with the Department of Education and Alabama CattleWomen's Association to host a state high school beef cook-off.
-  Action Step 2 Work with the State Dept. of Education to identify a FACS teacher in every county to work with the county cattlemen and/or cattlemen chapter to host a county contest.
-  Action Step 3 Enhance the educational program during the cook-off by separating into breakout groups for students to learn about economical cuts of beef, careers in foodservice and cattle production.
-  Action Step 4 Provide awards for winners in each division and the overall "Best in Beef" winner.
-  Action Step 5 Provide the winning student an opportunity to cook their beef dish on a local television cooking segment.

Strategy 2: Conduct a "Bama's Best" contest in the fall to increase beef demand at independent restaurants and gain media exposure about beef.

-   Action Step 1 Use the ACA Facebook, Instagram and Twitter platforms to promote the contest and offer a direct link to www.BamaBeef.org where nominations can be collected.
-   Action Step 2 Purchase an advertisement on Facebook to increase online engagement throughout the online portions of the contest.
-  Action Step 3 Purchase an advertisement with local radio station of the winner to promote the restaurant.
-   Action Step 4 Provide tabletop and window signage to each finalist to encourage diners to participate in People's Choice voting.
-   Action Step 5 Award plaques to each of the four finalists utilizing ACA leadership as a way to increase media attention about the contest.
-  Action Step 6 Select and reimburse three judges to travel to the top four restaurants to select a winner.
-  Action Step 7 Conduct an awards presentation and media event at the winning restaurant(s) for both the People's Choice and Judge's Pick.

Strategy 3: Leverage beef checkoff social properties to educate consumers about beef from pasture to plate.

-  Action Step 1 Implement the NCBA quarterly digital marketing plan to highlight beef on social media throughout the year.
-   Action Step 2 Purchase advertising through Facebook each month to drive consumers to www.BeefItsWhatsForDinner.com where they can explore beef nutrition, cattle production practices and recipe information.
-  Action Step 3 Post weekly on ACA social properties (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) highlighting positive information about beef cattle production, beef nutrition and recipes.
-  Action Step 4 Using Constant Contact, email monthly consumer newsletters with information about seasonal cuts, recipes and beef nutrition information.

Strategy 4: Participate in consumer events around Alabama as a way to promote beef to various consumer groups.

-   Action Step 1 Purchase beef brochures from NCBA to distribute at consumer events and through mailings.
-   Action Step 2 Purchase and distribute beef materials and posters/banners to county cattlemen and cattlemen chapters for use in their county fairs and local consumer events.
-  Action Step 3 Host a luncheon of the "Distinguished Young Women of Alabama" allowing the opportunity to showcase new beef products to an influential group of young leaders.
-   Action Step 4 Appear on five television news stations during the year to promote beef recipes and cooking tips to viewership.



Action Step 5 Have an exhibit at the Auburn University College of Agriculture Ag Round-Up to promote beef as a top ag commodity in the state.



Action Step 6 Establish a list of large food events taking place in various counties during the year for county cattlemen to utilize.



Action Step 7 Host a beef cookoff for students at private schools, homeschools and agriscience students to compete at AJCA Round-Up or the Alabama National Fair.



Action Step 8 Sponsor four (4) culinary events taking place in major cities in Alabama.



Action Step 9 Explore a sponsorship of a beef night at the three minor league baseball teams to promote beef.



Action Step 10 Sponsor the Beef Cook-off contest at Alabama National Fair.



Action Step 11 Sponsor one Bama- Q Challenge episode and Steak Cook-off to promote beef during the SLE Rodeo.

Strategy 5:

Expand the reach of the national Beef. It's What's For Dinner. advertising in Alabama.



Action Step 1 Place national beef ads in programs during special events such as rodeos, fairs and festivals.



Action Step 2 Purchase stickers using the new Beef. It's What's For Dinner. logo to distribute at consumer events and for counties to use.



Action Step 3 Purchase promotional items using the Beef. It's What's For Dinner. logo to distribute at consumer events.



Action Step 4 Purchase radio buys with local radio stations in Alabama's four major market areas during the year to promote the beef message.



Action Step 5 Promote Beef. What's For Dinner. campaign with strategically-placed billboard signs in high trafficked areas of the state.



Action Step 6 Purchase Google advertising to extend keyword search leads to www.BeeftsWhatsForDinner.com in Alabama.



Action Step 7 Purchase BEEF car tags to distribute at statewide events.



Action Step 8 Purchase Beef. It's What's For Dinner napkins and placements to provide for use at events.

Strategy 6:

Host October Beef Month in Alabama to promote beef and beef cattle production among consumers in the state.



Action Step 1 Purchase statewide online advertising to promote beef during October Beef Month and drive consumers to www.BeeftsWhatsForDinner.com.



Action Step 2 Coordinate a "Beef Week" during October Beef Month.



Action Step 3 Purchase 200 reading books for grades K-2 and 100 reading books grades 3-4 and put "face to the cattleman" by reading about beef cattle to elementary school classrooms during October Beef Month.



Action Step 4 Partner with the Department of Agriculture to host BeefFest at SweetCreek Farm Market.



Action Step 5 Coordinate a County Cattlemen's Steak competition at BeefFest at SweetCreek Farm Market.



Action Step 6 Post daily throughout October on ACA social properties promoting beef recipes, nutrition information, production facts and the faces behind the beef.



Action Step 7 Encourage cattlemen across the state to promote October Beef Month at countywide events, in schools and on social properties.



Action Step 8 Redesign the homepage of www.BamaBeef.org to feature beef imagery, links to www.BeeftsWhatsForDinner.com and an "October is Beef Month in Alabama" theme.



Action Step 9 Purchase advertising in the *Alabama Cattleman* magazine and other industry publications promoting October as Beef Month in Alabama.



Action Step 10 Plan a cattleman interview on local radio stations to promote October Beef Month and to educate consumers about beef cattle

production in Alabama.

Objective A: Consumer Communications & Advertising	
National	State
\$126,000	\$48,000

Objective B:	Influencer Education: Work with influencers in Alabama to increase knowledge about beef from pasture to plate.
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Strategy 7: Utilize the BEEF 101 checkoff program as the primary beef educational tool for key influencer groups to highlight the “Pasture to Plate” beef story.

-   Action Step 1 Host programs for at least eight culinary schools in Alabama at Auburn University Meats Laboratory to educate students about beef production and processing.
-  Action Step 2 Provide beef cuts charts and foodservice beef buying guides to all post-secondary culinary schools in Alabama.
-  Action Step 3 Target young medical professional students at Auburn University, University of Alabama, USA and UAB for a BEEF 101 program to increase knowledge about beef before they begin their careers.
-  Action Step 4 Provide opportunities for ACA Board members, county directors and ag industry groups to participate in BEEF 101 program to learn more about cattle production.
-   Action Step 5 Host a Beef 101 program for local food bloggers and influencers such as chefs in Alabama and provide them the cuts of beef fabricated during the program in order for them to cook and post on their media outlets.
-  Action Step 6 Hire a company to create a promotional video of Beef 101 to show to potential groups interested in participating in the program.

Strategy 8: Utilize farm tours to expose influencers to the cattle industry and increase their knowledge of beef.

-   Action Step 1 Host a farm tour for three culinary schools to learn the facts about beef cattle production.
-  Action Step 2 Host a farm tour in north Alabama for the American Culinary Federation members.
-  Action Step 3 Host a farm tour for 30 nutrition interns at UAB to learn more about cattle from pasture to plate.

Strategy 9: Partner with leaders from Alabama Dept. of Education to provide information, training programs, and materials about beef to targeted teacher groups.

-   Action Step 1 Participate in a general session at the FACS summer conference in Birmingham to educate teachers about availability of BEEF 101 programs for their students and beef teaching materials.
-   Action Step 2 Provide a BEEF 101 at Auburn University for FACS and AgriScience teachers to earn continuing education credits.
-  Action Step 3 Maintain a beef product information packet for FACS teachers to provide them with a presentation, beef cut identification and an economical beef lab for their students.
-  Action Step 4 Develop a lesson plan for agriscience teachers on beef production to use in the classroom.
-  Action Step 5 Attend and present the beef production lesson plan for Agriscience teachers at three regional meetings held during the year.
-  Action Step 6 Provide beef education to teachers and classrooms by utilizing virtual learning experiences such as webinars and live feeds to BEEF 101.
-  Action Step 7 Partner with the Department of Education to sponsor the beef for the FCCLA State high school culinary event in Alabama.

Strategy 10: Contract with a registered dietitian to provide resources, speakers, and materials detailing beef’s role in a healthy diet to health influencers around Alabama.

-  Action Step 1 Contact four colleges in Alabama about using ACA staff and cattlemen to serve on virtual panels for their class in Food Science to discuss beef cattle production.
-  Action Step 2 Partner with the Alabama Dietetic Association to provide 2 “lunch and learn” opportunities for members to earn continuing education units on beef.
-   Action Step 3 Work with University of Alabama and Auburn University Hospitality and Restaurant Management departments to conduct a beef presentation and demonstration every semester.

-   Action Step 4 Work with the Obesity Task Force to host a quarterly meeting and serve as the educational speaker on the program to discuss beef nutrition and cuts information.
-   Action Step 5 Serve as a speaker at the Alabama Family and Consumer Science collegiate conference to provide instructors with beef cut and nutrition information.
-   Action Step 6 Contract with a registered dietitian to use as a spokesperson at educational programs and on ACA social properties to provide expertise on beef's role in a healthy lifestyle.
-   Action Step 7 Present recent research findings on beef's role in a healthy lifestyle with Alabama Academy of Family Physicians.

Objective B: Influencer Education	
National	State
\$33,000	\$26,000

Objective C: Work with retail and foodservice partners in Alabama to increase beef sales through education about the product and promotional programs.

Strategy 11: Work with retail partners in Alabama to coordinate promotions to increase beef sale and serve as a source of education about beef.

-   Action Step 1 Communicate with NCBA's regional retail manager concerning regional and national supermarket chains participation in checkoff programs.
-   Action Step 2 Provide independent retailers with Point of Sale marketing items from NCBA to be used in meat case at supermarkets.
-   Action Step 3 Work with three retailers in the state or region to provide educational programs about beef and resources available through www.BeeftsWhatsForDinner.com.
-   Action Step 4 Partner with independent grocers to fund a sales competition between stores in the summer to increase beef sales and tonnage.
-   Action Step 5 Attend the Alabama Grocers Association Annual Conference and purchase a booth in the trade show to engage with retailers

Strategy 12: Work with foodservice partners in Alabama to coordinate promotions to increase beef sale and serve as a source of education about beef.

-   Action Step 1 Host four BEEF 101 classes at the AU Meats Laboratory about basic beef processing for foodservice companies as a training tool for new employees.
-   Action Step 2 Schedule and visit with 4 foodservice companies in the state to discuss national promotions, educational programs available and promotion ideas to increase beef sales.
-   Action Step 3 Promote BEEF U 2.0 to two foodservice operators as a training tool for sales teams.
-   Action Step 4 Partner with Alabama Restaurant and Hospitality Alliance to host a BEEF 101 for 50 chefs and restaurant owners in the state.
-   Action Step 5 Conduct sales promotion with foodservice companies during October Beef Month to increase sales and tonnage of beef in the state.

Objective C: Retail & Foodservice	
National	State
\$25,000	\$6,000

BRAND MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS	
National	State
\$184,000	\$80,000

Issues Response & Industry Relations

Objective D: Issues Response: Prepare a team of industry stakeholders to manage issues that arise and develop a plan to respond utilizing the team.

Strategy 13: Work with industry stakeholders to prepare and implement a plan for issues response.

-   Action Step 1 Keep a current list and contact information of key statewide individuals who are on the Beef Crisis Preparedness Team.



Action Step 2 Provide a staff person contact for the Beef Crisis Preparedness Team.



Action Step 3 Maintain a list of major communicatoes throughout the state who can stay abreast of issues regarding the beef cattle industry and are willing to particinate in media when asked.



Action Step 4 Activate the issues team when an event arises.

Strategy 14: Monitor traditional and digital media for unfavorable stories on beef and stay abreast of potentially damaging issues that could impact consumer confidence in beef.



Action Step 1 Use Google Alert and Meltwater to monitor local stories about the cattle industry and beef in the print and social media.



Action Step 2 Monitor NCBA's communication efforts about issues circulating the industry.

Strategy 15: Be prepared to counter media stories and statements that portray raising cattle and beef consumption in a negative way.



Action Step 1 Have an efficient plan in place for handling negative media stories including social media reports.



Action Step 2 Keep talking points ready for use on a wide array of potential issues.



Action Step 3 Provide a media spokesperson training session for the Beef Crisis Preparedness Team and others who desire media training.



Action Step 4 Strongly encourage county presidents in major media markets to participate in media spokesperson training so they're equipped to be available to media in case of crisis.



Action Step 5 Provide state and county leaders with the basic points on what to do when the media calls.

Strategy 16: Implement the Masters of Beef Advocacy 3.0 (MBA 3.0) program in Alabama to train advocates on a grassroots level



Action Step 1 Host a link to www.MastersofBeefAdvocacy.com on the Alabama Cattlemen's Association website.



Action Step 2 Use the state coordinator FFA toolkit to help activate agriscience teachers to implement MBA training in their classrooms.



Action Step 3 Use social media to market the launch of MBA 3.0 and encourage cattlemen to complete online training.

Objective D: Issues Response	
National	State
\$7,000	\$30,000

Objective E: Public Relations: Serve as the state's spokesperson for the beef cattle industry.

Strategy 17: Media: Increase the number of positive impressions generated about Alabama's beef industry.



Action Step 1 Serve as the spokesperson for the state's beef cattle industry by providing beef cattle information and responding to media calls.



Action Step 2 Co-sponsor the Rodeo Media Kickoff Luncheon with the SLE which is held for 50 members of the media providing positive beef industry information.



Action Step 3 Maintain a database of cattle producers in Alabama's major media markets that are available for interviews when the media inquires.

Strategy 18: Showcase that cattle producers are good stewards of the land, protect the environment, care for their cattle and produce them in a sustainable way.



Action Step 1 Partner with Natural Resources Conservation Services (NCRS) and the Alabama Department of Agriculture to recognize a state Alabama Environmental Stewardship Award winner and submit to the NCBA Environmental Stewardship Award Program.



Action Step 2 Highlight the work of Alabama cattle producers on social media through feature posts weekly.



Action Step 3 Provide articles and information that promote the Alabama beef cattle industry to newspapers who request content.

Objective E: Public Relations	
National	State
\$2,000	\$14,000

Objective F:	Industry Outreach: Attend industry stakeholders events to discuss, partner and promote beef checkoff programs.
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Strategy 19: Inform producers about checkoff-funded programs by speaking at meetings and other events.

-  Action Step 1 Update producers about beef checkoff activities at approximately 30 county cattlemen meetings and other producer gatherings.
-  Action Step 2 Provide industry leaders and Auburn University Beef Team with checkoff updates and talking points at least quarterly.
-  Action Step 3 Update ACA Board of Directors at regularly scheduled board meetings about checkoff programs.
-  Action Step 4 Work with the Alabama Livestock Marketing Association (LMA) to have an ACA staff person at annual meeting to report on checkoff activities.
-  Action Step 5 Update industry stakeholders such as the Alabama BCIA and breed associations about checkoff work during meetings or events.
-  Action Step 6 Purchase marketing material and new technology to improve aesthetics and provide modern communication tools for producers at trade shows and events.
-  Action Step 7 Produce and distribute 10,000 "Cattlemen's Connect" card to gain producer contact information to provide information about the checkoff and upcoming educational opportunities.

Strategy 20: Maintain strong relationships with Alabama's 22 auction markets and order buyers and work with them to promote the checkoff message.

-  Action Step 1 Provide all stockyards with banner up signage to promote producer programs.
-  Action Step 2 Visit each stockyard annually to discuss checkoff programs and provide checkoff resources to distribute to producers.
-  Action Step 3 Provide auction markets with checkoff fliers that can handily fit in an envelope when producers collect their check.
-  Action Step 4 Sponsor and attend 10 Customer Appreciation events at Alabama stockyards.
-  Action Step 5 Maintain a current stockyard directory on www.BamaBeef.org

Objective F: Industry Outreach	
National	State
\$0	\$45,000

ISSUES RESPONSE & INDUSTRY RELATIONS	
National	State
\$9,000	\$89,000

3. Research

Objective G:	Beef Quality Research: Support beef quality research at Auburn University in cooperation with a cattlemen's research panel.
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Strategy 21: Fund research projects to improve beef quality and safety.

-  Action Step 1 Provide funds for a graduate student in meat science Auburn University to research beef quality and safety.

Objective G: Beef Quality Research	
National	State
\$0	\$12,000

Objective H:	Production Research: Form a committee of cattlemen to evaluate and fund beef cattle research at Auburn University.
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Strategy 22: Provide funds for applied production research programs at Auburn that meet producer needs in carrying out the needs identified by the research committee.



Action Step 1 Fund production research projects at Auburn related to topics developed by a committee of cattle producers.

Objective H: Production Research	
National	State
\$0	\$40,000

RESEARCH	
National	State
\$0	\$52,000

4. Producer Communications

Objective I:	Producer Communications: Keep cattle producers informed about how their checkoff funds are being spent.
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Strategy 23: Leverage ACA social properties, print advertising and other digital tools to inform producers about the beef checkoff program.



Action Step 1 Provide national and state checkoff information on www.BamaBeef.org.



Action Step 2 Redesign the look of and publish a weekly update on the Bama Beef Blog where producers can learn about checkoff-funded programs and events.



Action Step 3 Publish four (4) e-newsletters highlighting quarterly checkoff programs to send to the Alabama cattle producers and auction markets.



Action Step 4 Advertise producer communication pieces in popular agriculture print media in Alabama.



Action Step 5 Highlight county activities throughout October Beef Month on social media and in the *Alabama Cattleman* magazine.



Action Step 6 Run a half-page piece in the *Alabama Cattleman* each month publicizing the work of the checkoff program.



Action Step 7 Purchase advertising through Facebook each month to drive producers to www.BeeffBoard.org where they can explore the work of their checkoff dollars.



Action Step 8 Using "The Drive" as a template, produce a monthly e-blast about the work of state and national producer checkoff dollars.



Action Step 9 Use targeted advertising at Alabama's five largest stockyards and the ACA Convention & Trade Show to educate producers about the work of their checkoff dollars.



Action Step 10 Produce placemats to provide at cattlemen events that display the work of checkoff dollars.



Action Step 11 Redesign www.BamaBeef.org to offer a refreshed look to online visitors.

Strategy 24: Utilize ag industry media to inform Alabama producers about checkoff-funded programs.



Action Step 1 Provide checkoff information to producers via the Southeast AgNet radio program.



Action Step 2 Prepare an annual report on the beef checkoff including information on the state and national programs and publish in the *Alabama Cattleman* and online at www.BamaBeef.org/Checkoff.

Objective I: PRODUCER COMMUNICATIONS	
National	State
\$32,000	\$31,000

5. Producer Education

Objective J:	Beef Quality Assurance (BQA): A nationally coordinated, state implemented program that teaches producers how to raise cattle under optimum management and environmental conditions.
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Strategy 25: Increase the number of BQA certifications to 20,000 through online and on-site certifications.

-  Action Step 1 Increase participation by developing incentives for producers who are BQA certified by providing them with a firm sign, bumper sticker and certificate.
-  Action Step 2 Provide funds as needed for Alabama's state BQA coordinator and ACA leader to the National BQA State Coordinators Annual Meeting.
-  Action Step 3 Publish an article in *Alabama Cattleman* on proper handling of cattle when loading and hauling in trailer.
-  Action Step 4 Maintain a database of all Alabama BQA-certified producers and send out yearly reminders for re-certification.
-  Action Step 5 Recognize top 5 counties for BQA certified cattlemen at the 2020 ACA Convention.
-  Action Step 6 Establish dates for 10 BQA certification trainings in auction markets across the state and advertise on Bama Beef Events Calendar.
-  Action Step 7 Provide all auction markets with four (4) cattle handling flags to promote safe handling of animals and the checkoff message.

Strategy 26: Integrate BQA training into Agriscience classrooms statewide to teach students at an early age that cattlemen care about their cattle, the land and food safety.

-  Action Step 1 Update and provide agriscience teachers with a BQA presentation for use in the classroom.
-  Action Step 2 Invite agriscience teachers to ACA building to show them what we do, promote the importance of BQA and show our support for youth development in the state.
-  Action Step 3 Provide web resources for instruction on beef cattle production on the www.BamaBeef.org Agriscience Teacher webpage.

Objective J: Beef Quality Assurance	
National	State
\$0	\$15,000

Objective K:	Producer Educational Programs: Provide programs that will increase the productivity, profitability and sustainability of Alabama's beef cattle industry by meeting the needs of producers.
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Strategy 27: Provide educational programs that teach producers about forages, nutrition, reproduction and animal breeding.

-  Action Step 1 Work with ACES to sponsor regional cow/calf management field days across the state.
-  Action Step 2 Partner with Auburn University's Department of Animal Science to host a beef cattle tour with the new faculty members.
-  Action Step 3 Work with ACES and the Alabama Department of Agriculture & Industries to educate producers on animal disease traceability.
-  Action Step 4 Work with ACES to sponsor the Alabama Grazing Academy.
-  Action Step 5 Work with ACES to sponsor the Stocker Conference.
-  Action Step 6 Advertise Extension educational programs using ACA social properties, www.BamaBeef.org and the *Alabama Cattleman*.
-  Action Step 7 Work with ACES to sponsor and promote short courses offered across the state.
-  Action Step 8 Sponsor development of educational materials for producers about bull selection, market reports and record keeping.



Action Step 9 Sponsor the Alabama Beef Cattle Conference hosted at Auburn University in March 2020.

Strategy 28: Publish articles and materials highlighting management practices that are beneficial to cattle producers in carrying out the Alabama Beef Cattle Strategic Plan.



Action Step 1 Develop a series of 12 articles to be published in the *Alabama Cattleman* that educate producers about production topics related to marketing, breeding, sustainability and management.



Action Step 2 Include a page in the *Alabama Cattleman* twice a year that features contact info for each ACES REA.



Action Step 3 Partner with Alabama BCIA to purchase and distribute the IRM Red Book to cattlemen in Alabama.



Action Step 4 Archive educational articles from the *Alabama Cattleman* on on www.BamaBeef.org.

Objective K: Producer Educational Programs	
National	State
\$0	\$42,000

Objective L: Young Producer Programs: Provide learning and leadership opportunities for young cattlemen ages (21-40) involved in the cattle industry.

Strategy 29: Develop educational programs for the millennial segment (21-40) to increase and strengthen communication to millennials within the cattle industry.



Action Step 1 Sponsor and host a media training conducted by NCBA for young cattlemen.



Action Step 2 Identify Alabama colleges with agriculture curriculum and offer educational programs for students.



Action Step 3 Co-sponsor at least one young cattleman to represent Alabama at the NCBA Young Cattlemen's Conference.

Strategy 30: Coordinate and support the Young Cattlemen's Leadership Program.



Action Step 1 Recruit a class of at least 25 participants for Class VII.



Action Step 2 Work with counties to recruit potential YCLP candidates, notify county chapters when they have graduates and encourage chapters to get YCLP's involved locally.



Action Step 3 Support the YCLP by organizing a series of 6 meetings dispersed throughout the state including an industry tour that highlights the many segments of the cattle industry.



Action Step 4 Work with Auburn University to provide leadership and spokesperson training.



Action Step 5 Provide issues management training to the YCLP class by ACA staff.



Action Step 6 Co-sponsor reception for graduates and current members at Cattlemen's Convention.



Action Step 7 Feature the current class on ACA social properties to highlight their involvement in Alabama's beef cattle industry.



Action Step 8 Organize and coordinate one YCLP alumni event to be held in the spring to serve as a networking opportunity.



Action Step 9 Organize a YCLP Council consisting of at least one (1) member of each completed class.

Objective L: Young Producer Programs	
National	State
\$0	\$37,000

PRODUCER EDUCATION	
National	State
\$0	\$94,000

6. Youth Development

Objective M:	Youth Programs: Provide educational and leadership development opportunities for youth involved in the cattle industry.
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Strategy 31: Increase the number of learning opportunities and activities to target young people and get them involved in the Alabama beef cattle industry.

-  Action Step 1 Work with county Cattlemen's chapters to establish at least 25 junior programs that involve activities beyond livestock exhibition.
-  Action Step 2 Work with Auburn University to host a statewide leadership training for Alabama junior cattlemen.
-  Action Step 3 Work with junior advisers to establish specified goals and expectations to include all youth in the county interested in the beef cattle industry.
-  Action Step 4 Co-sponsor and promote youth participation at BEEF U in Auburn.
-  Action Step 5 Sponsor an educational field days in different regions of the state to learn more about the cattle industry.
-  Action Step 6 Provide learning opportunities for Alabama youth by supporting the 12 educational contests during the statewide Alabama Junior Cattlemen's Association Round-Up.
-  Action Step 7 Provide learning opportunities for Alabama youth by supporting three educational contests during the 2020 ACA Convention.

Strategy 32: Partner with existing organizations to provide opportunities for youth within the beef industry.

-  Action Step 1 Support statewide events and livestock shows that target youth, such as the Junior Beef Expo, Alabama National Fair, AGR Christmas Classic, SLE Livestock Judging Contest and Collegiate FFA Winter Classic.
-  Action Step 2 Provide funds for the winning FFA Livestock Judging team to attend national contests.
-  Action Step 3 Educate youth about Alabama's beef cattle industry at the 2020 Alabama FFA Convention with a trade show exhibit.
-  Action Step 4 Participate in the roundtable discussion for Agriscience teachers at their summer conference to discuss IQA certification and cattle industry issues.
-  Action Step 5 Sponsor the statewide FFA Livestock Judging Contest and Beef Proficiency Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE).
-  Action Step 6 Provide funds to help send state 4-H winning teams to national events including: All-star 4-H Judging team to Louisville, KY, the state 4-H Livestock quiz bowl team to Omaha, NE, and the state 4-H skill-a-thon team to Louisville, KY.
-  Action Step 7 Support the AU Collegiate Livestock Judging Team with an annual sponsorship.
-  Action Step 8 Utilize the AJCA social properties to market upcoming youth events across AJCA, FFA and 4-H youth.

Strategy 33: Partner with ACES to coordinate a Junior Pasture to Rail that will be managed through the AJCA.

-  Action Step 1 Partner with ACES and industry leaders to fund four (4) educational programs for the Junior Pasture to Rail participants that give them insight of the cattle industry from pasture to plate.
-  Action Step 2 Fund awards for the top 3 youth participants based on profitability of one (1) calf and the average profitability of a pen of three (3) calves.
-  Action Step 3 Promote and advertise the program with a goal of having at least 10 youth participants in 2020.

Strategy 34: Encourage youth across Alabama to learn more about the beef cattle industry by visiting The MOOseum.

-  Action Step 1 Create a video of The MOOseum after renovation for social media and to house on www.BamaBeef.org to help publicize to potential visitors.

-  Action Step 2 Work with ACF to develop marketing materials for the renovated The MOOseum to include a lesson plan for teachers to give their classes on cattle production and beef's role in healthy lifestyles.
-  Action Step 3 Create a brochure about The MOOseum that can be included in information areas of other downtown landmarks and destinations.
-  Action Step 4 Partner with ACF to host quarterly events at The MOOseum showcasing Alabama's beef cattle industry.
-  Action Step 5 Produce a mailer to be sent to 4th grade teachers across Alabama promoting The MOOseum and its educational opportunities.
-  Action Step 6 Make a presentation about The MOOseum to the State Superintendents annual meeting to encourage school districts to visit the facility during field trips to Montgomery.

Objective M: YOUTH DEVELOPMENT	
National	State
\$0	\$77,000

7. Checkoff Support

Objective N:	National Program Support: Provide funds for support of the development and implementation of national and forcing beef promotion, information, education and research programs.
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Strategy 35: Fund national programs through the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, Meat Export Federation and the Cattlemen's Beef Board to help improve demand.

-  Action Step 1 Support the national checkoff programs by sending the Federation of State Beef Councils monies from both the national and state beef checkoff to meet requirements for two board seats.
-  Action Step 2 Send monies collected from the national checkoff funds to other state as required by the State-of-Origin section in Order. The Southeast states maintain the agreement of auction markets where all dollars collected stay in the state where the market is located.
-  Action Step 3 Support United States Meat Export Federation (USMEF) efforts in promoting beef in global markets by becoming a member.

Objective N: National Program Support	
National	State
\$12,000	\$30,000

Objective O:	Collections & Compliance: Ensure that beef cattle sellers and buyers are complying with the laws and regulations governing the checkoff programs. This means collecting and remitting a dollar whenever an animal is sold.
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Strategy 36: Collection Point Materials: Provide forms and other materials for collecting and remitting the dollar per head to all potential collection points.

-   Action Step 1 Print and distribute remittance forms and supplies as needed for collection sites.
-   Action Step 2 Mail at least one letter to all purebred breeder sales and board sales with compliance information and remittance forms.
-   Action Step 3 Keep collection points abreast of compliance issues by communicating with them at least twice annually.
-   Action Step 4 Work with all auditors in the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries to ensure all auction markets collect and remit the state \$1 checkoff on all cattle sold.
-   Action Step 5 Continue use of the BARN software and provide staff for data entry and reports on collection and compliance with the national and state checkoff programs.

Strategy 37: Collection Point Surveillance: Ensure collection points and private treaty sales are complying with the national and state laws and perform audits as needed.

-   Action Step 1 Place at least four ads for both the national and state programs with private treaty remittance forms in the *Alabama Cattleman* magazine.
-   Action Step 2 Increase collections of checkoff dollars from private treaty sales.

-   Action Step 3 Contact sites found to be non-compliant through letters, telephone calls and personal visits, conducting audits when necessary.
-   Action Step 4 Monitor market and board sale reports and compare with monthly remittance reports.
-  Action Step 5 Mail refunds to producers as requested monthly from the state program.
-  Action Step 6 Meet with staff at the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries at least twice annually to evaluate state checkoff collections.

Objective O: Collections & Compliance	
National	State
\$13,000	\$24,000

Objective P: Administration: Provide adequate and efficient administrative services to the state beef checkoff program.

- Strategy 38: Support Service: Work through the the Alabama Cattlemen's Association to provide administration and operations support services for the checkoff program.
-   Action Step 1 Conduct a year-end audit for the national checkoff program and an every-other-year-end audit on the state checkoff program using an independent CPA firm.
 -   Action Step 2 Assemble and provide timely accounting information for management.
 -   Action Step 3 Report the the Alabama Cattlemen's Association Executive Committee on compliance issues.
 -   Action Step 4 Reimburse the Alabama Cattlemen's Association for general administrative expenses to include the costs of miscellaneous supplies and services for the checkoff program not related to other programs.
 -   Action Step 5 Reimburse the Southeastern Livestock Exposition building account for rent of office and meeting space, use of demonstration kitchen, storage space and equipment usage.
 -  Action Step 6 Reimburse auction markets 3% for their assistance in collecting and remitting checkoff funds to the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries and the Alabama Cattlemen's Association.
 -  Action Step 7 Reimburse the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries 3% of the state checkoff for collecting and remitting monies to the Alabama Cattlemen's Association.

Objective P: Administration	
National	State
\$38,000	\$81,000

CHECKOFF SUPPORT	
National	State
\$63,000	\$135,000

TOTAL	
National	State
\$288,000	\$558,000



CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Purpose of Policy

This conflict of interest policy is designed to help directors, officers, and employees of the Beef Checkoff Council identify situations that present potential conflicts of interest and to provide the Beef Checkoff Council with a procedure that, if observed, will allow a transaction to be treated as valid and binding even though a director, officer, or employee has or may have a conflict of interest with respect to the transaction. In the event there is an inconsistency between the requirements and procedures prescribed herein and those in federal or state law, the law shall control. All capitalized terms are defined in Part 2 of this policy.

1. Conflict of Interest Defined.

For purposes of this policy, the following circumstances shall be deemed to create Conflicts of Interest:

- a. **Outside Interests.**
 - i. An Agreement or Transaction between the Beef Checkoff Council and a Responsible Person or Family Member.
 - ii. An Agreement or Transaction between the Beef Checkoff Council and an entity in which a Responsible Person or Family Member has a Material Financial Interest or of which such person is a director, officer, agent, partner, associate, trustee, personal representative, receiver, guardian, custodian, conservator, or other legal representative.
- b. **Outside Activities.**
 - i. A Responsible Person competing with the Beef Checkoff Council in the rendering of services or in any other Agreement or Transaction with a third party.
 - ii. A Responsible Person's having a Material Financial Interest in; or serving as a director, officer, employee, agent, partner, associate, trustee, personal representative, receiver, guardian, custodian, conservator, or other legal representative of, or consultant to; an entity or individual that competes with the Beef Checkoff Council in the provision of services or in any other Agreement or Transaction with a third party.
- c. **Gifts, Gratuities and Entertainment.** A Responsible Person accepting gifts, entertainment, or other favors from any individual or entity that:
 - i. does or is seeking to do business with, or is a competitor of the Beef Checkoff Council; or
 - ii. has received, is receiving, or is seeking to receive a loan or grant, or to secure other financial commitments with the Beef Checkoff Council;
 - iii. is a charitable organization;
 - iv. under circumstances where it might be inferred that such action was intended to influence or possibly would influence the Responsible Person in the performance of his or her duties. This does not preclude the acceptance of items of nominal or insignificant value or entertainment of nominal or insignificant value that are not related to any particular transaction or activity of the Beef Checkoff Council.

2. Definitions.

- a. A "Conflict of Interest" is any circumstance described in Part 1 of this Policy.
- b. A "Responsible Person" is any person serving as an officer, employee, or member of the board of directors of the Beef Checkoff Council.

of

- c. A "Family Member" is a spouse, domestic partner, parent, child, or spouse of a child, brother, sister, or spouse of a brother or sister, a Responsible Person.
- d. A "Material Financial Interest" in an entity is a financial interest of any kind that, in view of all the circumstances, is substantial enough that it would, or reasonably could, affect a Responsible Person's or Family Member's judgment with respect to transactions to which the entity is a party. This includes all forms of compensation. (The board may wish to establish an amount that it would consider to be a "material financial interest.")
- e. *An "Agreement or Transaction" is any agreement or relationship involving the sale or purchase of goods, services, or rights of any kind, the providing or receipt of a loan or grant, or the establishment of any other type of pecuniary relationship by the Beef Checkoff Council. The making of a gift to Beef Checkoff Council is not an Agreement or Transaction within the meaning of this document.*

3. Procedures.

- a. *Before board or committee action on and Agreement or Transaction involving a Conflict of Interest, a director or committee member having a Conflict of Interest and who is in attendance at the meeting shall disclose all facts material to the Conflict of Interest. Such disclosure shall be reflected in the minutes of the meeting.*
- b. *A director or committee member who plans not to attend a meeting at which he or she has reason to believe that the board or committee will act on a matter in which the person has a Conflict of Interest shall disclose to the chair of the meeting all facts material to the Conflict of Interest. The chair shall report the disclosure at the meeting and the disclosure shall be reflected in the minutes of the meeting.*
- c. *A person who has a Conflict of Interest shall not participate in or be permitted to hear the board's or committee's discussion of the matter except to disclose material facts and to respond to questions. Such person shall not attempt to exert his or her personal influence with respect to the matter, either at or outside the meeting.*
- d. *A person who has a Conflict of Interest with respect to an Agreement or Transaction that will be voted on at a meeting shall not be counted in determining the presence of a quorum for purposes of the vote. The person having a conflict of interest may not vote on the Agreement or Transaction and shall not be present in the meeting room when the vote is taken, unless the vote is by secret ballot. Such person's ineligibility to vote shall be reflected in the minutes of the meeting. For purposes of this paragraph, a member of the board of directors of the Beef Checkoff council has a Conflict of Interest when he or she stands for election as an officer or for re-election as a member of the board of directors.*
- e. *Responsible Persons who are not members of the board of directors of Beef Checkoff Council, or who have a Conflict of Interest with respect to an Agreement or Transaction that is not the subject of board or committee action, shall disclose to the Chair or the Chair's designee any Conflict of Interest that such Responsible Person has with respect to an Agreement or Transaction. Such disclosure shall be made as soon as the Conflict of Interest is known to the Responsible Person.*
- f. *In the event it is not entirely clear that a Conflict of Interest exists, the individual with the potential conflict shall disclose the x circumstances to the Chair or the Chair's designee, who shall determine whether there exists a Conflict of Interest that is subject to this policy.*

4. Confidentiality. *Each Responsible Person shall exercise care not to disclose confidential information acquired in connection with such status or information the disclosure of which might be averse to the interests of Beef Checkoff Council. Furthermore, a Responsible Person shall not disclose or use information relating to the business of the Beef Checkoff Council for the personal profit or advantage of the Responsible Person or a Family Member or the Responsible Person's company.*

5. Review of Policy.

- a. *Each new Responsible Person shall be required to review a copy of this Policy and to acknowledge in writing that he or she has done so.*
- b. *Each Responsible Person shall annually complete a disclosure form identifying any relationships, positions, or circumstances in which the Responsible Person is involved that he or she believes could contribute to a Conflict of Interest arising. Such relationships, positions, or circumstances might include service as a director of or consultant to a not-for-profit organization, or ownership of a business that might provide goods or services to the Beef Checkoff Council. Each Responsible Person should also disclose to the board of directors any potential Conflict of Interest that may arise during the course of the year between the submission of annual disclosure forms. Any such information regarding business interests of a Responsible Person or a Family Member shall be treated as confidential and shall generally be made available only to the Chair, the Executive Vice President, and any committee appointed to address Conflicts of Interest, except to the extent additional disclosure is necessary in connection with the implementation of this Policy.*
- c. *This policy shall be reviewed annually by each member of the board of directors. Any changes to the policy shall be communicated immediately to all Responsible Persons.*

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WHISTLE-BLOWER POLICY

General

The Association Code of Conduct (the code) requires directors, key volunteers, and employees to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. Employees and representatives of the Association must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling their responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

The objectives of the Whistle-Blower Policy are to establish policies and procedures for the following:

- The submission of concerns regarding questionable accounting or audit matters by employees, directors, officers, volunteers, and other stakeholders of the Association, on a confidential and anonymous basis*
- The receipt, retention, and treatment of complaints received by the Association regarding accounting, internal controls, or auditing matters*
- The protection of directors, volunteers, and employees reporting concerns from retaliatory actions*

Reporting Responsibility

Each director, volunteer, and employee of Association has an obligation to report in accordance with this whistle-blower policy (a) questionable or improper accounting or auditing matters, and (b) violations and suspected violations of Association's code (concerns).

Acting in Good Faith

Anyone reporting a concern must act in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates an improper accounting or auditing practice, or a violation of the code. The act of making allegations that prove to be unsubstantiated, and that prove to have been made maliciously, recklessly, or with the foreknowledge that the allegations are false, will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense. It may also result in discipline, up to and including dismissal from the volunteer position or termination of employment. Such conduct may also give rise to other actions, including civil lawsuits.

Confidentiality

Reports of concerns, and investigation pertaining thereto, shall be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.

Disclosure of reports of concerns to individuals not involved in the investigation will be viewed as a serious *disciplinary offense and may result in discipline, up to and including termination of employment. Such conduct may also give rise to other actions, including civil lawsuits.*

Authority of Executive Committee

All reported concerns will be forwarded to the executive committee in accordance with the procedures set forth herein. The executive committee shall be responsible for investigating and making appropriate recommendations to the board of directors, with respect to all reported concerns.

No Retaliation

This whistle-blower policy is intended to encourage and enable directors, volunteers, and employees to raise concerns within the Association for investigation and appropriate action. With this goal in mind, no director, volunteer, or employee who, in good faith, reports a concern shall be subject to retaliation or, in the case of an employee, adverse employment consequences. Moreover, a volunteer or employee who retaliates against someone who has reported a concern in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including dismissal from the volunteer position or termination of employment.

Reporting Concerns

Encouragement of Reporting

The Association encourages complaints, reports, or inquiries about illegal practices or serious violations of the code, including illegal or improper conduct by the Association itself, by its leadership, or by others on its behalf. Appropriate subjects to raise under this policy would include financial improprieties, accounting or audit matters, ethical violations, or other similar illegal or improper practices or policies. Other subjects on which the Association has existing complaint mechanisms should be addressed under those mechanisms, such as raising matters of alleged discrimination or harassment through the Association's human resources channels, unless those channels are themselves implicated in the wrongdoing. This policy is not intended to provide a means of appeal from outcomes in those other mechanisms.

Employees

Employees should first discuss their concern with their immediate supervisor. If, after speaking with his or her supervisor, the individual continues to have reasonable grounds to believe the concern is valid, the individual should report the concern to the director of human resources. However, if the individual is uncomfortable speaking with his or her supervisor, or the supervisor is a subject of the concern, the individual should report his or her concern directly to the director of human resources or a level above the supervisor. In addition, suspected fraud should be reported directly to the chair of the executive committee, who may be contacted by phone at (334) 470-0580 or by e-mail at hr@association.org. If the concern was reported verbally to the director of human resources, the reporting individual, with assistance from the director of human resources, shall reduce the concern to writing. The director of human resources is required to promptly report the concern to the chair of the executive committee, which has specific and exclusive responsibility to investigate all concerns. If the director of human resources, for any reason, does not promptly forward the concern to the executive committee, the reporting individual should directly report the concern to the chair of the executive committee. Concerns may also be submitted anonymously. Such anonymous concerns should be in writing and sent directly to the chair of the executive committee.

Directors and Other Volunteers

Directors and other volunteers should submit concerns in writing directly to the chair of the executive committee.

Handling of Reported Violations

The executive committee shall address all reported concerns. The chair of the executive committee shall immediately notify the executive committee, the president, the CEO, and chief operating officer of any such report. The chair of the executive committee will notify the sender and acknowledge receipt of the concern within five business days, if possible. It will not be possible to acknowledge receipt of anonymously submitted concerns.

All reports will be promptly investigated by the executive committee, and appropriate corrective action will be recommended to the board of directors, if warranted by the investigation. In addition, action taken must include a conclusion or follow-up, or both, with the complainant for complete closure of the concern.

The executive committee has the authority to retain outside legal counsel, accountants, private investigators, or any other resource deemed necessary to conduct a full and complete investigation of the allegations.

ALABAMA BEEF CHECKOFF PROGRAM

ALABAMA CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

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