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RETAILERS AND PROCESSORS ATTEND ANNUAL MEAT CONFERENCE, FOCUS ON INCREASING PROFITABILITY

Beef Checkoff Program's Retail Marketing and Culinary Teams Seize Opportunity to Communicate with Retailers and Suppliers in Orlando

DENVER (April 25, 2005) - More than 500 meat industry executives attended the Annual Meat Conference in Orlando, March 6-8. Those in attendance participated in a dynamic educational agenda that shed light on what's ahead for meat operations and focused on "Turning up the Heat on Sales and Profitability."

In addition to meat and poultry suppliers, merchandisers and retailers, several representatives from the National Cattlemen's Beef Association attended the conference and presented insights on behalf of the Beef Checkoff Program. Randy Irion, Director, Retail Marketing, addressed a crowd of retailers interested in building excitement in their meat departments by utilizing visuals such as on-pack labels, and participating in relevant promotional efforts. Culinary Center Director Dave Zino provided commentary on how the retailer can best appeal to meat consumers.

"There are a variety of in-depth studies and retail programs that we're supporting this year to increase beef demand at retail," said Irion. "We've worked hard to establish strong partnerships with the goal of driving consumers to the meat case, and this was our chance to share some of that."

Retail Marketing is part of the Center for Global Marketing Department at NCBA and is funded by America's beef producers through the national Beef Checkoff Program. It is coordinated on behalf of the Cattlemen's Beef Board (CBB) and state beef councils by NCBA, which serves as one of the CBB contractors for checkoff-funded programs.

"The Annual Meat Conference served as a great platform to discuss many of the issues facing retailers today, especially how to take advantage of opportunities in the meat case," said Alan Warren, Ukrops. "The Beef Board and NCBA, along with the National Pork Board and Cryovac Sealed Air, have been very proactive in leading studies such as the National Meat Case Study 2004 that can help us see where there's opportunity for growth and change."

The conference also included a product tasting event during which the Beef Checkoff Program partnered with A.1. Steak Sauce and Sutter Home Winery to conduct a booth tasting and demonstration of the flatiron steak. The product, one of the new beef value cuts, was well-received.

Irion also noted that the conference served as an excellent opportunity to communicate with meat and retail trade media regarding the retail efforts taking place now and in the coming months.

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“With the Summer Grilling promotion around the corner, many editors and reporters were interested to learn about beef’s planned initiatives, including partnerships with A.1. and Sutter Home,” said Irion. “Of course we were very pleased to educate them about our efforts to spread the word about beef.”

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The Beef Checkoff Program was established as part of the 1985 Farm Bill. The checkoff assesses \$1 per head on the sale of live domestic and imported cattle, in addition to a comparable assessment on imported beef and beef products. States retain up to 50 cents on the dollar and forward the other 50 cents per head to the Cattlemen’s Beef Promotion and Research Board, which administers the national checkoff program, subject to USDA approval. The checkoff assessment became mandatory when the program was approved by 79 percent of producers in a 1988 national referendum vote. Checkoff revenues may be used for promotion, education and research programs to improve the marketing climate for beef.

Producer-directed and consumer-focused, the NCBA is the trade association of America’s cattle farmers and ranchers, and the marketing organization for the largest segment of the nation’s food and fiber industry.