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## Beef Checkoff “Beefs Up” Retail Marketing Team

**Denver (8/1/07)** – The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) announces two new appointments to its beef checkoff funded Retail Marketing Team. Steve Leigh and Wendy Smith have joined the organization to extend checkoff dollars and help supermarket retailers effectively market beef and increase beef demand among their customers. Both positions are based in NCBA headquarters in Denver.

Prior to accepting the position as director of retail relations, Steve Leigh served as manager of private label and seafood at Nash Finch. His prior work experience includes 28 years with Albertsons in various positions managing the meat program in the California divisions. Steve brings great knowledge and experience in supermarket operations particularly within the retail meat department. He has also developed and trained associates to become successful meat managers and supervisors, and will work closely with Retail Marketing Managers and specific retail accounts.

Wendy Smith is the new associate director of retail marketing. She joins the organization after serving as manager of marketing services at Swift & Company. Her experience includes consumer marketing, customer communication and creative development of marketing programs and materials. Her expertise in working with branded beef programs and the implementation of consumer marketing campaigns will have a role in execution of beef checkoff-funded programs. Wendy will work closely with retail accounts as well as State Beef Councils.

“We are very excited to welcome Steve and Wendy to the Retail Marketing Team,” said Jim Henger, executive director of retail marketing for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, which contracts to manage retail programs for the beef checkoff. “Steve and Wendy's experience in combination with the Retail Marketing Managers allows us to maximize checkoff dollars and help our retail partners increase beef demand in their stores.”

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, 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.

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*Visuals: Headshots of Steve Leigh and Wendy Smith are available.*

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