

Pennsylvania Cattlemen's Association



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Affiliated with the National Cattlemen's Beef Association

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Angela C. Snyder
Office of the Deputy Administrator
Poultry Programs
Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) USDA
1400 Independence Avenue SW
STOP 0256 Room 3932 – South
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Ms. Snyder:

We represent over 1500 cattle producers in Pennsylvania, and take strong exception to the proposed exemption of organically-produced products from the Beef Promotion and Research Board Check-Off. All checkoffs historically have provided educational and research information pertaining to a commodity. Within any commodity there are many different brand names and production systems used.

There is probably more variation in production systems, marketing programs, and nutritional value within "conventional non-organic" systems than between organic and conventional systems.

The purpose of checkoff programs generally is to educate and inform the public about a commodity, and to conduct research needed to further assure the safety and consumer benefits of these products. It is not the intent of the checkoff programs to set one type of beef product or production system apart from other products or production systems. Basically, checkoff programs are designed to encourage the consumption of one generic commodity that does not differentiate between production systems, and in this case, refers to beef and veal. After consumers make the decision to use beef in their nutritional program, then the different types or brands of beef can be further determined by the consumer.

In summary, producers and marketers of organically-produced products will reap benefits from the checkoff program to the same extent as "conventional" beef producers and marketers. Therefore, there is absolutely no reason for organically-produced products to be exempted from the beef checkoff programs.

Sincerely,

Lowell L. Wilson, PhD, PAS
Administrative Secretary

Cc: PCA Directors

received
6-7-04