



For Immediate Release

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State Beef Checkoff Helps Rural Youth

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What's to become of our industry? Who'll take my place? Where will our food come from when my generation is gone? These are questions asked every day by those involved in Alabama's agriculture industry. Fortunately, cattlemen in Alabama contribute to the Fifty Cent State Beef Checkoff program which works to increase learning opportunities for the young people involved in the cattle business.

"When we reactivated our state checkoff program five years ago, there was a strong call from our Board of Directors to do more to involve and educate the youth of our industry. The reaction to that call has been to hire a staff person to work directly with rural youth and fund programs targeting those young people," says Dr. Billy Powell, Executive Vice President of the Alabama Cattlemen's Association.

To date, that decision to invest in the young people of the industry is continuing to pay dividends. With efforts aimed at involving more young people in new and existing activities, participation in junior cattlemen events at the local and state level has increased.

"We started by reorganizing the junior cattlemen's association to get more kids involved and that train of thought continued from there. Now that we have the state checkoff to fund more youth programs, we've been able to help existing programs through Alabama 4-H and Alabama FFA. As well, new programs like the AJCA Round-Up and B.E.E.F. U have been very popular and successful in getting more kids involved," says Reid Blossom, Youth Programs Coordinator of the Alabama Cattlemen's Association.

The AJCA Round-Up, slated to be held next week in Montgomery, will draw over 170 youth from 34 counties around the state to compete in a variety of contests aimed at educating the next generation of cattlemen in Alabama.

"This will be the second year we've had the Round-Up and it's definitely growing as more folks hear what a great event it is. I hope we can keep the state checkoff program so that we can keep having the Round-Up and other events we've been able to start in the last few years," says Brad Baker, AJCA President from Ariton.

Cattlemen will have the opportunity to vote to keep the state checkoff on July 29th from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at each county extension office in the state. All cattle owners are eligible to vote once in-person regardless of their county of residence or the county where they own cattle. No proxy or absentee voting will be allowed.

The 2008 Checkoff Marketing Plan, detailing exactly how and where checkoff dollars are spent, can be viewed by visiting the Beef Checkoff link on www.bamabeef.org or by contacting the Alabama Cattlemen's Association at 334-265-1867.

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