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NEWS RELEASE

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Montana Beef Promotion Continues

Despite ongoing lawsuit, beef promotion efforts continues in Montana

In 1954 the Montana Beef Council (MBC) was created by Montana cattlemen for Montana's cattlemen to protect and increase demand for beef and beef products through state, national and international consumer marketing programs including promotion, education and research, thereby enhancing profit opportunities for Montana beef producers, and it still operates that way today.

The investment that each Montana rancher makes with the \$1-dollar-per-head Beef Checkoff goes directly towards consumer-facing and beef demand-building programs that keep more beef on more plates. These efforts are accomplished by the direction of a twelve-member board of directors, whom are fellow Montana ranchers and business owners, along with organizations leveraging the use of checkoff dollars with their beef promotion and education projects.

Due to the ongoing Ranchers-Cattlemen Action Legal Fund, United Stockgrowers of America versus U.S. Department of Agriculture lawsuit, Montana ranchers who would like up to half of their dollar to remain in control of the MBC Board of Directors will need to complete a producer consent form on an annual or monthly basis. This consent authorizes the board to carry out programs designed to stimulate beef demand. The recent ruling by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals does not affect the current operations of MBC.

In October, the new fiscal year began and the MBC board set a tentative work plan that outlined efforts to invest \$860,000 into programs of beef promotion, education, consumer information, industry information, foreign marketing and producer communications in fiscal year 2018. Programs approved could be funded through Montana's 50 cent in-state portion of the \$- per-head beef checkoff, after Montana producers provide affirmative consent to MBC to retain that portion of their assessment.

"Following our January board meeting, the council notified our proposed partners that some funding was available to carry out their proposals. We had just over \$150,000 of consented producer dollars to work with and we were glad to get the funding rolled out into Montana for beef promotion and education projects that have been on hold," said Jim Taber, MBC president, a cow-calf producer and backgrounder from Shawmut, Mont.

By federal law, checkoff collection remains mandatory, however the programs will only be carried out by MBC after Montana producers complete and return the Producer Request to Retain Beef Checkoff Assessments Form. Producers wishing to complete forms must do so on an annual or monthly basis. The form can be obtained at www.MontanaBeefCouncil.org or by calling the Montana Beef Council at (406) 656-3336.

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