

AB 243 CALIFORNIA BEEF COMMISSION (COOPER) - SUPPORT

AB 243 (Cooper) is sponsored by the California Cattlemen's Association (CCA) and establishes the California Beef Commission (Commission) to work in partnership with the California Beef Council (Council) to promote the collective interests of California's beef and cattle producers.

Currently \$1.00 is collected when cattle are sold in California. \$.50 remains in California to be spent by the Council and \$.50 is sent to the national beef checkoff program overseen by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Ranchers support an increase in the current beef checkoff by an additional \$1.00, however cattle producers want to ensure an increase in the beef check is spent solely to benefit California producers and spending is not subject to oversight by USDA. AB 243 accomplishes this objective.

- AB 243 establishes a framework to form the Commission but alone will not increase the beef checkoff. A majority of California's beef and dairy cattle producers must approve the formation of the Commission and a \$1.00 increase in the beef checkoff through a vote administered by the California Department of Food & Agriculture (CDFA).
- The Commission will work in partnership with the Council, however funds collected by the Commission will remain separate to avoid any conflict with USDA and the National Beef Research and Promotion Act.
- AB 243 also initiates a refund process to allow cattle producers who wish to seek a refund from the Commission to do so within 90 days of the fee being collected.
- AB 243 will not add costs to the state because the Commission and any appropriate oversight by CDFA will be reimbursed by the beef checkoff. AB 243 also requires an organization like CCA to pay for the initial referendum, although the organization can be reimbursed if a majority of producers vote to form the Commission and increase the checkoff.
- CCA is working closely with CDFA to ensure the proposed Commission resembles the numerous other agricultural commodity commissions that have been formed by the legislature.

