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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OCTOBER 28, 2009

ALBERTA BEEF PRODUCERS WORKING TO OBSTRUCT CATTLE CHECK-OFF REFUNDS

SEXSMITH, Alta.—“The Alberta Beef Producers organization is constantly speaking out about ‘regulatory burdens.’ Yet when it comes to their own check-off refund, they’ve designed a maximum-paperwork, maximum-hassle process,” said NFU Alberta Board member and cattle rancher Neil Peacock.

Peacock was commenting on a complex process by which Alberta Beef Producers (ABP) proposes to refund farmers their cattle check-off dollars. Under the proposed process, farmers and ranchers would have to apply for refunds six or more times per year.

Earlier this year, the Alberta Government listened to cattle farmers and ranchers and made the ABP check-off refundable. But ABP has now put forward a refund process designed to maximize paperwork and minimize the number of farmers and ranchers likely to obtain refunds.

“There are refund processes that are much simpler and that give ranchers and farmers a real choice,” said Peacock. He continued: “The simplest option would be to change the legislation so as to allow a check-box on livestock manifests where farmers could indicate that they either want ABP to receive check-off dollars or not. There would be no need for a refund system and its paperwork. That would clearly be the best system. Farmers could vote with their dollars to support or not support ABP.”

Second best, but still superior to the system proposed by ABP, is the refund system in place in Manitoba right now. NFU Manitoba Board member and cattle producer Fred Tait explains: “In Manitoba, farmers and ranchers can apply for a refund any time, and their request can cover all check-off levies going back one year.” In contrast, the system proposed by ABP would require farmers and ranchers to make a claim no more than 2 months after the check-off deduction—thus requiring at least 6 times the paperwork as is required in Manitoba.

The NFU reminds Alberta farmers and ranchers that they need to contact ABP and tell the organization that it needs to simplify its refund process. Producers have until November 15th to get their comments in to ABP, using the following contact methods:

email: laurap@albertabeef.org

fax: (403) 274-0007 (attention: Refundable check-off consultation)

mail: Refundable check-off consultation
Alberta Beef Producers
320, 6715 - 8th Street NE
Calgary, Alberta T2E 7H7

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For More Information, please contact:

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