R-CALF USA Members’ Policy Priorities

Reinstate mandatory country of origin labelling (MCOOL) for beef to stop the surge of imports displacing U.S. cattle producers.

- In 2022, the volume of cattle and beef imports was over 4 billion pounds, which is equivalent to 6.8 million head of cattle.
- In 2023, imported cattle and beef hit an all-time record high.

Implement and enforce the Packers and Stockyards Act (PSA) rules to reverse the ongoing decline in the number of U.S. cattle producers.

- Reducing competition in the cash cattle market lowers cash cattle prices.
- There is a tremendous imbalance between the market power of the Big 4 packers who control over 85% of the market and the market power of independent U.S. cattle producers. The PSA rules prohibit the Big 4 packers from interfering with the integrity and competitiveness of the market.

Enforce antitrust laws to protect the cattle markets against mergers that substantially lessen competition and anticompetitive conduct affecting the price of livestock.

- The government should undo the mergers and acquisitions that violated antitrust laws when the massive corporations took dominion over our nation’s agricultural markets.
- We’ve lost 655,000 cattle ranchers during just the past four decades, with 107,000 of them quitting during just the past five years. And during the past five years consumers have been paying record prices for beef. Clearly, the current system is broken.

Enact tariffs to increase domestic production and preserve our national security so that we are not dependent on foreign supply chains.

- Through concentration and globalization, we’ve eliminated 63% of our nation’s sheep producers in just four decades. About 70% of lamb and mutton consumed in the U.S. is now imported. The sheep industry is the cattle industry’s canary in the coal mine and the cattle industry has already lost 52% of its cattle producers in four decades, and during the same, time beef and cattle imports have doubled.

Stop the USDA’s mandatory electronic identification (EID) eartag rule on cattle.

- The mandatory EID rule is costly for cattle producers with no opportunity to recover the cost in the marketplace; currently, the cattle producers who choose to use EID eartags receive a premium. The EID rule will promote more concentration in the U.S. cattle industry because the large, vertically integrated cattle feeding and packing operations are not required to use individual EID tags.

Provide the necessary enforcements to prevent producers' hard-earned checkoff dollars from being used against them.

- As an example, a USDA audit revealed that the National Cattlemen's Beef Association receives nearly 82% of their revenue from mandatory producer-paid beef checkoff funds and, in turn, often supports policies that many independent U.S. cattle producers view as contrary to their interests and livelihoods.

Stand strong against the WTO's weakening of our sovereignty – no decision by the WTO has any force of law in the United States.

- The U.S. resolved the Brazil-U.S. cotton WTO case with a one-time cash payment, and it negotiated a settlement of the United States' law banning clove cigarettes (the ban is still considered WTO-illegal). Recently, the U.S. has disregarded WTO trade rules when it placed tariffs on electric vehicles, steel, and aluminum.