



R-CALF United Stockgrowers of America
P.O. Box 30715
Billings, MT 59107
Fax: 406-252-3176
Phone: 406-252-2516
Website: www.r-calfusa.com
E-mail: r-calfusa@r-calfusa.com

November 21, 2012

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

The Honorable Phyllis K. Fong
USDA Office of Inspector General
Room 117-W Jamie Whitten Bldg
1400 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20250

Sent via facsimile and U.S. Mail: 202-720-6314

Re: Complaint Regarding Possible Conflict of Interest Within Beef Checkoff Program

Dear Secretary Vilsack and Inspector General Fong:

R-CALF USA has been informed that an officer of the Beef Checkoff Program's Cattlemen's Beef Board (CBB) also is an officer of an organization that receives Beef Checkoff Program funding. If our information is correct, this is an outrageous conflict of interest.

A November 19, 2012 news report by the Red River Farm Network stated that the U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance (USFRA) announced that "Weldon Wynn, who represents the Cattlemen's Beef Board, was elected as USFRA vice chairman."

According to the Beef Checkoff Program's website, Weldon Wynn is the vice chair of the CBB. See <http://www.beefboard.org/leadership.asp>.

According to the Beef Checkoff Program's website, Beef Checkoff Program contractor National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) submitted an Authorization Request for FY 2013 to the CBB for a \$216,958 grant from the CBB and/or the Beef Promotion Operating Committee to be paid to the USFRA. See <http://www.beefboard.org/blog/September%202012%20OC%20Meeting/II-04-2013%20Issues%20Reputation%20Management%20081612.pdf>, at page 7.

In addition, the USFRA claims in one or more of its news releases that its news releases are funded in whole or in part by one or more Checkoff programs. See, e.g., <http://www.fooddialogues.com/news/2012/11/15/-u.s.-farmers-ranchers-alliance-names-nine-finalists-for-its-faces-of-farming-ranching-search-during-the-food-dialogues-new-york>.

The Honorable Tom Vilsack and the Honorable Phyllis K. Fong

November 21, 2012

Page 2

It would be unconscionable for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to tolerate a CBB appointee that serves in a fiduciary capacity for an organization that is a recipient of Beef Checkoff Program funds. It would be equally unconscionable if USDA does not provide even rudimentary oversight over the Beef Checkoff Program to ensure that such a blatant conflict of interest does not occur.

If our information is correct and Weldon Wynn serves both to decide who is to receive Beef Checkoff Program funds (in his official capacity as a CBB officer) as well as to benefit directly from his own decisions (by directly representing the interests of Checkoff funds recipient USFRA), then this is further evidence of the ongoing, insidious and systemic corruption within the Beef Checkoff Program that USDA has chosen not to address.

Please confirm whether or not USDA is allowing a CBB official to also represent the interests of a Beef Checkoff Program fund recipient.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Bullard". The signature is stylized and cursive, with the first name "Bill" being more prominent and the last name "Bullard" following in a similar script.

Bill Bullard, CEO