

Washington Beef Commission eyes millennials and ranchers

By **DON JENKINS**
Capital Press

The Washington Beef Commission’s new marketing plan has two audiences in mind: young adults in Seattle and Tacoma, and the rural ranchers who fund the urban promotions.

Puget Sound millennial parents, ages 25 to 34, spend a lot of time online and could be persuaded by social media “consumer influencers” to eat more beef, according to the plan.

“I think we’ve really found a relevant sweet spot,” the commission’s executive director, Patti Brumbach, said.

The plan also calls for informing ranchers about the campaign they pay for but don’t see. The commission hopes to increase producer support for the mandatory beef check-off. The commission apparently has not won over the Cattle Producers of Washington.

“They want us to pay for marketing, and we’re not benefiting,” Cattle Producers President Scott Nielsen said.

The Beef Commission receives a \$1.50-per-head tax on cattle sold in Washington. The seller pays the tax. The state commission keeps \$1 and sends 50 cents to the national Cattlemen’s Beef Board. The state commission has an annual budget that has remained steady at about \$1.1 million for several years.

The state commission says it doesn’t have the money for a high-profile media campaign. Instead, the commission uses social media and niche events to tout beef.

Last year, the commission introduced to tech-savvy Amazon workers “Chuck,” the “only all-knowing beef expert powered by Google Artificial Intelligence.” Planned for this holiday season is the “Drool Log,” a video of slow-cooked beef rotating.

Research conducted by a consumer survey business, Toluna, informs the campaign. Surveys show Puget Sound millennials prize taste and protein, but they also want to “trust the people that raise beef.”

Through videos and in-person events, the commission seeks to introduce urban residents who know little



Don Jenkins/Capital Press

The Washington Beef Commission hopes to win-over millennials in Seattle and Tacoma. It hasn’t, however, won over one skeptical producer group.

about cattle production to ranchers.

“When it comes to the Seattle consumer, you need to focus on local producers to be relevant,” Brumbach said.

The survey found millennial parents average 53 hours a week online. Once sold on beef, they can “have significant impact on others to do the same primarily through use of their smart phone,” according to the marketing plan.

Two years ago, the Beef Commission sought to raise the assessment and double its budget. The commission received support from the Washington Cattlemen’s Association, Washington State Dairy Federation and Washington Cattle Feeders Association.

The Cattle Producers, however, were opposed. Their members argued that a beef-promotion campaign may help packers sell more meat, but it hasn’t translated into a better price for calves. With ranchers divided, state lawmakers declined to raise the mandatory assessment.

Beef Commission board members represent cow-calf producers, dairy farmers, feeders, auction yards and meat packers. There is no direct link between the board and the skeptical Cattle Producers.

Nielsen said the group recom-

mended Stevens County rancher Justin Hedrick to be on the commission, but he wasn’t picked by Department of Agriculture Director Derek Sandison.

“We really wanted to have somebody on it,” Nielsen said. “I think they’ve given up on us.”

Sandison interviewed Hedrick and a rancher recommended by the Washington Cattlemen’s Association. Sandison chose the association’s candidate, the second from the group to be appointed, because of a more flexible attitude toward promoting beef, a department spokesman said.

Brumbach said the commission keeps ranchers up-to-date on its work by regularly sending emails. “We’re working really hard on it,” she said.

Nielsen said the emails aren’t the same as having someone on the board.

Brumbach said she doesn’t know of any talk about resurrecting a proposal to raise the assessment.

R-CALF USA, a national cattlemen’s group aligned with the Cattle Producers, is suing to end the beef checkoff in 15 states. Washington is not among them.

R-CALF alleges the checkoff forces ranchers to fund private councils in the 15 states. In Washington, the Beef Commission is a state agency.

Wolf advocates lose round in Washington court

By **DON JENKINS**
Capital Press



Judge John Skinder

Supreme Court decision that held some state agency actions are exempt from SEPA even if they could have a

significant impact.

Fish and Wildlife attorney Amy Dona had argued the department has emergency and law enforcement powers to kill wolves that are attacking livestock, just like any other animal damaging property.

“The state recognizes there is a nuisance here, when a wolf is attacking livestock and causing damage,” she said.

If the department has to do an environmental review before removing a wolf, where would the department draw the line? she asked. “What about removing moles from the governor’s mansion lawn?” she asked.

Fish and Wildlife adopted its lethal-removal protocol in 2017. It was largely formed in meetings between the Fish and Wildlife staff and the department’s Wolf Advisory Group.

The department has used the protocol to guide decisions, but it doesn’t obligate Fish and Wildlife Director Kelly Susewind to order lethal control. Susewind invoked the protocol against three packs this year.

The conservation groups’ attorney, Claire Loeb Davis, said Fish and Wildlife has avoided looking at several important questions.

The questions include how shooting wolves affects recovery and the ecosystem, and whether culling packs promotes tolerance in rural areas or fosters a contempt for wolves that leads to more poaching, she said.

“This case is about whether WDFW has thoroughly and responsibly reviewed the consequences of its wolf-killing program,” Loeb Davis said.

A similar lawsuit is pending in King County Superior Court.

OLYMPIA — Washington’s policy on killing depredating wolves withstood a court challenge Nov. 1, as a judge ruled Fish and Wildlife doesn’t have to put it up for formal scientific scrutiny.

Thurston County Superior Court Judge John Skinder acknowledged “profoundly passionate” feelings about wolves, but said the law supports Fish and Wildlife’s position that the policy is exempt from the State Environmental Policy Act.

“I think the state of Washington’s legal analysis is correct in this matter,” he said.

The ruling handicaps but does not end a lawsuit by the Center for Biological Diversity and Cascadia Wildlands.

Fish and Wildlife asked Skinder to dismiss claims based on SEPA, a law that details the process for reviewing agency actions that have a significant affect on the environment.

The hearing and ruling did not touch on whether the department’s policy violates the Administrative Procedure Act, a law meant to give the public a chance to comment on government actions.

“We would never have brought the APA claim if we didn’t think it was strong, and we still think it’s strong,” said Sophia Ressler, an attorney for the Center for Biological Diversity.

The groups are suing to suspend Fish and Wildlife’s option cull a wolfpack after it attacks three head of livestock in 30 days or four head in 10 months.

Ranchers are required to have tried non-lethal measures to deter attacks. The department says the cullings will not prevent wolves from become re-established in Washington.

Washington judges have been asked a handful of times to intervene to stop the imminent shooting of wolves. The hearing was the first on whether Fish and Wildlife should have put its lethal-removal policy through a SEPA review, which can take two years or more.

Skinder cited a 1992 state



LAB TESTED. FIELD PROVEN.

P0157 FAMILY		P0789AMXT™		P1572AM™		P1751 FAMILY	
31.1	TONS/A YIELD ADVANTAGE	34.6	TONS/A YIELD ADVANTAGE	35.9	TONS/A YIELD ADVANTAGE	34.4	TONS/A YIELD ADVANTAGE
SILAGE CRM	WINS	SILAGE CRM	WINS	SILAGE CRM	WINS	SILAGE CRM	WINS
107	64%	107	88%	114	76%	115	65%

See your local Pioneer sales professional for details. Visit us to see the latest harvest results near you.

Pioneer.com/yield

 **PIONEER**

Data is based on an average of 2016–2019 comparisons made in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, California and Montana through Oct. 24, 2019. Comparisons are against all competitors, unless otherwise stated, and within +/- 5 silage CRM of the competitive brand. Product responses are variable and subject to any number of environmental, disease and pest pressures. Individual results may vary. Multi-year and multi-location data are a better predictor of future performance. DO NOT USE THIS OR ANY OTHER DATA FROM A LIMITED NUMBER OF TRIALS AS A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN PRODUCT SELECTION. Refer to www.pioneer.com or contact a Pioneer sales representative or authorized dealer for the latest and complete listing of traits and scores for each Pioneer® brand product. Pioneer® brand products are provided subject to the terms and conditions of purchase which are part of the labeling and purchase documents. TM & SM Trademarks and service marks of Dow AgroSciences, DuPont or Pioneer, and their affiliated companies or their respective owners. © 2019 Corteva. PION9LOCL051_JP

 **CORTEVA**
agscience

S152219-1

**BAUMALIGHT**
BAUMALIGHT.COM
Ellis Equipment | 800-949-2336
MFG A VARIETY OF ATTACHMENTS INCLUDING
BRUSH MULCHERS | ROTARY BRUSH CUTTERS
STUMP GRINDERS | PTO GENERATORS | AUGER DRIVES
TRENCHERS | DRAINAGE PLOWS | TREE SPADES
TREE SAWS & SHEARS | BOOM MOWERS

CHECK OUT

CapitalPress.com

For Additional Weekly Savings!

 **Capital Press**
EMPOWERING PRODUCERS OF FOOD & FIBER



S147832-1