

Cattlemen Propose Oregon Beef Commission

Local Hearing Date Set For October 21

Laws Govern Commissions

Rancher's Report

By BILL DECKER

Historically western cattlemen have been steadfastly independent and individualistic. These virtues were necessary in the days when the very nature of their work meant they had to be completely self-reliant. Today's beef producer, in competition for his share of the consumer's food dollar, is faced with the question of whether or not he can remain the completely self-reliant individual his grandfather was. Perhaps he will have to join an industry-wide amalgamation of producers designed to conduct research into improving his product, strengthening his marketing position, promoting beef consumption and protecting his interests on levels over which he as an individual has no control.

These are the functions of a commodity commission and it has been proposed that beef producers in Oregon establish such a commission. Other states have set up beef commissions and more of them are in the process. Other commodities in Oregon have established similar producer groups. A group of Oregon cowmen have petitioned the State Department of Agriculture and set in motion the processes involved in establishing a beef commission here.

Seventeen public hearings are tentatively scheduled to be held throughout Oregon during the last three weeks of October to acquaint cattlemen with the recently proposed plan for the establishment of a state beef commission. These hearings, which are required by law, will be open to the public and will feature discussions of the desirability and need for such a commission. All interested parties are urged to attend.

The cattlemen will be given the opportunity to present arguments for or against the proposal and to exchange ideas. After the hearings the director of agriculture will be presented with transcripts of the evidence presented to them for his study. If he decides that such a self-help program is justified on the basis of the testimony he will set the date for a vote by the producers of the commodity; in this case, beef.

Beef producers will be required to register before they will be eligible to vote. If two-thirds of the producers who vote favor the idea of a commission, and if those voters represent more than one-third of the beef produced in the state, then the governor will appoint the commission. The commissioners receive no salary, but

they are paid for their travel expenses and may receive a per diem for the time they spend in commission work.

In view of the fact that the beef industry is an important factor in the economy of the Klamath Basin we submit this analysis of commodity commissions in general and the proposed beef commission in particular.

There are already several successful commissions in operation in Oregon. These producer groups strive to improve market conditions for their particular products in a variety of ways. They are financed by taxes assessed against the sales of the commodity involved and these funds are deposited with the state treasurer subject to the same budgeting and auditing practices as other agencies created under state authority. They are rigidly controlled by the legislation which allowed their formation and by their own individual petitions which stipulate their fields of authority.

CATTLEMEN

The cattlemen who petitioned for the formation of a beef commission have said that it will serve a much needed purpose in fostering research, marketing studies and promotional campaigns. They believe that the 10 cents per head which will be levied on all cattle going to slaughter or leaving the state will eventually prove to be a profitable investment. Proponents of the plan cite the fact that if the efforts of the commission can prevent the price of beef from falling one cent a pound during a period of high production the return to the producer on a 1,000 pound animal will be \$10 for 10 cents.

Opponents of the commission plan seem, for the most part, not to question the fact that research and advertising would help the beef industry, but they do not believe that the desired results can be achieved on the state level. A national organization would probably win the support of these cattlemen and those who favor the Oregon commission maintain that a nationwide plan will be the inevitable outgrowth of the formation of sufficient state commissions.

Others oppose the Oregon Beef Commission plan on the basis of suspicions that because the seven members of the commission are to be appointed by the governor the posts will become political rewards. The petition, backers of the plan point out, clearly sets

The most recent edition of the Oregon State Department of Agriculture Bulletin says that a commission, unless its powers are otherwise limited by the original petition, may:

1. Conduct scientific research.
2. Give reliable information showing the value of a commodity and its products.
3. Study legislation, both state and federal, which has bearing on tariffs, duties, reciprocal trade agreements, import quotas and similar matters.
4. Protect the interests of the commodity with respect to legislation or proposed legislation or executive action.
5. Sue and be sued as a commission, without individual liability.
6. Enter into contracts.
7. Borrow money, with limitations.
8. Make grants to research agencies to finance special or emergency studies.
9. Appoint officers and name their duties.
10. Cooperate with other agencies to benefit the commodity.
11. Take action to collect the crop assessed.
12. Adopt, withdraw, modify or amend any of its regulations, orders or resolutions.
13. Enter into contracts to advertise the commodity or develop new markets.
14. Establish a reasonable per diem, including travel time, to commission members.
15. Accept grants, donations or gifts to carry out its program.
16. Assess a tax within limitations of the general law or as further limited by the original petition.

down the requirements each member of the commission must meet.

HEARINGS

In the hearings producers will be given the opportunity to express their opinions regarding whether or not a beef commission is desirable and necessary before representatives of the State Department of Agriculture. The hearings will not determine whether such a commission will be established; that will be decided in the referendum which the department will call for if the testimony at the hearings indicates such a move is warranted.

It is important that all producers attend the hearings, but it is even more imperative that they register to vote on the matter. Registration procedure will be explained at the hearings and ballots will be available for those registered at the county agent's office.

Research has become the key to industrial progress and success. More and more money is being budgeted for seeking ways and means of improving products, reducing production costs, broadening markets and utilization of by-products.

Keeping pace with the modern trend toward scientific research has been the recognition of the value of advertising and the promotion of products.

Agricultural industries have proven the value of research and promotion. There can be no doubt as to the important contributions science has made toward improving farming techniques and products. Those branches of agriculture sufficiently organized to engage in promotional campaigns designed to increase consumption of their commodities have seen remarkable results and have been encouraged to allocate more funds for that purpose.

Beef producers have seen the results of scientific experiments in their business. Recently discovered antibiotic, hormones and genetic factors have greatly changed several aspects of the beef industry. More discoveries are to come. If Oregon's cattlemen are willing to establish and support a beef commission in this state such an organization could do much to foster research into local situations. We have problems which other areas are not faced with as well as many which are common to the industry as a whole. We are in a unique position as far as marketing is concerned and much could be done to gain a better understanding of our relations to the over-all price picture.

Local experiments with advertising and promotional projects have proven conclusively that such efforts on the local level are effective and profitable. The petition under which the proposed Oregon Beef Commission has been authorized to proceed with its hearings specifically limits the activities of the commission, if it be formed, to problems associated with marketing. In this realm it could accomplish a great deal for Oregon's beef producers.

The supporters of the idea of an Oregon Beef Commission have long been aware of the fact that approximately one-third of our state's beef is produced by dairymen. Members of the dairy industry have been appealed to for support of the plan for a self-help pro-

gram and have responded favorably. The Oregon Cattlemen's Association has suggested that two dairymen serve on the commission.

Since the law requires that there be one handler of the product on each commodity commission the packing industry would be represented as well and this would leave very little chance that the commission would not represent the cow business as a whole.

Cattlemen know that consumption of beef can be increased and that a stable market combined with increased year-around consumption will aid the industry. Research will add to our knowledge of how to breed animals which will convert the least feed into the most beef in the shortest time. Promotion will help assure the consumption of that beef.

STUDIES SCRIPTS

NEW YORK — Helen Hayes will probably return to Broadway next season, but so far hasn't made up her mind which of two scripts she prefers.

The veteran star is going to Europe this summer to confer with Anita Loos on "Cock-a-Boodle-Doisy," a play about a colorful figure in the international set, the late Lady Mendl. Miss Hayes' husband, Charles MacArthur, was at work on the play when he died last year.

Miss Hayes is also considering Jean Anouilh's "Time Remembered."

THE COVER

The cover picture for this week's Herald and News Magazine Section of Klamath Basin Living was taken by staff photographer Don Kettler and features "Crescent" the herd sire belonging to Harold W. Ray of Hillsboro, Oregon. The herd will be sold here on October 7. The picture was taken with a Crown Graphic camera set at f14 and a fiftieth of a second.



DALLY GIVAN thinks that the idea of an Oregon Beef Commission should be supported by all of us. "We've got something to sell and if we don't push our product ourselves," he said, "nobody else is going to." He said that he would be glad to see some market research done on the local level.



ED WILLIAMS combined the experiences of a dairyman and cattleman when he expressed the idea that an organization behind the beef business would accomplish a great deal. "The dairy commission has done a lot of good," he said, "and the beef producers should really get behind this idea."



VERN HOWARD offered the opinion that since other commodity commissions have done a great deal for the industries which they represent he sees no reason why a beef commission would not help the cow business. "It won't hurt anyone," he said, "and it just might do everybody a lot of good."



ROY GIENGER says that if enough states establish local commissions to support the beef industry a national organization will eventually grow out of the movement. He believes that the 10 cents a head tax on cattle going to slaughter or out of the state will be well worth the investment.



CHARLIE DREW, veteran Klamath County cattleman, believes that the plan to promote beef consumption would do the cow business some good. He has seen cattle prices fluctuate from one extreme to another and thinks that anything that can be done to stabilize the market would be of great benefit.