

Tennessee Cattle Producers Vote To Support In-State Beef Promotion

NASHVILLE, TENN.

The results are in and Tennessee cattle producers have voted to increase the assessment they pay to support in-state promotions of beef announced state Agriculture Commissioner Julius Johnson.

"In today's competitive market, it's important for farmers to reassess their efforts in the marketplace and how they can best reach today's consumer," Johnson said. "I'm pleased to have authorized this referendum and to have provided an opportunity for producers to have a say in determining their business future."

Tennessee cattle producers cast their votes last week in a statewide referendum authorized by the Tennessee Department of Agriculture. The referendum was requested by the Tennessee Cattlemen's Association, the state's largest cattle organization.

More than 56 percent or 718 of the 1,275 producers who cast ballots at local UT Extension

offices supported the measure. The measure increases by 50 cents the assessment farmers pay per head of cattle sold to support in-state research, education and promotion of beef. Only a majority of the votes cast were needed to pass.

The 50 cent increase will go into effect in the spring. Currently, cattle producers pay \$1 per head to help build consumer demand for beef products nationally. The national beef program was authorized by a vote of cattle producers and implemented in 1985.

Tennessee ranks as one of the top beef producing states in the nation with nearly two million head of cattle. According to the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, cattle and calves generated \$545 million in Tennessee farm cash receipts in 2010, making beef the state's top commodity. There are approximately 47,000 cattle producers in the state. Δ



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