

UP FOR RENEWAL

Live Cattle Marketing Committee discusses Livestock Mandatory Reporting program and its reauthorization.

by Troy Smith, field editor

With passage of the *Livestock Mandatory Reporting Act of 1999*, Congress authorized the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) to implement the Livestock Mandatory Reporting (LMR) program, whereby packers and importers submit information about sales of livestock and livestock products. AMS then issues regular reports detailing livestock and meat price trends and supply/demand conditions, to aid livestock producers in price discovery.

According to law LMR must be reauthorized every five years.

With the current authorization set to expire Sept. 30 of this year, LMR reauthorization was an important agenda item for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) Live Cattle Marketing Committee meeting hosted Feb. 7, during the 2020 Cattle Industry Convention in San Antonio, Texas.

NCBA policy supports reauthorization, but measures related to rules for LMR implementation were discussed and acted upon by the committee.

Advanced was a resolution calling for NCBA support of a change in timing of carcass weight reports. Currently, average carcass

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weight reports are published following a 13-day delay. Committee members approved a resolution seeking "next-day" reports. Specifically, it advocates for reports published by 11 a.m. daily, which provide average

carcass weights of cattle harvested the previous day.

Citing further declines in negotiated cash trade and increases in numbers of fed cattle traded on a formula basis, a resolution was introduced that seeks greater transparency in formula-based marketing agreements. Committee members approved the resolution, which calls for NCBA support of initiatives requiring LMR to publish details of formula transactions, including net price, base price and any premiums.

Also advanced by the committee was a policy directive calling for NCBA to appoint a working group to consider current reporting structure, review related studies and identify additional potential improvements to LMR. The working group is to report its findings and recommendations to the Live Cattle Marketing Committee at its July 2020 meeting, in order that NCBA may take needed action prior to LMR reauthorization.

Committee members also heard

a report from AMS Field Chief Taylor Cox regarding the agency's "Five-State Study," which was aimed at discovering a way to include more negotiated cash sales in price reports.

Reorganization of reporting regions has been proposed, said Cox, explaining that the study has been posted to the AMS website, and input from stakeholders is encouraged.

NCBA Washington, D.C., staffer Darryl Blakey reminded members that USDA has proffered a new rule aimed at specifying criteria the secretary of agriculture would apply when determining whether a marketing transaction gives or takes unfair advantage, in violation of the *Packers & Stockyards Act*. With similar aspirations as the previous "GIPSA" and "Farmer Fair Practices" rules, the proposed "Undue and Unreasonable Preferences and Advantages under the *Packers & Stockyards Act*" rule was published in the *Federal Register* on Jan. 13.

Blakey called the proposed language "an improvement," but having ambiguity that needs to be addressed. Blakey said public comment on the proposed rule is due by March 13, 2020. ■

Editor's note: Troy Smith is a freelance writer and cattleman from Sargent, Neb.

Beef Improvement Federation to host meeting in Florida

Registration for the 2020 Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) Meeting and Research Symposium is open and available online at <http://bit.ly/BIF20-reg>.

This year's event will be June 9-12 at the Embassy Suites Orlando, Kissimmee, Fla.

BIF is dedicated to advancing and coordinating all segments of the beef industry. From its start, it has sought to connect science and industry to improve beef cattle genetics.

One of its first projects was developing a way to standardize performance records across beef cattle breeds. The result was our current expected progeny difference (EPD) system.

Continuing the tradition of using science to benefit producers, BIF is

now the capstone for developing programs for improving the efficiency, profitability and sustainability of beef production. Its annual meetings bring together industry professionals, producers and researchers to discuss current issues facing the beef industry.

Find a schedule, as well as links to hotel and meeting registration, at <http://bit.ly/BIF20-sch>.

