



The Minnesota Cattleman

The Official Newspaper of the Minnesota State Cattlemen's Association®

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Volume 29 | Edition 1 | February 2026

Richard Pesek Recognized as 2025 Cattleman of the Year

On Dec. 5, the Minnesota State Cattlemen's Association (MSCA) announced Richard "Dick" Pesek, of Taunton, MN, as the 2025 Minnesota Cattleman of the Year during the Minnesota Cattle Industry Convention in St. Cloud. This award recognizes Pesek's nearly 50 years of service, leadership and unwavering dedication to advancing Minnesota's beef industry through his local and state cattlemen's associations.

Pesek's journey in the cattle community began in his early twenties, when he attended local cattle-

men's meetings simply to listen and learn. Deeply influenced by the wisdom of respected leaders in the industry, he carried their values forward, eventually becoming one of those dependable, respected figures himself. Known for his humbleness, steady presence and dedication, Pesek has long embodied the quiet strength that holds Minnesota's beef community together.

Throughout his decades of involvement, Pesek has served in numerous leadership roles, including cow-calf chair, feedlot chair

and regional director at the state level. But his greatest impact has been felt locally and regionally, where his boots-on-the-ground leadership, generosity and readiness to serve have impacted many.

If there is a beef event that needs help – whether a school lunch, community celebration, church dinner, a county fair or the Minnesota State Fair's Purple Ribbon Auction – Pesek is one of the first to show up and the last to leave, working without fanfare.

Pesek has been a long-standing and valued member of the MSCA Farmfest team, working side by side with leaders from across the state to elevate our industry's visibility and connection with the public. He played a central role in organizing regional cattlemen's tours – including hosting the tour at his own farm twice.

Despite his extensive service, Pesek is quick to credit others and remains grounded in what matters most: his family.

The MSCA is honored to recognize Richard "Dick" Pesek as the 2025 Minnesota Cattleman of the Year



2025 Cattleman of the Year, Richard "Dick" Pesek.

– a tribute to his lifetime of belief in the future of Minnesota leadership, generosity and Minnesota's cattle industry.

MSCA

MSCA is a grassroots organization consisting of over 20 local cattlemen's groups, providing the greatest opportunity for producer input and policy recommendations

Minnesota State Cattlemen's members, did you know you can pay your local affiliate dues online? Use the link below to renew your membership for the state and local association!

<https://www.mnsca.org/become-a-member/membership-application>

MINNESOTA STATE CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION
DISTRICT MAP & LOCAL AFFILIATES

1. Central Minnesota Cattlemen	11. Mower County Cattlemen
2. Cottonwood Cattle Producers	12. Murray County Cattlemen
3. Three Rivers Cattlemen	13. Northwestern Stockmen
4. Fillmore County Cattlemen	14. Redwood Area Cattlemen
5. Glacial Ridge Cattlemen	15. Rock-Nobles Cattlemen
6. Houston County Cattlemen	16. Snake River Cattlemen
7. Le Sueur County Area Cattlemen	17. Southwest Cattlemen
8. Midwest Cattlemen	18. Tri-County Cattlemen
9. Minnesota Cattlemen	19. Wabasha County Cattlemen
10. Mississippi Valley Cattlemen	20. West Central Cattlemen
	21. Pipestone Cattlemen

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NEWS - TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL

Amy Mastin Recognized as 2025 Industry Service Award Recipient



Amy Mastin, 2025 Industry Service Award recipient, pictured with MSCA President Jake Thompson

The Minnesota State Cattlemen's Association (MSCA) announced Amy Mastin as the 2025 Industry Service Award recipient on Dec. 5 during the Minnesota Cattle Industry Convention. Each year, the MSCA recognizes an individual, business or organization that has demonstrated support to grow Minnesota's cattle industry or community through the Industry Service Award.

This award recognition honors Mastin's extraordinary leadership in agricultural education and her transformative impact on the next generation of Minnesota cattle producers.

Mastin, a classroom teacher at the Kelliher Public School District in Beltrami County and founder of Kelliher

Amy Mastin . . . continued on page 15



KAITLYN ROOT

Executive Director
Office: 763-479-1011

Hello, readers!

Winter is meeting season for many organizations, including the Minnesota State Cattlemen's Association (MSCA). Calendars are filling up with local cattlemen's meetings across the state, and it's encouraging

to see the strong participation and enthusiasm within Minnesota's cattle industry.

This time of year also brings one of the most important national gatherings for beef producers – the National Cattlemen's Beef Association's (NCBA) CattleCon. This year, CattleCon will be held in Nashville, and representatives from MSCA, including myself, will be there to learn, collaborate and most importantly, represent Minnesota cattle producers on the policy front.

One of the strengths of both MSCA and NCBA is the emphasis on grassroots involvement. CattleCon is where that process truly comes to life.

State affiliates like MSCA bring forward policy resolutions that originate with producers. These resolutions are discussed, refined and ultimately voted on, serving as the first step toward becoming official NCBA policy. When appropriate, MSCA advances resolutions that have already been vetted and supported by Minnesota producers, ensuring our state's priorities are part of the national conversation.

This process is proof that producer voices matter. Grassroots efforts are the backbone of our organization, and it is rewarding to see how ideas that start at the local level can shape policy at the national level.

A strong example of this

is a Minnesota-led resolution on disaster payments. This policy, now used to help guide NCBA's work, focuses on ensuring disaster assistance accurately reflects actual loss based on the carrying capacity of eligible grazing land. It's a practical, producer-driven solution highlighting how Minnesota cattlemen can make a real impact beyond our state lines.

By staying engaged at the local level and participating through MSCA, Minnesota producers help ensure their voices are heard, first in our state, and then across the nation through NCBA. That's grassroots advocacy at work, and it's something we can all be proud of.



JAKE THOMPSON

President

Hello fellow cattlemen and cattlemen,

The cold has found us in north central Minnesota. As I write this the thermometer reads -21. At our place, calving prep has begun.

The MSCA strongly supports the upcoming State

Beef Checkoff Referendum because it represents a vital investment in the future of Minnesota's beef industry. For decades, cattle producers have contributed to the Beef Checkoff program, a producer-funded marketing and research initiative designed to increase beef demand.

Currently, Minnesota producers pay a \$1 per-head assessment at point of sale, with funds shared between the Minnesota Beef Council and the national Cattlemen's Beef Board. The proposed referendum would authorize a refundable 50-cent increase per head, allowing Minnesota's beef producers to retain more resources in state for targeted promotion, research and education ef-

forts that directly benefit local operations.

MSCA believes that expanding the state checkoff is crucial because it enables investment in production-focused research and consumer outreach that the national program cannot fully support. State checkoff dollars can be used to strengthen and build market opportunities tailored to Minnesota producers – activities that have tangible impacts on profitability and sustainability.

Moreover, enhanced promotion through the Minnesota Beef Council helps reinforce consumer confidence in beef raised by Minnesota cattlemen, bolstering demand in both local and broader markets.

With the cattle industry evolving and competition increasing, maintaining robust promotional and research programs ensures Minnesota producers remain competitive. The refundable nature of the increase preserves producer choice while allowing those who opt in to shape the future of beef in Minnesota.

MSCA encourages all eligible producers to request a ballot by February 12 and participate in this important decision that supports long-term viability and growth of the state's beef sector.

Until next time, may your hay mow stay full and your fence stay tight.



RACHEL GRAY

President-Elect

Hello from northern Minnesota!

Today we are above zero! That is a cause for celebration around here. We are

just coming out of the cold snap and hopefully will have a bit of a break before calving is in full swing. We are working on getting the calving pens and the calving room ready, along with everything in between.

Of course, thinking about calving makes me think about what's in my calving kit. Along with all the typical meds and supplies, we add a couple of things that we find very helpful.

The first thing is a bottle of oxygen. It works well for getting those slow calves going. If we assist a birth, the calf is given a shot of oxygen. I am always amazed at how quickly it

helps a calf.

We also always have 5-hour energy shots on hand. We add that to a bottle of colostrum or even give it to a calf that needs a boost.

This year, I am also putting together a small bin of things for the people working in the calving pens. It includes hand salve, a few pairs of extra gloves, extra hats, socks and snacks.

Getting ready for calving is one of my favorite times here. The anticipation is building as we wait for the new crop of calves.

It seems that calving season and bull buying season run right together. We have

no shortage of bull catalogs in the mailbox each day.

I think we all enjoy looking through the catalogs and making choices about breeding and the next calf crop.

These seasons always remind me that cattlemen and women are always looking forward to the next season.

I think that makes us hopeful. I think the hope and joy of seeing calves born and looking forward to the next season are among the things that make our job so wonderful.

Here's to having a great calving season! Stay warm and safe.

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Minnesota Cattleman
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AMANDA ARMSTRONG
PRESIDENT, MNCW

Winter greetings from the Minnesota State CattleWomen (MNCW)!

Thank you to everyone who joined us for our November webinar: “Navigating Unexpected Loss on the Farm” with Dr. Krishona Martinson. She shared her real-life story of how one farm family navigated the sudden loss of a young husband and father, while also offering practical steps you can take now to prepare your own family and operation for the unexpected.

Our Jan. 22 webinar

“Build Your Brand With Blondie” featuring Lindsey Loken of Blondie’s Butcher Shop, will have already taken place by the time you read this. Keep an eye on MNCW social media or our website for future webinars. Remember, these are open to all, men and women, members and non-members.

The Minnesota Beef Ambassadors have been busy this winter. They assisted at the Minnesota Cattle Industry Convention (MCIC) in December, and they will be attending an industry training event at Schiefelbein Farms’ bull sale in February.

Mark your calendars for Beef Boot Camp in April. Follow the Minnesota Beef Ambassadors social media or the MNCW web page for more information.

Lastly, we held our annual meeting in December in conjunction with the MCIC. New officers installed are Amanda Armstrong, president; Nikay Anderson, president elect;

and Jessica Heiden, vice president. American National Cattle Women Vice President Deb Chute, from Aitkin, MN, spoke at the breakfast session of the MCIC.

We always enjoy meeting with other like-minded cattlemen and cattlemen at the convention.

We look forward to a successful 2026!

Thank you, 2025 Beef Alliance Members

THANK YOU to the following businesses that have committed to support members of the Minnesota State Cattlemen’s Association as a part of the Minnesota Beef Alliance Program for 2025. If you are interested in learning more about the Beef Alliance program, contact Angie Ford at mnscamembership@gmail.com.

Prime

- American Foods Group*
- Carlson Wholesale
- Merck Animal Health*
- Minnesota Beef Council
- Roto-Mix
- Form-A-Feed
- Producers Livestock Marketing Association
- AgCountry Farm Credit Services
- Boehringer Ingelheim

Choice

- Minnesota Corn Growers Association
- Zoetis

Select

- ADM
- Kent Nutrition Group
- Centra Sota Cooperative
- Artex Manufacturing
- Minnesota Farm Bureau
- Professional Ag Marketing
- Purina Animal Nutrition
- Northwest Lighting Systems
- Dry Creek Ranch Trucking, Inc.

Presidential

- CKP Insurance
- Wieser Concrete Products



* Indicates giving above base level for that category!



DALLAS KNOBLOCH
MSCA FEEDER CHAIR

Hello everyone from southwest Minnesota!

We have changed the calendar to a new year, and here in the southern part of the state winter has been tolerable. For the most part the ground is bare, and the days are beginning to get longer already.

It’s always amazing how time just keeps moving forward. The temperature swings have been the biggest challenge here at the feedyard for cattle health, so we continually keep a close eye on that.

The cattle market continues to remain strong and with much volatility. Feeder

cattle continue to be one of the best commodities in agriculture to own right now, and it should be very interesting to see how the chips all fall this year.

As we flipped to January, the feeder market really seemed to gain steam. We are certainly seeing the heifers gaining ground on a steer during the first three weeks of the year.

Has heifer retention began in earnest at this point? The economics certainly look to be there with the cost of a bred heifer and price brought back to the cow selling a calf.

One of my thoughts recently, as we look at the global beef market, does the U.S. run the risk of turning the beef market into the way our dominance went in the soybean market? As many countries build the infrastructure of feedlots and packing capacity to ship more beef to the U.S. will we price ourselves out of the market?

The agriculture commodities have become such a global market as it certainly makes for a much larger

playing field. The drive of the U.S. cattlemen for the best quality and safest beef raised will be hard to beat, but you never know what’s on the horizon.

As we slowly move toward spring it’s the time for many of the local cattlemen to hold their annual banquets. Be sure to attend, support and enjoy time with others in the beef industry. These local groups are truly the starting point of promoting and adding value to our beef to the consumer. This hard work by so many over the years is why we have a consumer that trusts and demands U.S. beef.

Be sure to stay tuned and involved in the upcoming Minnesota Beef Checkoff referendum. This is the industry’s way of ensuring we continue to reach the consumer and to promote our product!

It is vital that we continue supporting the checkoff and the rising expenses that are incurred each year.

Stay safe as we make our way through the remainder of winter, keep the cattle happy and the pens full!



ERIC ZELTWANGER
Vice President

Greetings fellow cattlemen,

As I sit down to write this, we are working our way through what I can only hope is the coldest stretch of the winter. The wind blows, and the temp is struggling to make it up to zero.

Days like this set livestock producers apart from the rest. I for one am glad I can be a part of it (but wouldn’t mind if it warmed up a bit).

Along with the cool temps comes bull sale season. I enjoy flipping through catalogs when I get time. I like to keep up with new pedigrees and enjoy studying the data that producers are collecting to help advance the beef industry in the U.S.

The U.S. cattle industry has done a fantastic job following what the consumer told us they want. They want to keep the flavor and

taste that sets beef apart from other proteins.

They also want a more consistent eating experience which has been a big reason for the focus on marbling in the last decade.

Marbling increases grade which is the best correlation we have as far as eating experience so far. They are setting the standard for generations to come with the advancements they are breeding for today.

We as producers need to evaluate what we are needing to keep up with the industry, then we need to go out and find those things to steer us in that direction.

On the feeding side of things, we have also learned a lot as far as implants and beta antagonist and some of the other sciences in feeding.

We continue to get better at feeding just as they continue to breed them better. All striving to put more high-quality beef at the center of the plate.

This is a great time to point out the restructuring of the food pyramid which has also come around to putting proteins in the center of the plate. We as producers can count this as a win for the industry.

Keep up the good work everyone and as always, may your cows be fat and your calves heavy!

Upcoming Events Important Dates

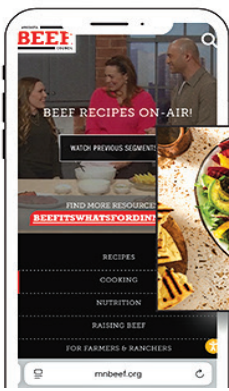
- March 13 – **MSCA March Quarterly Meeting** – Forty Club Restaurant & Bar, Aitkin, MN, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.
- April 16 – **Steak on a Stick** – Minnesota State Capitol, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
- July 13 – **MSCA Quarterly Meeting & PAC Event** – Marshall, MN
- July 14 – **MSCA Summer Tour** – hosted by the Southwest Cattlemen, Marshall, MN
- December 11-12 – **2026 Minnesota Cattle Industry Convention** – Mankato, MN
- December 10-11, 2027 – **2027 Minnesota Cattle Industry Convention** – Mankato, MN



For more details on events listed below, visit www.mnsca.org.

Minnesota Beef Council

BEEF PROMOTION, EDUCATION, & RESEARCH








www.mnbeef.org

Prime Promoter of the Year

Each year at the Minnesota Cattle Industry Convention, the Minnesota Beef Council announces the recipient of its Prime Promoter of the Year Award. This year's convention was held December 5-6 at the River's Edge Convention Center in St. Cloud, Minnesota.

The Prime Promoter Award was established in 2017 by the Minnesota Beef Council and the Beef Checkoff Program to recognize a group or organization that demonstrates exceptional leadership in promoting beef. Recipients receive a plaque and \$500 to support future beef promotion efforts. This year's honoree is the Snake River Valley Cattlemen's Association.

The Snake River Valley Cattlemen's Association is a long-standing and active local affiliate dedicated to strengthening beef promotion and supporting cattle producers throughout their region. Their commitment to advancing beef education, visibility, and community engagement has made them an exemplary leader among Minnesota's beef organizations.

The association invests significant time and resources into youth outreach – supporting 4-H and FFA members, providing educational opportunities, and hosting a junior beef show that allows young exhibitors to showcase their cattle. Additionally, they make their association's chute and scale available for both the junior show and the local county fair, further supporting youth involvement in the beef industry.

Beyond youth programming, Snake River Valley Cattlemen's maintains an active role in



producer education. Throughout the year, they host impactful speakers who share insights on beef production and other topics important to cattle producers. Their presence at community events and their own educational meetings ensures beef remains visible, valued, and accurately represented.

Their strong social media presence amplifies key beef messages from the Minnesota Beef Council, Minnesota State Cattlemen's Association, Minnesota CattleWomen, and the Minnesota Beef Ambassador Program – expanding their reach well beyond in-person events.

"This is an organization that understands the importance of keeping beef front-of-mind year-round. Their dedication, professionalism, and passion are a tremendous asset to our state's beef community," said Minnesota Beef Council CEO Kelly Schmidt during the award presentation.

Representatives from the Snake River Valley Cattlemen's Association were present at the convention to accept the award on behalf of the entire organization.

Top of the Class

The mission of the Top of the Class program is to greater develop the skills of Minnesota's beef industry leaders to maximize their impact and effectiveness in local, state, national, and international arenas. The program is a dynamic, year-long educational experience featuring two separate in-state seminars along with an out-of-state experience in Colorado. The members of the current Top of the Class program completed their second session in Denver, Colorado January 13 – 16, 2026.

While in Denver, the class learned through a variety of meetings about the structure, history, and mission of the Cattlemen's Beef Board and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association. The group also heard from the Issues Management Team and received a tour of the Digital Command Center (DCC), which monitors relevant beef information from the

media around the clock. Another highlight was learning from chefs in the NCBA culinary center. Other important areas of focus included compliance of the checkoff, learning from senior checkoff managers and the meeting with the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF).

One of the major highlights of the Denver trip for Top of the Class is getting to visit Five Rivers Cattle Feeding, a large feedlot in Kersey, Colorado. Participants were able to learn about the history of Five Rivers, the structure of the organization along with touring their facility. They also traveled to Cargill Meat Solutions in Fort Morgan, Colorado for a tour of the packing plant (pictured), getting to see the efficiencies of a plant that processes thousands of head of cattle every day.

The third and final Top of the Class session will be held March 4 – 5, 2026 in Minnesota.

Consumer Events

The Minnesota Beef Council (MBC) participated in the Ag in Action event held at FarmAmerica in Waseca on November 5th, 2025. This event reached approximately 190 students from grades 5th and 6th. The MBC hosted an interactive table with a spin wheel and quizzed students with beef-related questions. The students were not only provided knowledge about the beef industry but also offered promotional materials to take home.

Another opportunity to reach consumers was at the event hosted by the Academy for Sciences & Agriculture (AFSA) High School in Vadnais Heights called "Ag Night" on January 15th, 2026. This event, meant to educate the community about various aspects of agriculture, gathered various ag groups including Minnesota Beef, Minnesota Pork, and Minnesota Turkey to name a few. Minnesota Beef was present with an interactive booth and community members in attendance were able to enjoy a spaghetti feed provided by the school.

HEART-HEALTHY RECIPE:

BEEF AND KALE BOLOGNESE



This recipe is certified by the American Heart Association.

Did you know there are more than 36 cuts of beef that meet government guidelines for lean? February is Heart Health Month, so we celebrate the ways beef can be part of a heart-healthy dietary pattern as recent research shows that eating lean beef can help maintain normal cholesterol levels. A tip for finding lean beef cuts is to look for the terms "round" or "loin." For a full collection of heart-healthy beef recipes certified by the American Heart Association, visit mnbeef.org/recipes.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 pound Ground Beef (96% lean or leaner)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 1 cup chopped carrots
- 2 cups shredded kale
- 2 cans (6 ounces each) no-salt added tomato sauce
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 1 package (16 ounces) uncooked Pappardelle pasta
- 2 tablespoons reduced-fat grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 tablespoons thinly sliced fresh basil

COOKING:

1. Heat oil in stockpot over medium heat until hot. Add Ground Beef, onion and garlic; cook 8 to 10 minutes, breaking into 3/4-inch crumbles and stirring occasionally.

Cook's Tip: Cooking times are for fresh or thoroughly thawed Ground Beef. Ground beef should be cooked to an internal temperature of 160°F. Color is not a reliable indicator of ground beef doneness.

2. Stir in celery and carrots; cook 3 to 5 minutes. Add kale, tomato sauce, salt and peppers; simmer 10 minutes to develop flavors, stirring occasionally. Meanwhile, cook pasta according to package directions.

3. Serve sauce over pasta; garnish with Parmesan cheese and basil.

Nutrition information per serving, 1 cup sauce and 4 ounces pasta: 462 Calories; 72 Calories from fat; 8g Total Fat (2.3 g Saturated Fat; 0 g Trans Fat; 0.5 g Polyunsaturated Fat; 3.2 g Monounsaturated Fat); 52 mg Cholesterol; 216 mg Sodium; 73 g Total Carbohydrate; 6.2 g Dietary Fiber; 7.9 g Total Sugars; 28 g Protein; 0 g Added Sugars; 62 mg Calcium; 3.7 mg Iron; 755 mg Potassium; 0 mcg Vitamin D; 0.2 mg Riboflavin; 0.6 mg NE Niacin; 0.4 mg Vitamin B6; 1.6 mcg Vitamin B12; 188 mg Phosphorus; 4.3 mg Zinc; 12 mcg Selenium; 58.4 mg Choline.

Twin Cities Live

The Minnesota Beef Council makes a monthly appearance on Twin Cities Live, a television show airing daily from 3-4 p.m. CST on KSTP, Channel 5-Eyewitness News, and is rebroadcasted late in the evening. For November's segment, Twin Cities Live host, Ben Leber, traveled to Petty Brothers Meats in Annandale, MN. This segment featured the meat market's wide selection of fresh meats and further prepared products like their famous beef sticks. Segments in December and January were filmed back in the Twin Cities Live studio where Ashley Wulf, Communications Director, featured roasts in time for the holiday season and beef's protein value respectively. You can find the recorded segments along with recipes and grocery lists on our Facebook page and on our website at mnbeef.org.



MBC Board Meeting

The next Minnesota Beef Council Board of Directors Meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 27 - Tuesday, April 28, 2026. The meeting will be held in Maple Plain, MN at the Minnesota Beef Council office.

Minnesota Beef Council Events

- March 24, 2026 | **Ag Day Gala** (Minnesota State Fairgrounds)
- April 10, 2026 | **Minnesota Academy of Nutrition Dietetics Conference** (Eagan, MN)
- March 4-5, 2026 | **Top of the Class Session #3** (Maple Plain, MN)
- March 20-21, 2026 | **Minnesota Association of Meat Processors Convention** (St. Cloud, MN)



DUSTIN WIESE
MSCA COW/CALF CHAIR

What a great start to the year for the cattle industry. Markets are at record highs, and beef demand remains strong despite historically high grocery prices.

For cow-calf producers, this marks one of the most favorable market environments we've seen in years. From here, several key factors will continue to shape where prices go.

All signs point to continued high prices and demand. As of last year, the U.S. cattle herd is at the tightest cattle supply in the past 74 years. Though the market dipped with the White House announcement of importing from Argentina in October, it has mostly bounced back since then.

The New World screwworm continues to move north and has now been found in Tamaulipas, Mexico, which borders Texas. As a result, the U.S. border remains closed to Mexican cattle imports, and we can ex-

pect it to continue to remain closed. This closure further limits feeder cattle supplies and adds additional price support for U.S. producers.

Another aspect of the market to

watch is the dairy industry. Currently, even with low milk prices, U.S. milk production is on pace to reach record levels with milk cow inventories at their highest level since 1993.




Dairy herds are also capitalizing on the high beef prices by keeping

DUSTIN...
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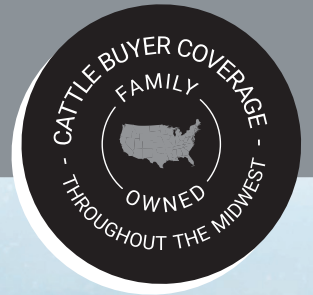
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What We've Accomplished Together

By Buck Wehrbein, NCBA President

I know, I know. Time goes by fast. We all say it, but still, it's hard to believe I'm sitting down to write my final column to NCBA members.

NCBA has existed for more than 125 years for one simple but vital reason: to stand up for America's cattle producers — the men and women who care for the land, raise cattle and put in long days to keep this business moving forward. None of that work happens without engaged cattlemen and women like you. Your involvement is the foundation of everything we do and, as I close my term as president, I've never been more proud to stand alongside you as members of this association.

Because of that strong grassroots presence, NCBA was able to deliver meaningful results this past year. Together, we have voiced strong opposition to increased beef imports from Argentina, secured tax relief to help producers keep more of what they earn, and defended private prop-

erty rights by pushing back against regulatory overreach through WOTUS. We've fought for common-sense reforms to the Endangered Species Act, worked to create a more favorable tax and regulatory environment for future generations of cattle producers, led the effort, along with our state affiliate partners, to keep New World Screwworm out of the U.S., and advanced trade opportunities that promise long-term benefits — including Australia opening its doors to imports of U.S. fresh beef. We made some meaningful progress with Secretary Rollins as our government works with grassroots producers to understand the true needs of rural America and how our business contributes to the fabric of our communities.

This past year also reminded us that market signals matter. We're experiencing record prices for cattle and beef, reflecting both historically low cattle numbers and strong demand for our product. For gen-

erations, cattle producers have worked to deliver the safest, highest-quality beef in the world, and today we are finally seeing fair prices for our products. Even amid market turbulence and political rhetoric surrounding prices, our markets proved resilient, just as they always do. To witness this level of demand is truly remarkable. It's something I wish my dad could see. For everyone to recognize what we've always known — that our product is exceptional — is nothing short of incredible.

Of course, our work as an association is never finished. There will always be more to accomplish, especially as we continue to invest in the next generation of leaders, because the future depends on them just as much as it depends on us. At the same time, NCBA continues to grow and adapt, evolving to meet the changing needs of our members and the business we serve. As the German proverb reminds us, "Food is never eaten as hot as it's cooked." In other

words, things often seem more daunting in the moment than they truly are. We can get bent out of shape and scared to death, but when we arrive at the challenge, it's rarely as bad — or as good — as it first appeared. Perspective matters, and with steady leadership and collaboration, we navigate uncertainty and keep moving forward.

When I began this year, I wrote that I was truly honored to serve as your NCBA president. That hasn't changed. Your trust in me has been humbling, and I am deeply grateful for it. From day one, I said my confidence didn't come from what I could accomplish alone, but from the incredible people I stand alongside and you have proven that true at every turn.

The true strength of this association lies in its members. You are the backbone of our industry, the driving force behind our advocacy, and the reason we continue to grow and adapt. Your engagement, insight and

commitment to our shared mission — to improve the business climate, grow beef demand, and expand the world's access to U.S. beef — are what make NCBA so effective.

This year reinforced something I said early on: leadership is about listening. I've endeavored to hear you, to respect every voice and to lead with honesty. Together, we've faced emerging threats, navigated policy shifts, and secured wins that will shape the future of our industry. As I prepare to pass the gavel, I'll leave you with this: your membership matters more than ever. Every voice and every perspective strengthens our ability to fight for your interests. Stay engaged. Share your ideas. Encourage young producers to get involved.

Thank you for allowing me the privilege of serving as your president. It has truly been the honor of a lifetime.

God bless, and happy trails.

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NEWS BRIEFS

New Dietary Guidelines Emphasize Beef's Place in a Healthy Diet

On Jan. 7, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) welcomed the release of the 2025-2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs). The updated DGAs nearly double the recommended daily amount for protein intake, increasing it to 1.2-1.6 grams per kilogram body weight, depending on your age group and individual caloric needs.

The document focuses on building a healthy diet around whole foods, limiting highly processed foods and added sugars, and prioritizing protein at every meal like nutrient-dense beef. Red meat is specifically mentioned as a healthy source of protein in a varied,

balanced diet.

The Dietary Guidelines released are simplified and more consumer-friendly than previous cycles. The streamlined approach taken by Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins and Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. keeps science-backed recommendations at the heart of the DGAs, but makes them far more practical for the families, caregivers, school administrators, and medical professionals who are making decisions every day about what to feed our children, seniors and Americans of all ages.

Other recommendations in the DGAs include:

Incorporate beef tallow and other healthy fats into the cooking process.

Use healthier cooking methods like baking, broiling, roasting, stir-frying, or grilling, all of which can be

used with the wide variety of retail beef cuts available to American families.

Introducing nutrient-dense foods like meat during infancy and early childhood to support growing children.

Minnesota Beef Checkoff Fee Increase Proposed

Minnesota beef producers will have the opportunity to vote on a proposed refundable increase of 50 cents per head to the state's current beef checkoff. It's been more than 30 years since the last checkoff increase, when the Federal checkoff was implemented for all U.S. beef producers at \$1.00 per head.

Currently, producers pay \$1.00 per head at the time of sale, with funds split evenly between the Minnesota Beef

Council and the Cattlemen's Beef Board. If the referendum passes, producers will pay \$1.50 per head but will be able to request a refund of \$0.50 per head if they choose. The proposed increase would fund additional beef production research, promotion, and consumer activities within Minnesota.

Dairy cows purchased by a producer for milk production are not subject to the checkoff. However, dairy cows and veal calves sold by a dairy producer for slaughter are subject to it.

Producers who wish to participate in the referendum must be listed on the Minnesota Beef Council's producer list. To be added to the list to receive a ballot, visit the Minnesota Beef Council website, email info@mnbeef.org or call the Minnesota Beef Council office at 763-479-1011 by Feb. 12.

Referendum timeline:
Feb. 12, 2026 – Deadline to request a ballot

March 30, 2026 – Referendum ballots mailed to producers

April 20, 2026 – Ballots cast must be postmarked for return

May 19, 2026 – Results of referendum released

For more information, visit <https://mnbeef.org/for-farmers-ranchers>.

NCBA and PLC Secure House Passage of Gray Wolf Delisting

On Dec. 18, the Pet and Livestock Protection Act, introduced by Reps. Tom Tiffany (R-WI) and Lauren Boebert (R-CO) passed the House with a bipartisan vote. The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) and Public Lands

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NEWS BRIEFS

Council (PLC) have been strong supporters of this legislation which would reissue the 2020 rule delisting gray wolves in the lower 48 states and ensure that the delisting cannot be overturned in federal court again.

“For too long, ranchers have grappled with the pendulum swing of regulatory determination on the gray wolf. The last three presidents have concluded that the gray wolf is fully recovered, yet lawsuits from activist groups have forced the agency to back away from sound science and keep the wolf listed,” said NCBA President and Nebraska cattleman Buck Wehrbein. “Restoring the 2020 wolf delisting through the Pet and Livestock Protection Act will give management decisions and certainty back to cattle producers, who are suffering financially and emotionally from wolf depredations that increase ev-

ery year. NCBA extends our gratitude to Congress for passing this legislation and urge the Senate to act.”

Gray wolves were delisted during the first Trump administration in 2020, but this rule was vacated by a U.S. District Court ruling in 2022. Since being listed under the ESA in 1974, the gray wolf population has seen tremendous recovery, exceeding recovery goals by 300 percent.

“The science is clear. Gray wolves have long since recovered and remain listed only because of political pressure from activist groups. Ranchers and rural communities across the West face the daily consequences of unchecked wolf populations, which threaten both livestock and pets,” said PLC President and Colorado rancher Tim Canterbury. “Returning management authority to the states ensures that decisions are

made closer to those directly impacted on the ground. Ranchers proudly support this bill, and PLC thanks Reps. Tiffany and Boebert for standing with ranchers and rural communities.”

House Passage of NEPA Modernization Provides Regulatory Relief to Ranchers

On Dec. 18, the Standardizing Permitting and Expediting Economic Development (SPEED) Act, modernizing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), passed the House. House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Bruce Westerman (R-AR) and Rep. Jared Golden (D-ME) originally sponsored this bill to speed up NEPA permitting processes. The National Cattlemen’s Beef Asso-

ciation (NCBA) and Public Lands Council (PLC) have consistently pushed to modernize NEPA to allow livestock producers to be able to quickly carry out critical conservation work.

“Many livestock producers rely on federal permitting under NEPA to make range improvements and carry out other voluntary conservation work to maintain working lands and prevent degradation. Unfortunately, outdated NEPA processes have made permitting for livestock grazing much more difficult and costly, which limits the amount of conservation work that can be done and leaves working lands in much worse condition,” said NCBA Executive Director of Natural Resources and PLC Executive Director Kaitlynn Glover. “This legislation speeds up federal permitting by reducing bureaucratic red tape and not letting NEPA be

weaponized by frivolous litigation. NCBA and PLC thank Chairman Westerman and Rep. Golden for their work on this important legislation.”

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- Women in Ag Network Conference – Feb 3 | Waite Park
- Hubbard County Grazing Workshop – Feb 6 | Bemidji
- Ranching For Profit – Feb 12 | Bemidji
- Livestock Producer Workshop – Feb 23 | Baudette
- Winter Integration Series – Feb 26 | Dassel
- SFA Midwest Grazing & Soil Health Summit – Mar 3–4, 2026 | Willmar
- GrazeHERS Zoom Sessions & Field Days – May-June | Sleepy Eye, Blackduck
- MNGPCA Grazing School – July | TBA



MNGPCA, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit led by farmers of all backgrounds, is dedicated to education, peer mentorship, and grazing land conservation.

STEWARDS OF THE LAND: GRAZING MENTORSHIPS



MNGPCA is launching a new 7-month, farmer-to-farmer Grazing Mentorship Program connecting grazers across Minnesota with experienced mentors.

Registration opens March 1, with mentorships running April–October.

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¹Merck Animal Health. 2025. Comparison of RESFLOR GOLD® to Norfenicol for Treatment of Bovine Respiratory Disease in Holstein Steers Following Metaphylaxis with Tulathromycin. Final Study Report.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION: Not for use in humans. Keep out of reach of children. Do not use in animals that have shown hypersensitivity to florfenicol or flunixin. Avoid direct contact with skin, eyes and clothing as product contains materials that can be irritating. Animals intended for human consumption must not be slaughtered within 38 days of treatment. This product is not approved for use in female dairy cattle 20 months of age or older, including dry dairy cows. Use in these cattle may cause drug residues in milk and/or in calves born to these cows. A withdrawal period has not been established in pre-ruminating calves. Do not use in calves to be processed for veal. Not for use in animals intended for breeding purposes. See package insert for complete information.

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CAUTION: Federal law restricts this drug to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian.

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CONTRAINDICATIONS: Do not use in animals that have shown hypersensitivity to florfenicol or flunixin.

WARNINGS: NOT FOR HUMAN USE. KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN. This product contains material that can be irritating to skin and eyes. Avoid direct contact with skin, eyes, and clothing. In case of accidental eye exposure, flush with water for 15 minutes. In case of accidental skin exposure, wash with soap and water. Remove contaminated clothing. Consult a physician if irritation persists. Accidental injection of this product may cause local irritation. Consult a physician immediately. The Safety Data Sheet (SDS) contains more detailed occupational safety information. For customer service, adverse effects reporting, and/or a copy of the SDS, call 1-800-211-3573. For additional information about adverse drug experience reporting for animal drugs, contact FDA at 1-888-FDAVETS, or <http://www.fda.gov/reportanimalae>.

Not for use in animals intended for breeding purposes. The effects of RESFLOR GOLD® on bovine reproductive performance, pregnancy, and lactation have not been determined. Toxicity studies in dogs, rats, and mice have associated the use of florfenicol with testicular degeneration and atrophy. NSAIDs are known to have potential effects on both parturition and the estrous cycle. There may be a delay in the onset of estrus if flunixin is administered during the prostaglandin phase of the estrous cycle. Studies have associated the use of flunixin in cattle with a delay in parturition and prolonged labor (which may increase the risk of stillbirth), and interference with involution and expulsion of fetal membranes (which may increase the risk for placental retention and metritis).

RESFLOR GOLD®, when administered as directed, may induce a transient reaction at the site of injection and underlying tissues that may result in trim loss of edible tissue at slaughter.

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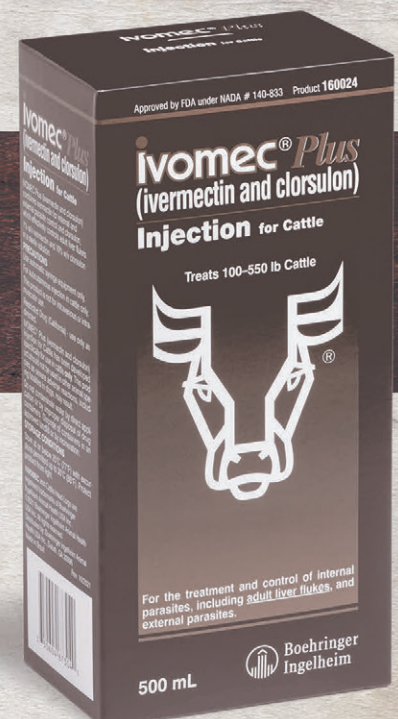
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¹ Based on label claims and FOI summary.



Minnesota Beef Checkoff Referendum Gives Producers a Voice



By Kelly Schmidt, Minnesota Beef COUNCIL CEO

Minnesota cattle producers will soon have the opportunity to vote in a referendum that could shape the future of beef promotion, research and education in the state. The vote centers on a proposed increase to the Minnesota Beef Checkoff, a producer-funded program that supports efforts to strengthen demand for beef and advance the industry.

Understanding the Beef Checkoff

The Beef Checkoff is a national program funded by cattle producers and beef importers at a rate of \$1 per head of cattle sold. The program invests in beef promotion, research and consumer education with the goal of building demand for beef and supporting the long-term viability of the industry.

In Minnesota, 50 cents of each checkoff dollar remains in the state and is managed by the Minnesota Beef Council to fund local promotion, education and research initiatives. The remaining portion supports national efforts through the Cattlemen's Beef Board.

Why a Referendum Is Being Held

The current Minnesota Beef Checkoff assessment has remained unchanged for more than three decades. During that time, the beef industry has experienced significant changes, including shifts in consumer preferences, increased competition from other protein sources and a rapidly evolving media and marketing landscape.

The upcoming referendum will allow producers to vote on a state-level increase to the Minnesota Beef Checkoff. The proposed increase is intended to provide additional resources for Minnesota-focused programs that highlight beef's value, support research and engage consumers where they make food decisions.

What the Proposal Includes

Under the proposal, the additional assessment would be refundable, meaning producers who do not wish to participate in the increased portion would have the option to request a refund. Any additional funds collected would remain in Minnesota and be invested

in programs designed to benefit the state's beef producers.

Supporters note that increased funding could expand outreach to consumers, strengthen nutrition education and enhance research and promotional efforts that individual producers cannot achieve on their own.

Producer Participation Is Key

The referendum will be conducted by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, which oversees the voting process and certifies eligible producers. Participation in the referendum ensures that producers have a direct voice in decisions affecting how the Beef Checkoff operates in Minnesota.

For more information about the Minnesota Beef Checkoff and the upcoming referendum, producers can visit mn-beef.org/for-farmers-ranchers or contact the Minnesota Beef Council directly.

REMINDER

The last day for beef producers to request a ballot is **February 12th**

(763) 479-1011

info@mnbeef.org

To request a ballot, fill out the form by scanning here:

MSCA March Quarterly Meeting

Friday, March 13
Forty Club Restaurant & Bar
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Swamp Creatures

By COLIN WOODALL, NCBA CEO

President Trump has made “draining the swamp” a core piece of his political agenda. “The Swamp” has become a popular moniker for Washington, D.C., and is meant to describe the dark, slimy and unsavory perceptions many have of our government and those who work within it. Those perceptions are rooted in what most Americans see in the news. As one who spent 20 years living in “The Swamp,” the perceptions are not far off. However, there are some in the Trump administration who believe NCBA, and other agriculture trade associations, are swamp creatures and part of the problem. Let’s explore this.

The daily antics of those in Washington generate the onslaught of news we’re exposed to minute-by-minute, but when talking about draining the swamp, the first group that comes to mind are lobbyists. There are thousands of people who are registered lobbyists working to influence the decisions of our federal government. Hundreds of millions of dollars are exchanged in the business of setting up meetings, working to gain government contracts, passing or killing legislation,

and representing everything from individuals to major corporations. While there are robust laws and regulations that apply to lobbying, you don’t have to spend much time to realize dark, slimy and unsavory actions take place.

Many lobbyists work for more than one paying client. One day they might be representing a defense contractor and the next day a car manufacturer. These individuals serve their many clients and will get paid whether they are successful or not. I spent some time working in a Senate office on Capitol Hill, and we would see the regular rotation of familiar lobbyist faces. When they would call to set up meetings, we always had to clarify who they were representing for that particular meeting. It would definitely be a different group the next time around.

Now, it’s important to note that many lobbyists who operate this way are good people who work hard at representing their clients and do it legally. Over the years, we have worked with many lobbyists like this on policy issues we shared with other groups. Several past NCBA employees make their living

like this. However, there are many more who have given lobbying the sullied reputation it has and have precipitated the need to drain the swamp.

NCBA employs federally registered lobbyists, and we must report our lobbying activities to both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. In addition, we are required to report all activities of our Political Action Committee or PAC. The lobbying rules are serious, and violating them can result in fines or jail time. We are diligent when it comes to compliance because we are not going to risk the reputation of this association.

Even though we employ lobbyists, they only have one client — YOU! When we arrive for a meeting, the staff don’t have to ask who we are there representing. They know we are there to speak for you and the policy you set for NCBA. They know when we show up, they will get the facts without the spin because our grassroots policy process doesn’t allow for staff opinions to influence it. It is your policy and we are known for shooting straight. This approach to lobbying is why we have the reputation and successful track record

we have.

Among the general American public, the lobbying profession probably ranks between cockroach and used car salesman. Again, building the case against the swamp. At NCBA, our lobbyists are working each day with federal departments and agencies, Members of Congress, foreign embassies, and other organizations to advance your policy positions. Yes, we are there to influence outcomes, but to do so in a way that keeps the government out of your business. You don’t have the time to fly back and forth to D.C. to lobby your Representative or Senator, so it is our collective effort as a producer-led and driven association that yields the policy wins we have seen in the past year. We are your voice and your advocate.

That is why we bristle when Trump officials say we are part of the swamp. Just the contrary. We bring integrity to public policy advocacy that more people should emulate. We represent you, and only you, and do so with the backing of a grassroots policy book created by NCBA producer members, not swamp creatures.

DUSTIN...
continued from page 5

cows in production longer and shifting towards breeding beef genetics.

What does this mean for the beef producer? Even though milk production is at an all-time high, don’t expect the beef on dairy to flood the market.

The increase in milk volume is largely the result of short-term herd management decisions rather than true herd expansion. Less dairy cows are being culled, and the average age of a milk cow is increasing. Meanwhile, the amount of replacement heifers is falling.

Another key signal to watch is heifer retention. The latest USDA inventory shows replacement heifer numbers are not rising significantly. Limited heifer retention helps keep the overall cattle supply tight, which continues to support the high cattle prices.

Several years of drought, low cattle prices and record-high input costs have led to today’s historically tight cattle supplies. While challenges remain, many ranchers are operating in the black for the first time in years, creating cautious optimism as the industry looks ahead.



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Ostlie Awarded 2025 Dennis Bottem Scholarship



Lilly Ostlie of Benson, Minnesota, recipient of the 2025 Dennis Bottem Scholarship

The Minnesota State Cattlemen’s Association (MSCA) is proud to announce that Lilly Ostlie of Benson, Minnesota, has been selected as the recipient of the 2025 Dennis Bottem Scholarship. This is a \$500 award recognizing outstanding youth leadership and commitment to the livestock industry.

Ostlie is a 2024 graduate of Benson High School and is currently

pursuing a degree in animal science at South Dakota State University (SDSU). In addition to her academic work, she is highly involved across campus, participating in SDSU Block and Bridle, Little International and the Cattlemen’s Club.

Demonstrating strong leadership within the beef and livestock community, Ostlie serves as President of the Minnesota Junior Red Angus

Association. She holds membership in 4-H, FFA, Minnesota Junior Red Angus Association, Junior Red Angus Association of America, United Junior Suffolk Sheep Association and the Minnesota Junior Suffolk Sheep Association.

Lilly’s family holds membership and is involved with the MSCA, Glacial Ridge Cattlemen’s Association and other ag organizations

throughout the state.

The MSCA congratulates Lilly on this well-deserved honor and looks forward to her continued contributions to Minnesota’s cattle and livestock industries.

The Minnesota State Cattlemen’s Association is a membership organization representing cattle farmers and individuals who are part of the cattle community in Minnesota.

Amy Mastin . . . continued from page 1

Cattle Company, has become a driving force in connecting students to the cattle industry through hands-on, immersive learning. Her passion for agriculture – and her commitment to helping students discover meaningful career pathways – has shaped one of the most dynamic school-based cattle programs in the state.

Under Mastin’s leadership, students have learned the beef industry from the ground up. She has built curriculum and experiences that teach life skills, responsibility, animal husbandry, genetic selection and an understanding of market dynamics. Through innovative partnerships with fellow educators, her program brings lessons full circle – integrating instruction on butchering, meat cuts and real-world “pasture to cafeteria” concepts that impact the entire school district.

As the program has grown, Mastin has expanded its offerings to include options such as a meat processing class and a livestock production class, giving students tangible, career-building skills that extend far beyond the classroom. The success of her efforts is

evident not just in traditional grade books, but in the excitement, confidence and leadership emerging in the students she mentors.

As stated by a former student of Mastin’s, “Amy has the utmost

compassion for the cattle industry and agriculture. With everything she accomplishes, she keeps one thing in mind: the local community of farmers and ranchers.”

The MSCA proudly recognizes

Amy Mastin as the 2025 Industry Service Award recipient –honoring her dedication, innovation and the meaningful impact she continues to make on students, schools and the broader beef community.

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Recruited By: _____

Questions Call: ☎ (763) 479-1011 or email: ✉ mnsca@mnsca.org

MN State Cattlemen's Association Dues \$100

Junior Dues \$25

Local Cattleman Association Dues (Optional)

Contact your local association to join

NCBA Membership Dues (Optional)

(Select the appropriate classification and add to MN State Cattlemen dues)

1-100 - \$180	2001+ - \$2,281 + (\$0.4560/hd) = \$ _____
101-250 - \$360	Stocker/feeder - \$180 + (\$0.4560/hd) = \$ _____
251-500 - \$540	
501-750 - \$779	Associate Dues (NCBA Dues →) _____
751-1000 - \$1,080	Individual - \$180
1001 -1250 - \$1,381	Business - \$239
1251 - 1500 - \$1,679	Student (24 or younger) - \$59
1501 - 1750 - \$1,980	
1751 - 2000 - \$2,281	Total Dues Enclosed This Membership _____