Written by: Ed Brown

THE BEEF CHECKOFF

On Tuesday, May 10, cattle producers will vote on a referendum that will affect the industry for years to come. They will vote as to whether or not to continue the Beef Promotion and Research Act, better known as the Beef Checkoff.

The Beef Checkoff requires the collection of one dollar per head on every sale of cattle. This money is allocated by a board made up of producers for programs of consumer information, research and promotion. In California, half the funds are utilized in the state by the California Beef Council, and half go to support the national programs.

Types of programs funded by the Beef Checkoff include network radio and television advertising, national magazine and newspaper ads, point of purchase promotion, food service promotion, consumer information programs, and research projects in nutrition, marketing, and new product development.

An eligible voter is any individual who has owned cattle between October 1, 1986 and March 31, 1988. You may vote in person at the county Cooperative Extension office, 2145 West Wardrobe Avenue on May 10, 1988 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

The Merced Mariposa Cattlemen's Association is urging all beef producers in the two counties to vote yes on the referendum. Reasons cited are as follows:

1. The checkoff is controlled by producers. All board members were nominated by state organizations representing beef producers.

2. California controls 50 cents of each dollar spent.

3. All producers and importers pay their fair share. A per head charge is the most equitable, giving small and large producers alike results for their money spent.

4. The money goes to programs, not administration. There is a 5% cap on administration costs. In the last year costs of administration have been 2.8%.

5. The programs are showing results.

In 1987 the Beef Checkoff raised approximately 72 million dollars. Thirty million dollars of this was used for advertising. In comparison, the poultry industry spent 70 million in advertising and the Coca-Cola Company spent 500 million. To compete with other products for its share of the consumer dollar, passage of the Beef Checkoff is the best opportunity cattlemen face this year.