

"BEEF REFERENDUM INSTRUCTIONS FOR COUNTY EXTENSION AGENTS"

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this information is to illustrate and clarify the role of the Extension Agent in conducting the Beef Promotion and Research Order Referendum as agreed upon by the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP) in response to a provision of the 1985 Farm Bill relating to a National Beef Promotion and Research Order Referendum.

II. GENERAL

The Beef Promotion and Research Order Referendum is required by the Beef Promotion and Research Act of 1985. The requirements and procedures for the Referendum are documented in the January 8, 1988, Federal Register. This document is subject to changes as provided by concerned parties during a thirty (30) day review period after publication in the Federal Register (until February 8, 1988). However, significant changes are unlikely.

The Referendum will be held (1) day only with registration and voting the same day. Voting will be in-person, by secret ballot, at the county Extension office in the county of voter residence or the Extension office serving the county of voter residence. Absentee voting will be allowed but will be strictly controlled. Ballots will be available only from the State Extension Coordinator by written request or can be picked up in-person. The time period for requesting an absentee ballot will be from April 1 until close of business, Friday, April 29, 1988. These ballots must be mailed by the absentee voter so as to be received in the County office serving the county of voter residence, by close of business, May 3, 1988. Ballots will be counted and voter eligibility challenges addressed by the county ASCS Committee or representative after the Referendum.

III. DATE, LOCATION, AND TIME OF REFERENDUM

The Referendum shall be conducted on May 10, 1988, at county Extension offices during regular business hours of the involved office.

IV. THE ROLE OF THE COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT

1. Prepare for the registration and voting in the Referendum on the Beef Promotion and Research Order in the county.

2. Supervise the registration and voting on the day of the Referendum at the county Extension office.

3. Maintain security of ballots and registration forms and delivery to county ASCS office.

4. Conduct all activities related to the Referendum in an impartial manner.

6. Provide public notice of the Referendum, including how to acquire absentee ballots, time period available etc.

V. REFERENDUM PROCEDURE

1. Beginning March 21, 1988, and continuing until May 10, 1988, the county Extension agent or designee should:

- A. Provide public notice of the date, time, and location and general requirements of the Referendum and how and where absentee ballots can be obtained through the use of radio, TV, newspaper, or any other available media, without incurring advertising expenses. Copies of all press releases related to the Referendum and other pertinent information will be supplied by the State Coordinator.

- B. Provide guidelines for acquiring an absentee ballot, and the time constraints. Available from the State Coordinator ONLY by written request or in-person, April 1, 1988 until close of business April 29, 1988, and must be received in the county Extension office of voter residence by close of business, May 3, 1988.

C. Respond to inquiries concerning the Referendum requirements and procedures at the county level.

D. Provide training for any Extension personnel assisting with the Referendum.

2. At least 10 days prior to the Referendum (May 1, 1988) the county Extension agent or designee should:

A. Review and study applicable instructions and information.

B. Receive, and maintain security for a supply of all forms required to conduct the Referendum at the county office. Advise State Coordinator of receipt of forms.

C. Receive one copy of all forms to be used in the conduct of the Referendum at the county Extension office to be used as a backup to make copies as necessary. Advise State Coordinator of receipt of backup forms.

D. Notify State Coordinator if required Referendum forms have not been received at least 10 workdays prior to the date of the Referendum.

E. Acquire or prepare secure ballot boxes. Ballot boxes may be available on loan from some county ASCS offices. If not, cardboard boxes or other suitable containers which can be sealed may be used. Clearly mark all boxes with the words "Ballot Box" and County Name.

F. Review Section VIII part 3. "Duplication of Ballots" and part 4. "Emergency Ballots for In-Person Voting", and be prepared in case of a shortage of "Beef Referendum" forms or envelopes.

3. From April 1, 1988 until close of business May 3, 1988 the county Extension agent or designee must:

A. Receive and securely maintain all absentee ballot and registration forms mailed to the county office. Handle all envelopes from

absentee voters marked "Beef Referendum" as follows:

i. Upon receipt, record the name of the absentee voter as listed on the outside of the envelopes on the "Voter Registration List" form LS 40-3. This list will be used to cross check names with the "Absentee Voter Request List" and "County Unknown Absentee Voter Request List" which will be received from the State Coordinator. Absentee voter, "Beef Referendum" envelopes with names not on these lists must be identified with the words "NOT ON LISTS", also write "NOT ON LISTS" next to their name on the "Voter Registration List" form LS 40-3. Place the envelopes in the ballot box (or appropriate ballot box for counties serving more than one county). ASCS will double check these lists later.

ii. Place all unopened envelopes marked "Beef Referendum" in the ballot box for the county of voter residence or keep them in a secure place until a ballot box has been acquired or prepared.

B. Receive from the State Coordinator, Form LS-39-3, "Absentee Voter Request List" and "County Unknown Absentee Voter Request List" containing the names of persons who have requested absentee ballots. Maintain this list on file until after the Referendum.

4. After close of business, May 3, 1988, any absentees ballots received must be marked with date, time of arrival and "LATE" clearly printed on the envelope, then placed in the ballot box. Also, record the name of the absentee voter on the "Voter Registration List", form LS 40-3 and print "LATE" next to the name.

5. The day prior to the Referendum, May 9, 1988 the county Extension agent or designee should:

A. Prepare secure ballot boxes and extra boxes in case of a large number of votes are cast. Clearly mark all boxes with the words "Ballot Box" and county name. County Extension offices serving more than

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one county will need separate ballot boxes and corresponding registration forms for each county served.

B. Be prepared to make additional copies of the ballot and registration if the supply of forms run out. Review section VIII, part 3. "Duplication of Ballots" and part 4. "Emergency Ballots for In-Person Voting" (pages 9-11).

C. Acquire an adequate supply of pencils or pens for completing registration forms and ballots.

D. Provide "refresher" training for any Extension personnel assisting with the Referendum.

6. On the day of the Referendum, May 10, 1988 the county Extension agent or designee should:

A. Begin voting at normal office hours.

B. Plan on being present at all times during voting.

C. Arrange the ballot box (boxes) in an accessible location, but within the agent's view at all times. Also make certain that forms cannot be obtained without the agent's knowledge.

D. Provide a voting area which will offer voter privacy so as to maintain confidentiality of voting.

E. Require all persons desiring to vote to enter their names on Form LS-40-3, "Voter Registration List", for the county in which they reside, BEFORE GIVING THEM REGISTRATION FORMS, BALLOTS, and ENVELOPES.

F. Display the "Voter Registration List", form LS 40-3, containing the names of absentee voters.

G. Provide each voter with a Form LS-40-2, registration form/envelope, a Form LS-40 ballot, and a Form LS-40-1 envelope marked "Beef Ballot."

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H. Instruct voters to read all instructions carefully, to complete and sign registration form, and mark ballot as required. Have them personally place the completed, signed, and sealed envelope marked "Beef Referendum" in the ballot box for the county in which they reside.

I. Assist voters as necessary and make certain that at least one copy of the Beef Promotion and Research Order is available for review.

i. If a voter is illiterate, explain voting procedure. Show them where to mark the ballot for either a "yes" or "no" vote. After marking ballot in private and placing it in the envelope marked "BEEF BALLOT", assist the voter in filling out the registration information on the "BEEF REFERENDUM" envelope (form LS 40-2), witness, and initial their "MARK" on the signature line.

J. Keep track of number of ballots and forms at intervals throughout the day. If necessary or if it appears necessary, reproduce registration forms and ballots by copying backup forms in sufficient quantities to ensure all voters have the opportunity to cast their ballots. Review section VII., part 3. "Duplication of Ballots" and part 4. "Emergency Ballots for In-person Voting" (pages 9-11).

K. Maintain a list of the names of any voters referred to the county Extension agent or designee as being not eligible to vote. Provide this list to the ASCS office. Clarify eligibility requirements but do not deny a person the opportunity to vote even if there is reason to doubt eligibility (see section VI. Voter Eligibility).

L. Maintain security of the ballot box during the Referendum and secure it at the end of the voting period until it can be delivered to the county ASCS office.

3. On the day following the Referendum, May 11, 1988, the county Extension agent must:

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A. Deliver to the county ASCS office serving the county of voter residence (or offices if a county Extension office serves several counties) the following:

i. The sealed ballot box or boxes containing all absentee ballots received, "Beef Referendum" envelopes which contain the Ballot in a "Beef Ballot" envelope, and any duplicated or emergency ballots.

ii. Completed Forms LS 40-3, "Voter Registration List"

iii. Completed Forms LS 39-3, "Absentee Voter Registration List" and any "County Unknown Absentee Voter Request List" received from the State Coordinator.

iv. List of any names of challenge voters received during the Referendum.

v. Ballot boxes borrowed from the ASCS office.

B. Advise ASCS county office if no ballots were cast.

C. Participate with ASCS Committee or representative in checking completed Forms LS-40-2 and LS-39 against Form LS-40-3, "Voter Registration List", and Forms LS-39-3, "Absentee Voter Request List".

D. Discard all unused forms.

VI. VOTER ELIGIBILITY

State Coordinators, county Extension agents, designees, and employees should provide assistance in clarifying eligibility requirements and voting process and providing every opportunity for producers to vote. However, they should not become involved in questioning voter eligibility; issues relating to law as documented in the Federal Register; or show bias toward voting results. With these guidelines in mind, the eligibility requirements include the following:

1. Producers who owned or acquired ownership of cattle during the period of October 1, 1986, through March 31, 1988.

2. Importers who imported cattle, beef or beef products during the period of October 1, 1986, through March 31, 1988.

3. Any person who claims to be a producer or an importer shall be permitted to register and vote.

4. Joint and Group Interests -

A. A group of individuals, such as members of a family, joint tenants, tenants in common, a partnership, or owners of community property engaged in the production of cattle, is a producer entity and shall be entitled to cast only one vote. 4-H, FFA and other youth who buy and sell cattle in their own name will be eligible to vote as well as their parents who may also be engaged in the production of cattle.

B. Any member of a group may register to vote as a producer or importer if he is an eligible producer or importer separate from the group.

5. Proxy Registration and Voting -

A. Voting by proxy is not permitted.

B. An officer or employee of a corporate producer or importer, or any guardian, administrator, executor or trustee of a producer's or importer's estate, or an authorized representative of any producer or importer entity (other than an individual producer or importer), such as a corporation or partnership may register to cast a ballot on behalf of such entity.

C. Any individual registering to vote in the Referendum on behalf of any producer entity or importer entity shall certify that he is authorized by such entity to take such action.

VII ~~III~~. BALLOTS AND REGISTRATION FORMS

1. Types of forms

A. In person voting -

- i. Form LS 40 - Ballot
- ii. Form LS 40-1 - Envelope marked "Beef Ballot"

- iii. Form LS 40-2 - Combined registration form/envelope marked "Beef Referendum"
- iv. Form LS 40-3 - Voter Registration List

B. Absentee Voting -

- i. Form LS 39 - Combined absentee Registration and Voting form
- ii. Form LS 39-1 - Envelope marked "Beef Ballot"
- iii. Form LS 39-2 - Envelope marked "Beef Referendum"
- iv. Form LS 39-3 - "Absentee Voter Request List"

2. Availability

- a. In-person - available on the day of voting at county Extension office.
- b. Absentee - available upon written request from the State Extension office or picked up in-person from the State Coordinators office between April 1 and close of business, Friday April 29, 1988.

3. Duplication of Forms

In the event that in-person voting materials are expected to run out, photocopies can be made. The key factor is to duplicate each original form as close as possible in quality and content. Paper size, quality or color are not of concern but conventional white paper should be utilized if possible. The following guidelines should be followed:

A. Duplication of in-person voting forms-
(Utilize materials provided in duplication packet or actual forms)

- i. Form LS 40 - Ballot: Duplicate as is, full sheet of paper is acceptable,
- ii. Form LS 40-2 - Combined registration form/envelope marked "Beef Referendum": Duplicate Registration Information side of the envelope or Registration form from the Duplication Packet on a full sheet of paper.

Clearly write on a plain envelope the words "BEEF REFERENDUM"

iii. Form LS 40-1 - Envelope marked "Beef Ballot": Print the words "BEEF BALLOT on a comparable envelope.

iv. Form LS 40-3 - Voter Registration List: Photocopy as is on conventional paper.

The voter must fill out the Duplicate Registration form completely, insert it, and the envelope marked "BEEF BALLOT" (which contains a completed Ballot) into the envelope marked "BEEF REFERENDUM".

The Voter MUST also print name, address, and SIGN the envelope marked "BEEF REFERENDUM"

4. Emergency Ballots for In-Person Voting

In a situation where a county Extension office has run out of forms and has no photocopy equipment available or in service, the following guidelines must be followed to prepare an emergency, minimum ballot.

i. Voting Ballot: Utilize a sheet of official county office letterhead, if possible. The voter must print the following to provide a valid ballot:

For a YES vote:

"I vote YES to continuing the Beef Promotion and Research Order"

For a NO vote:

"I vote NO to continuing the Beef Promotion and Research Order"

The voter must fold this piece of paper in half, with the vote to the inside to maintain confidentiality.

The voter must securely staple or tape the "BALLOT" together or fold and insert into an envelope.

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The voter must clearly print on this single sheet "BEEF BALLOT" or envelope containing the "BALLOT" the words "BEEF BALLOT".

ii. Voter Registration and "BEEF BALLOT" envelope:

The county agent must read or describe the content of the "Certification Statement" on the registration form.

iii. On the TOP HALF of a sheet of official county office letterhead, if possible. After being informed of the content of the "Certification Statement," the voter must list: NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER, whether a PRODUCER or IMPORTER and SIGN. On the BOTTOM HALF of the sheet of paper, the voter must list the words "BEEF REFERENDUM".

This will serve as the "Registration form" and also to secure the "BEEF BALLOT" form or envelope containing the Ballot.

Fold this "REGISTRATION FORM" in half with the voter information and the words "BEEF REFERENDUM" on the OUTSIDE.

iv. Insert the "BEEF BALLOT" or envelope marked "BEEF BALLOT" containing the "BALLOT" inside the folded "REGISTRATION FORM" and securely staple or tape together. Insert into appropriate ballot box; be sure to have voter list name and representation information on the voter registration list or reasonable version of the list.

v. The county agent or designee must let the ASCS office know there are emergency ballots present so extra care will be taken when opening the "BEEF REFERENDUM" so as not to compromise voter confidentiality by opening the "BEEF BALLOT" in the process.

VIII. ROLE OF THE STATE COORDINATOR

1. In-person voting:

A. The State Coordinator is expected to distribute to each county Extension office, the designated number of: registration forms/envelopes

(Form LS 40-2), ballots (Form LS 40), "Beef Ballot" envelopes (Form LS 40-1), and voter registration lists (Form LS 40-3), as specified by the Livestock and Seed Division, AMS. This designated number will be provided to State Coordinators, by AMS, prior to form shipments.

B. All voting materials be should distributed so as to arrive in county offices at least 10 days prior to voting (ie. by May 1, 1988).

C. One week prior to the week in which the Referendum is to be held, the State Coordinator should have confirmation that counties have received all required forms in appropriate numbers (ie. by May 3, 1988).

2. Absentee Voting

A. The State Coordinator shall:

i. Respond to inquiries from producers or importers in the State concerning absentee voting.

ii. Absentee ballots and registration forms should be distributed beginning April 1, 1988, and continue until close of business Friday April 29, 1988. All requests received after close of business, Friday April 29, 1988, shall be returned to the person making the request with the notification that the period for obtaining absentee ballots ended on that date.

iii. Upon written or in-person requests, mail or provide one "set" of absentee voting materials per request. Mail materials to the address specified in the written request.

iv. A "set" of absentee voting materials is comprised of one of each of the following forms: a Form LS 39, "Combined Absentee Registration and Voting Form", a Form LS 39-1, Envelope marked "Beef Ballot", a Form LS 39-2, Envelope marked "Beef Referendum"

v. It is recommended the envelope marked "Beef Referendum" (form LS 39-2) which is provided to the absentee voter for mailing the

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ballot and registration, be pre-addressed by the State Coordinator with the address of the county Extension office serving the county of voter residence. The designated county indicated on the envelope must correspond with that indicated on form LS 39-3, "Absentee Voter Request List".

vi. Record name and county of residence on the "Absentee Voter Request List" form LS 39-3, if county is unknown, then place name on a separate "Absentee Voter Request List" clearly marked "County Unknown".

vii. Maintain a separate "Absentee Voter Request List" for each county. If the county of a person requesting an absentee ballot cannot be determined, list that person's name and address on a Form LS 39-3 marked "County Unknown."

viii. After the end of the period for requesting absentee ballots, discard all unused forms for absentee voting.

IX. DISTRIBUTION OF "ABSENTEE VOTER REQUEST LIST" (Form LS 39-3)

1. The coordinator is expected to: maintain a file copy of the "Absentee Voter Request Lists", for each county and "County Unknown Absentee Voter Request List". Mail the ORIGINAL, completed "Absentee Voter Request Lists" to the appropriate county Extension office PROMPTLY following the ending date of the period for requesting absentee ballots (close of business, Friday, April 29, 1988). ALL counties must receive a copy of the "County Unknown Absentee Voter Request List".

2. The coordinator shall confirm receipt of the appropriate "Absentee Voter Request List" and "County Unknown" list by the county Extension agent prior to the date of the Referendum.

X. PUBLIC NOTICE

1. Provide public notice of the Referendum through the use of newspaper, radio, TV, newsletters, or any other available media without incurring advertising expense. Copies of official press releases issued

on the Referendum will be provided by the Livestock and Seed Division, AMS.

2. Provide public notice regarding requirements for absentee voting including where and how to acquire absentee ballots and the time constraints imposed; April 1, 1988 until close of business, April 29, 1988, and received in county Extension office serving the county of voter residence by close of business, May 3, 1988.

3. Assist county Extension agents in providing public notice of the Referendum at the county level. Be sure voters know the address of the county office and hours the office will be open (should correspond with normal office hours).

XI. IMPARTIALITY

1. The county Extension agent or designee is expected to:

A. Confine all activities to the Referendum to conduct a fair and impartial Referendum.

B. Not imply or recommend approval or disapproval or the Order.

C. Attend any public meeting designed to assure a "yes" vote or "no" vote. Make it clear attendance is intended to provide information on voting process and not to imply support for specific efforts.

D. Insure county Extension clientele and 4-H mailing lists are not released to any group, for any reason. This is our legal responsibility.