

Public Law 94-294
94th Congress

An Act

To enable cattle producers to establish, finance, and carry out a coordinated program of research, producer and consumer information, and promotion to improve, maintain, and develop markets for cattle, beef, and beef products.

May 28, 1976
[H.R. 7656]

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That this Act shall be known as the "Beef Research and Information Act".

Beef Research
and Information
Act.
7 USC 2901 note.

LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND DECLARATION OF POLICY

SEC. 2. Beef constitutes one of the basic, natural foods in the diet. It is produced by many individual cattle producers throughout the United States. Cattle, beef, and beef products move in interstate and foreign commerce and those which do not move in such channels of commerce directly burden or affect interstate commerce of cattle, beef, and beef products. The maintenance and expansion of existing markets and the development of new or improved markets and uses are vital to the welfare of cattle producers and those concerned with marketing, using, and processing beef as well as the general economy of the Nation. The production and marketing of cattle, beef, and beef products by numerous individual persons in the cattle and beef industry have prevented the development and carrying out of adequate and coordinated programs of research, information, and promotion necessary for the maintenance of markets and the development of new products of, and markets for cattle, beef, or beef products. Without an effective and coordinated method for assuring cooperative and collective action in providing for and financing such programs, individual cattle producers are unable to provide, obtain, or carry out the research, consumer and producer information, and promotion necessary to maintain and improve markets for cattle, beef, and beef products.

7 USC 2901.

It has long been recognized that it is in the public interest to provide an adequate, steady supply of high quality beef and beef products readily available to the consumers of the Nation. Maintenance of markets and the development of new markets, both domestic and foreign, are essential to the cattle industry if the consumers of beef and beef products are to be assured of an adequate, steady supply of such products at reasonable prices.

It is therefore declared to be the policy of the Congress and the purpose of this Act that it is essential and in the public interest, through the exercise of the powers provided herein, to authorize and enable the establishment of an orderly procedure for the development and the financing through an adequate assessment of an effective and continuous coordinated program of research, consumer information, producer information, and promotion designed to strengthen the cattle and beef industry's position in the marketplace, and maintain and expand domestic and foreign markets and uses for United States beef. Nothing in this Act shall be construed to mean, or provide for, control of production or otherwise limit the right of individual cattle producers to produce cattle or beef.

DEFINITIONS

7 USC 2902.

SEC. 3. As used in this Act—

(a) The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of Agriculture or any other officer or employee of the Department of Agriculture to whom there has heretofore been delegated, or to whom there may hereafter be delegated, the authority to act in his stead.

(b) The term "person" means any individual, group of individuals, partnership, corporation, association, cooperative, or any other entity.

(c) The term "cattle" means live domesticated bovine quadrupeds.

(d) The term "beef" means the flesh of cattle.

(e) The term "beef products" means products produced in whole or in part from cattle, exclusive of milk and products made therefrom.

(f) The term "producer" means any person who owns or acquires ownership of cattle: *Provided*, That a person shall not be considered to be a producer if his only share in the proceeds of a sale of cattle or beef is a sales commission, handling fee, or other service fee.

(g) The term "producer-buyer" means a producer who buys cattle.

(h) The term "producer-seller" means a producer who sells cattle.

(i) The term "United States" means the fifty States of the United States of America and the District of Columbia.

(j) The term "promotion" means any action to advance the image or desirability of beef and beef products.

(k) The term "research" means any type of research to advance the desirability, marketability, production, or quality of cattle, beef, and beef products.

(l) The term "consumer information" means facts, data, and other information that will assist consumers and other persons in making evaluations and decisions regarding the purchasing, preparation, and utilization of beef and beef products.

(m) The term "producer information" means facts, data, and other information that will assist producers in making decisions that lead to increased efficiency, lower cost of production, a stable supply of cattle, and the development of new markets.

(n) The term "marketing" means the sale or other disposition of cattle, beef, or beef products, in any channel of commerce.

(o) The term "commerce" means interstate, foreign, or intrastate commerce.

(p) The term "transaction" means the transfer of ownership of cattle or beef through a sale, trade, or other means of exchange.

(q) The term "slaughterer" means any person, specified in the order or the rules and regulations issued thereunder, who slaughters cattle, including cattle of his own production.

BEEF RESEARCH AND PROMOTION ORDER

7 USC 2903.

SEC. 4. To effectuate the declared policy of this Act, the Secretary shall, subject to the provisions of this Act, issue and from time to time amend an order applicable to producers and slaughterers. Such an order shall be applicable to all areas in the United States.

NOTICE AND HEARING

7 USC 2904.

SEC. 5. Whenever the Secretary has reason to believe that the issuance of an order will tend to effectuate the declared policy of this Act, he shall give due notice and opportunity for hearing upon a proposed order. Such hearing may be requested and proposal for an order submitted by an organization certified pursuant to section 15 of this

Act, or by any interested person affected by the provisions of this Act, including the Secretary.

FINDING AND ISSUANCE OF AN ORDER

SEC. 6. After notice and opportunity for hearing as provided in section 5, the Secretary shall issue an order if he finds, and sets forth in such order, upon the evidence introduced at such hearing, that the issuance of such order and all the terms and conditions thereof will tend to effectuate the declared policy of this Act.

Notice and
hearing.
7 USC 2905.

PERMISSIVE TERMS IN ORDER

SEC. 7. Any order issued pursuant to this Act shall contain one or more of the following terms and conditions, and except as provided in section 8, no others:

7 USC 2906.

(a) Providing for the establishment, issuance, effectuation, and administration of appropriate plans or projects for advertising, promotion, producer information, and consumer information with respect to the use of cattle, beef, or beef products and for the disbursement of necessary funds for such purposes: *Provided, however,* That any such plan or project shall be directed toward increasing the general demand for cattle, beef, or beef products. No reference to a private brand or trade name shall be made if the Secretary determines that such reference will result in undue discrimination against the cattle, beef, or beef products of other persons. No such advertising, consumer education, or sales promotion programs shall make use of false or misleading claims in behalf of cattle, beef, or beef products, or false or misleading statements with respect to quality, value, or use of any competing product.

(b) Providing for, establishing, and carrying on research, market development projects, and studies with respect to sale, distribution, marketing, utilization, or production of cattle, beef, or beef products, and the creation of new products thereof, to the end that the production, marketing, and utilization of cattle, beef, or beef products may be encouraged, expanded, improved, or made more acceptable, and the data collected by such activities may be disseminated, and providing for the disbursement of necessary funds for such purposes.

(c) Providing that slaughterers shall maintain and make available for the inspection such books and records as may be required by any order or regulations issued pursuant to this Act and for the filing of reports by such persons at the time, in the manner, and having content prescribed by the order or regulations to the end that information and data shall be made available to the Beef Board and to the Secretary which is appropriate or necessary to the effectuation, administration, or enforcement of the Act, or of any order or regulation issued pursuant to this Act: *Provided, however,* That all information so obtained shall be kept confidential by all officers and employees of the Department of Agriculture and of the Beef Board, and by all officers and employees of contracting agencies having access to such information, and only such information so furnished or acquired as the Secretary deems relevant shall be disclosed by them, and then only in a suit or administrative hearing brought at the direction, or upon the request, of the Secretary, or to which he or any officer of the United States is a party, and involving the order with reference to which the information so to be disclosed was furnished or acquired. Nothing in this section shall be deemed to prohibit (1) the issuance of general statements based upon the reports of the number of persons subject to an order or

Slaughterers,
record
maintenance.

Confidential
information.

Penalty.

statistical data collected therefrom, which statements do not identify the information furnished by any person, (2) the publication of general statements relating to refunds made by the Beef Board during any specific period, which statements do not identify any person to whom refunds are made, or (3) the publication by direction of the Secretary of the name of any person violating any order, together with a statement of the particular provisions of the order violated by such person. Any such officer or employee violating the provision of the subsection shall, upon conviction, be subjected to a fine of not more than \$1,000 or to imprisonment for not more than one year, or to both, and if an officer or employee of the Beef Board or the Department of Agriculture, he shall be removed from office.

(d) Terms and conditions incidental to and not inconsistent with the terms and conditions specified in this Act and necessary to effectuate the other provisions of such order.

REQUIRED TERMS IN ORDER

7 USC 2907.

SEC. 8. Any order issued pursuant to this Act shall contain the following terms and conditions;

Beef Board.
Establishment.

(a) Providing for the establishment and appointment, by the Secretary, of a Beef Board which shall consist of not more than sixty-eight members, and alternates therefor, and defining its powers and duties which shall include only the powers (1) to administer such order in accordance with its terms and provisions, (2) to make rules and regulations to effectuate the terms and provisions of such order, (3) to receive, investigate, and report to the Secretary complaints of violations of such order, (4) to recommend to the Secretary amendments to such order. The term of an appointment to the Beef Board shall be for three years with no member serving more than six consecutive years, except that initial appointment shall be proportionately for one, two, and three years: *Provided*, That the Beef Board shall appoint from its members an executive committee, consisting of not less than seven nor more than eleven members who are broadly representative of the industry, with authority to employ a staff and conduct routine business within the policies determined by the Beef Board.

Term.

(b) Providing that the Beef Board, and alternates therefor, shall be composed of cattle producers appointed by the Secretary from nominations submitted by eligible producer organizations, associations, general farm organizations, or cooperatives, within the geographic area, and certified pursuant to section 15, or, if the Secretary determines that substantial number of producers are not members of or their interests are not represented by any such eligible organizations, associations, or cooperatives, from nominations made by such producers in the manner authorized by the Secretary so that the representation of producers on the Board shall reflect, to the extent practicable, the proportion of cattle produced in each geographic area of the United States as defined by the Secretary: *Provided*, That the Beef Board shall from time to time, with the approval of the Secretary, redesignate representation on the Beef Board so as to reflect the proportion of cattle in each geographic area: *Provided, however*, That each such designated geographic area shall be entitled to at least one representative on the Beef Board.

(c) Providing that the Beef Board shall, subject to the provisions of subsection (g) of this section, develop and submit to the Secretary for his approval any advertising, sales promotion, consumer information, producer information, research, and development plans or proj-

ects, and that any such plan or project must be approved by the Secretary before becoming effective.

(d) Providing that the Beef Board shall, subject to the provisions of subsection (g) of this section, submit to the Secretary for his approval budgets on a fiscal period basis of its anticipated expenses and disbursements in the administration of the order, including probable costs of advertising, promotion, producer information, consumer information, research, and development projects. The Beef Board shall also submit copies of such budgets to the House Committee on Agriculture and the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry.

Budgets,
submittal to
Secretary and
congressional
committees.

(e) Providing, that—

(1) In each transaction where a producer sells or otherwise transfers ownership of cattle to any other producer, each such producer-seller shall pay to the producer-buyer and each producer-buyer shall collect from the producer-seller an assessment based on the value of the cattle involved in the transaction. Each producer who sells to a slaughterer or otherwise arranges for the slaughter of his cattle shall pay to the slaughterer and the slaughterer shall collect from such producer an assessment based on the value of the cattle involved. The slaughterer shall remit assessment(s) collected to the Beef Board in the manner prescribed by the order or the regulations issued thereunder, including any assessment(s) due at time of slaughter on cattle of his own production. In the event no sales transaction occurs at the point of slaughter, a fair value shall be attributed to the cattle at the time of slaughter for the purposes of determining the assessment: *Provided*, That the Beef Board may exempt from or vary the assessment on transactions of breeding animals or classes of breeding animals until time of slaughter: *Provided further*, That cattle slaughtered for his own home consumption by a producer who has been the sole owner of such cattle shall not be subject to assessments provided in this Act: *Provided further*, That the Beef Board may collect directly from any producer any assessments that he collected under the provisions of this Act, which are not passed along in the usual manner due to the loss in value of the cattle.

(2) The rate of assessment shall be as prescribed by the order except the aggregate rate shall not exceed one-half of 1 percent and shall provide for such expenses and expenditures, including provision for a reasonable reserve, and any referendum and administrative costs incurred by the Secretary under this Act, as the Secretary finds are reasonable and likely to be incurred by the Beef Board under the order during any period specified by him.

(3) To facilitate the collection of assessments, the Beef Board may specify different procedures for slaughterers, or classes of slaughterers, to recognize differences in marketing practices or procedures utilized in the industry.

(4) The Secretary may maintain a suit against any person subject to the order for the collection of such assessment and the several district courts of the United States are hereby vested with jurisdiction to entertain such suits regardless of the amount in controversy.

(f) Providing that the Beef Board shall maintain such books and records and prepare and submit such reports from time to time to the

Record
maintenance;
reports to
Secretary.

Secretary as he may prescribe, and for appropriate accounting by the Beef Board with respect to the receipt and disbursement of all funds entrusted to it.

Contracts or
agreements.

(g) Providing that the Beef Board, with the approval of the Secretary, may enter into contracts or agreements for development and carrying out the activities authorized under the order pursuant to section 7 (a) and (b) and for the payment of the cost thereof with funds collected pursuant to the order. Any such contract or agreement shall provide that such contractors shall develop and submit to the Beef Board a plan or project together with a budget or budgets which shall show estimated costs to be incurred for such plan or project, and that any such plan or project shall become effective upon the approval of the Secretary, and further, shall provide that the contracting parties shall keep accurate records of all of their activities and make periodic reports to the Beef Board of activities carried out and an accounting for funds received and expended, and such other reports as the Secretary may require.

(h) Providing that no funds collected by the Beef Board under the order shall in any manner be used for the purpose of influencing governmental policy or action, except as provided by subsection (a) (4) of this section.

Reimbursement.

(i) Providing the Beef Board members, and alternates therefore, shall serve without compensation, but shall be reimbursed for their reasonable expenses incurred in performing their duties as members of the Beef Board.

REQUIREMENT OF REFERENDUM AND CATTLE PRODUCER APPROVAL

7 USC 2908.

SEC. 9. The Secretary shall conduct a referendum as soon as practicable among producers who at any time, during a consecutive twelve-month representative period preceding the date of the referendum, as determined by the Secretary, have been engaged in the production of cattle for the purpose of ascertaining whether the issuance of an order is approved or favored by such producers. The Secretary shall establish a procedure whereby all known cattle producers are notified of the referendum and the time and place of balloting and qualified producers may register with the Agriculture Stabilization and Conservation Service in person or by mail to vote in such a referendum during a period ending not less than ten days prior to the date of the referendum. No order issued pursuant to this Act shall be effective unless the Secretary determines (1) that votes were cast by at least 50 per centum of the registered producers, and (2) that the issuance of such order is approved or favored by not less than two-thirds of the producers voting in such referendum. The Secretary shall be reimbursed from assessments collected by the Beef Board for any expenses incurred for the conduct of the referendum. Eligible voter lists and ballots cast in the referendum shall be retained by the Secretary for a period of not less than twelve months after they are cast for audit and recount in the event the results of the referendum are challenged and either the Secretary or the Courts determine a recount and retabulation of results is appropriate. Prior to the holding of the referendum, sureties shall have posted a bond or other security, acceptable to the Secretary, in an amount which the Secretary shall determine to be sufficient to pay any expenses incurred for the conduct of the referendum. For the purpose of this section, the term "expenses incurred for the conduct of the referendum" shall include all costs incurred by the Government in connection therewith, except for salaries of Government employees.

Notice.

"Expenses
incurred for the
conduct of the
referendum."

SUSPENSION AND TERMINATION OF ORDERS

SEC. 10. (a) The Secretary shall, whenever he finds that any order issued under this Act, or any provision(s) thereof, obstructs or does not tend to effectuate the declared policy of this Act, terminate or suspend the operation of such order or such provision(s) thereof. 7 USC 2909.

(b) The Secretary may conduct a referendum at any time, and shall hold a referendum on request of 10 per centum or more of the number of producers voting in the referendum approving the order, to determine whether such producers favor the termination or suspension of the order, and he shall suspend or terminate such order six months after he determines that suspension or termination of the order is approved or favored by a majority of the producers voting in such referendum who, during a representative period determined by the Secretary, have been engaged in the production of cattle, and who produced more than 50 per centum of the volume of cattle produced by the producers voting in the referendum. Referendum.

(c) The termination or suspension of any order, or any provision thereof, shall not be considered an order within the meaning of this Act.

PROVISIONS APPLICABLE TO AMENDMENTS

SEC. 11. The provisions of this Act applicable to orders shall be applicable to amendments to orders. 7 USC 2910.

PRODUCER REFUND

SEC. 12. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Act, any producer against whose cattle any assessment is made and collected from him under authority of this Act and who is not in favor of supporting the programs as provided for herein shall have the right to demand and receive from the Beef Board a refund of such assessment: *Provided*, That such demand shall be made in accordance with regulations on a form and within a time period prescribed by the Board and approved by the Secretary but in no event more than sixty days after the end of the month in which the sale or slaughter of said cattle occurred and upon submission of proof satisfactory to the Board that the producer paid the assessment for which refund is sought, and any such refund shall be made within sixty days after demand is received therefor: *Provided, however*, That no producer shall claim or receive a refund of any portion of an assessment which he collected from other producers. 7 USC 2911.

PETITION AND REVIEW

SEC. 13. (a) Any person subject to any order may file a written petition with the Secretary, stating that any such order or any provision of such order or any obligation imposed in connection therewith is not in accordance with law and praying for a modification thereof or to be exempted therefrom. He shall thereupon be given an opportunity for a hearing upon such petition, in accordance with regulations made by the Secretary. After such hearing, the Secretary shall make a ruling upon the prayer of such petition which shall be final, if in accordance with law. 7 USC 2912.

(d) The district courts of the United States in any district in which such person is an inhabitant, or has his principal place of business, are hereby vested with jurisdiction to review such ruling, provided a complaint for that purpose is filed within twenty days from the date Hearing.

of the entry of such ruling. Service of process in such proceedings may be had upon the Secretary by delivering to him a copy of the complaint. If the court determines that such ruling is not in accordance with law, it shall remand such proceedings to the Secretary with directions either (1) to make such ruling as the court shall determine to be in accordance with the law, or (2) to take such further proceedings as, in its opinion, the law requires. The pendency of proceedings instituted pursuant to subsection (a) of this section shall not impede, hinder, or delay the United States or the Secretary from obtaining relief pursuant to section 14(a) of this Act.

ENFORCEMENT

7 USC 2913.

SEC. 14. (a) The several district courts of the United States are vested with jurisdiction specifically to enforce, and to prevent and restrain any person from violating any order or regulation made or issued pursuant to this Act. Any civil action authorized to be brought under this Act shall be referred to the Attorney General for appropriate action: *Provided*, That nothing in this Act shall be construed as requiring the Secretary to refer to the Attorney General minor violations of this Act whenever he believes that the administration and enforcement of the program would be adequately served by suitable written notice or warning to any person committing such violation.

Penalty.

(b) Any person who willfully violates any provision of any order issued by the Secretary under this Act, or who willfully fails or refuses to collect or remit any assessment duly required of him thereunder, shall be liable to a penalty of not more than \$1,000 for each such violation which shall accrue to the United States and may be recovered in a civil suit brought by the United States: *Provided*, That subsections (a) and (b) of this section shall be in addition to, and not exclusive of, the remedies provided now or hereafter existing at law or in equity.

CERTIFICATION OF ORGANIZATIONS

7 USC 2914.

SEC. 15. The eligibility of any organization to represent producers of any designated geographic area of the United States to request the issuance of an order under section 5, and to participate in the making of nominations under section 8(b) shall be certified by the Secretary. Certification shall be based, in addition to other available information, upon a factual report submitted by the organization which shall contain information deemed relevant and specified by the Secretary for the making of such determination, including, but not limited to, the following:

Report, submittal to Secretary.

(a) geographic territory covered by the organization's active membership,

(b) nature and size of the organization's active membership, proportion of total of such active membership accounted for by producers of cattle, and the volume of cattle produced by the organization's active membership in each such State,

(c) the extent to which the cattle producer membership of such organization is represented in setting the organization's policies,

(d) evidence of stability and permanency of the organization,

(e) sources from which the organization's operating funds are derived,

(f) functions of the organization, and

(g) the organization's ability and willingness to further the aims and objectives of this Act:

Provided, however, That the primary consideration in determining the eligibility of an organization shall be whether its producer membership consists of a substantial number of producers who produce a substantial volume of cattle subject to the provisions of this Act. The Secretary shall certify any organization which he finds to be eligible under this section and his determination as to eligibility shall be final. Where more than one organization is certified in any geographic area, such organizations may caucus to determine the area's nominations under section 8(b).

STATE BEEF BOARDS

SEC. 16. Nothing in this Act shall be construed to preempt or interfere with the workings of any beef board, beef council, or other beef promotion entity organized and operating within and by authority of any of the several States. 7 USC 2915.

REGULATIONS

SEC. 17. The Secretary is authorized to issue regulations with the force and effect of law as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act and the powers vested in him by this Act. 7 USC 2916.

INVESTIGATIONS: POWER TO SUBPENA AND TAKE OATHS AND AFFIRMATIONS: AID OF COURTS

SEC. 18. The Secretary may make such investigation as he deems necessary for the effective carrying out of his responsibilities under this Act or to determine whether a producer or slaughterer of cattle or any other person has engaged or is about to engage in any acts or practice which constitute or will constitute a violation of any provisions of this Act, or of any order, or rule or regulation issued under this Act. For the purpose of such investigation, the Secretary is empowered to administer oaths and affirmations, subpoena witnesses, compel their attendance, take evidence, and require the production of any books, papers, and documents which are relevant to the inquiry. Such attendance of witnesses and the production of any such records may be required from any place in the United States. In case of contumacy by, or refusal to obey a subpoena to, any person, including a producer, the Secretary may invoke the aid of any court of the United States within the jurisdiction of which such investigation or proceeding is carried on, or where such person resides or carries on business, in requiring the attendance and testimony of witnesses and the production of books, papers, and documents; and such court may issue an order requiring such person to appear before the Secretary, there to produce records, if so ordered, or to give testimony touching the matter under investigation. Any failure to obey such order of the court may be punished by such court as a contempt thereof. All process in any such case may be served in the judicial district whereof such person is an inhabitant or wherever he may be found. 7 USC 2917.

Penalty.

SEPARABILITY

SEC. 19. If any provision of this Act or the application thereof to any person or circumstances is held invalid, the validity of the remainder of the Act and of the application of such provision to other persons and circumstances shall not be affected thereby. 7 USC 2901 note.

AUTHORIZATION

7 USC 2918.

SEC. 20. There is hereby authorized to be appropriated out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated such funds as are necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act. The funds so appropriated shall not be available for payment of the expenses or expenditures of the Beef Board in administering any provisions of any order issued pursuant to the terms of this Act.

EFFECTIVE DATE

7 USC 2901 note.

SEC. 21. This Act shall take effect upon enactment.

Approved May 28, 1976.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY:

HOUSE REPORTS: No. 94-452 (Comm. on Agriculture) and Nos. 94-708 and 94-1044 (Comm. of Conference).

SENATE REPORT No. 94-463 (Comm. on Agriculture and Forestry).

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD:

Vol. 121 (1975): Oct. 2, considered and passed House.

Dec. 1, 2, considered and passed Senate, amended.

Vol. 122 (1976): May 3, House agreed to conference report.

May 12, Senate agreed to conference report.