

## California Cattle Council Vote Approaches

AgNet West

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The potential for a California Cattle Council is now being left to a vote by cattle producers after Senate Bill 965, which was first introduced by Senator Mike McGuire (D-Healdsburg), was signed by then-Governor Jerry Brown in September 2018. The underlying focus of the council would be research, promotion, and marketing to benefit California cattle producers.

Ballots are believed to have been mailed to individuals and businesses that sold cattle in 2018, with a voting window between February 19 and March 21. The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) defines eligible producers as “a person who owns or acquires ownership of beef or dairy cattle, and who, upon request, provides proof of ownership of cattle.” Producers who receive ballots are encouraged to fill them out and return them as soon as possible.

If the council is approved through the voting process, it would be funded through a \$1-per-head assessment on live cattle sold with all money being mandated to stay in California. Sales of calves smaller than 250 pounds would be exempt from the assessment. There is also a stipulation that producers that do not want to contribute to the council can request a refund of any money collected during a sale.

The council would consist of cattle producers who would be prohibited from engaging in any type of lobbying but instead make determinations on research and funding needs. CFDA would be in charge of oversight of the council with the authority to administer a vote to terminate the council if a majority of producers vote against its continuation.

The council will have a broader focus than the California Beef Council, as it would consider all aspects of cattle production. Several ag organizations supported the bill to advance the potential for a California Cattle Council, including the California Cattlemen’s Association, the Ventura County Cattlemen’s Association, and the Rural County Representatives of California.

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