

## California Cattle Council on The Horizon

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The creation of a California Cattle Council could be on the way as Senate Bill 965 continues to make progress through the legislative system in California. The bill was first introduced by Senator Mike McGuire (D-Healdsburg) on January 31 and after support from the Senate Agriculture Committee, it recently moved through the Senate Appropriations Committee with a “do pass” recommendation.

If established, the council would be funded through a \$1-per-head assessment on sold cattle collected at the point of sale. The money would be required to remain entirely in California. There is also a refund provision in the legislation that allows producers to receive their money back if they request it. The council would also be prohibited from engaging in any type of lobbying, as the primary focus of the organization would be research, promotion and marketing needs of California cattle producers.

The council itself would be composed of cattle producers making decisions on the research and funding priorities. While the California Beef Council is already involved in research, promotion and educational activities, a California Cattle Council would take a broader approach to include all aspects of cattle production and not just beef alone.

The bill is likely to be considered by the full Senate sometime before July. A California Cattle Council will not immediately be established even if the measure is passed and subsequently signed by the governor. SB965 merely creates an opportunity for a referendum allowing cattle producers to decide on forming the council. Many of the state’s beef and dairy producers have noted their support for SB965, along with organizations such as the California Cattlemen’s Association and the Rural County Representatives of California.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture would provide oversight of the council and would carry the authority to oversee a vote to suspend the law and terminate the council if a majority of producers vote against continuing the law’s operation.

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