

Montana Cattlemen's Association

Press Release

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MCA Moves Forward on Montana Certified Natural Beef Program

Billings, MT ~ On Friday, February 23, Montana Cattlemen's Association (MCA) members Dave Germann, Wally Congdon, Rock Ringling and Executive Director Jeremy Seidlitz testified before the Montana Senate Agriculture Committee in support of the Montana Certified Natural Beef Program. The bill (SB 544) passed committee on a 6-1 affirmative vote. This bill, which MCA believes is critical to the profitability of ranchers across the state, was then passed on the Senate floor with a 50-0 affirmative vote. The bill will now be transmitted to the Montana State House of Representatives.

MSGA through Errol Rice testified in opposition to the bill, as did Karla Johnson (Montana Cattlewomen).

SB 544 will create a state certification and marketing program for natural and grass fed beef. The voluntary program will call for an all-natural product (no hormones, antibiotics, or ionospheres) and will require a recordkeeping system and ultimate certification by the State of Montana. The program is designed for Montana cattle producers who wish to participate and will also be an opportunity for processors. This bill was proposed by MCA and is supported by the Governor's Office, most Montana producers, Montana Specialty Meats, Big Sky Natural Beef, and Centennial Natural Beef.

Brett DeBruycker, MCA president, notes that this legislation recognizes a growing market, driven by consumer demand, and provides producers with an opportunity not now available to certify their production of natural and/or grass fed beef. The contemplated program is wholly voluntary and is open to any of Montana's 11,400 cattle producers.

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The Montana Cattlemen's Association is a grassroots organization working on behalf of Montana's cattle producers on issues vital to the future of our industry. MCA is dedicated to address the market interests of Montana while working to restore prosperity in rural communities by advancing the interests of agriculture in Montana. MCA is the Montana state affiliate of R-CALF USA. For more information about the Montana Cattlemen's Association, please visit www.montanacattlemen.org or call 406-259-5433.