



Greg Hanes

by Greg Hanes, CEO,  
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**Y**ou don't have to look too hard to find history's repeating patterns and, as in the past, the call for change is in the air. Even within the beef industry, there's a movement urging producers to throw off traditional institutions, like the Beef Checkoff, simply because it's "too old" or they weren't alive when it was established. It's easy to get swept up by the itch for something different, change for change's sake. But, it's important to do your homework, because there are many reasons producers of all ages still value the Beef Checkoff.

Approved by an overwhelming 79 percent of producers during the referendum vote when it was implemented, Checkoff support remains high. According to Luce Research's 2020 Producer Attitude Survey, 77 percent of the 1,200 beef and dairy producers surveyed nationwide say the Checkoff contributes positively to consumer demand for beef; 73 percent approve of the Checkoff overall.

Of the Checkoff's dollar-per-head assessment, up to half is retained by Qualified State Beef Councils for beef-related programs in their own states. The other 50-cents is used nationally for marketing, consumer advertising, education, product development, and research

## Change for Change's Sake?

designed to increase demand for beef, both domestically and through Checkoff programs abroad. This local/national partnership is a unique and key aspect of the program.

Interestingly, the dollar assessment hasn't increased a penny over the decades—amazing when you consider that the 1985 dollar only has about 41-cents of purchasing power in 2020 (Consumer Price Index, Bureau of Labor Statistics). Despite this inflation loss, and the fact that the industry produces more beef from fewer cattle, the Checkoff delivers real value through a strategic blend of tradition, experience, and innovation.

Over three and a half decades, the Beef Checkoff has developed extensive knowledge from relationships with industry experts who know what works and provide guidance. From this foundation, the Checkoff embraces new ideas and methods, always finding ways to be the most effective. Checkoff contractors pivot nimbly amid global challenges like COVID-19; researchers propel the industry on issues like sustainability; and adoption of time- and money-saving technologies give producers an efficient and productive bang for their buck.

Change in life is a certainty. Nothing stays static, not even the 35-year-old Beef Checkoff. The programs and strategies of today are already much different than when it began. As we continue to grow demand for our product in an extremely competitive world, we want your thoughts and ideas. Get involved! Together, we can keep the Checkoff evolving to make beef the protein of choice for consumers domestically and around the world, a benefit to all producers.

To learn more about Checkoff programs, projects, and resources, visit [DrivingDemandForBeef.com](http://DrivingDemandForBeef.com). 



Bill King

For questions and additional information on The Beef Checkoff contact Bill King, Stanley NM, at the New Mexico Beef Council office

## Restaurants Struggle Through COVID

**M**ealtime for most families and individuals changed substantially in the past year due to COVID. Sadly, restaurant closures are up 32 percent in the U.S. and 28 percent globally due to the pandemic. Restaurants have always operated under

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Photo courtesy of the Beef Checkoff.

thin margins, and now curfews, capacity limits, and safety costs have made survival even tougher.

The bright spot in all of this is that diners showed up for restaurants in many ways. Outdoor dining in the U.S. has gone from less than one percent of all seated parties from August to November 2019 to over 12 percent for those same months in 2020. October was one of the most hopeful months for the industry, featuring the days with the largest number of seated reservations (October 17) and highest volume of takeout orders (October 30) since April.

Diners are ready to show up in full force for restaurants in 2021. According to an OpenTable diner survey conducted in mid-October 2020, 52 percent of respondents say they think they'll dine out in 2021 more than they did in 2020, with 28 percent of diners expecting to resume regular dining behavior in April 2021 or later in the year.

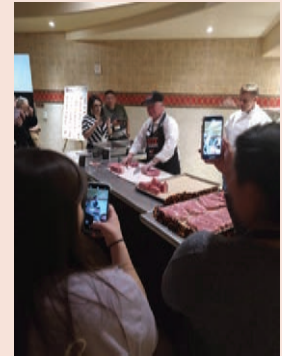
Safety precautions still loom large with 43 percent of diners saying the most important factor when dining out in 2021 is that restaurants have regulated health and safety measures. Good food trails far behind as the next important factor at 25 percent. In contrast, a renowned chef or owner, price, and location ranked among the lowest priorities among survey respondents, at 2 percent each. ■

## ProStart Helps New Mexico Students Launch Hospitality Careers

**T**he New Mexico Beef Council is a proud sponsor of New Mexico ProStart, administered by the NM Restaurant Association Foundation.

This program is a two-year career and technical education program that focuses on teaching culinary art and restaurant management skills in 28 high schools across the state. There are 48 ProStart programs across our state, with some schools having more than one program.

Part of NMBC's sponsorship includes the "Beef Grant Program" where the Council will reimburse teachers up to \$1,000 per year for beef that they use in ProStart classes. Information about both of these programs may be found at [NMBeef.com](http://NMBeef.com). ■



ProStart Students and Teachers learn about Beef Cuts



Taos High School Students compete in a ProStart culinary competition

For more information about your beef checkoff investment visit [MyBeefCheckoff.com](http://MyBeefCheckoff.com)



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