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THE BEEF CHECKOFF ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF SECOND ANNUAL NATIONAL RETAIL BEEF BACKER® AWARDS

Phoenix, Ariz. (January 30, 2009) – The Beef Checkoff Program announces the winners of the second annual national Retail Beef Backer® Awards program. Associated Food Stores, Adam's Hometown Markets and The Kroger Company are named for their commitment to outstanding beef marketing and merchandising programs. Presentations will be made at the 2009 Cattle Industry Annual Convention & Trade Show in Phoenix, Ariz., on January 31, 2009.

“The Retail Beef Backer Awards Program is one way beef producers can show their appreciation to retailers for the exceptional work they do to increase beef demand,” said Jim Henger, executive director of channel marketing for the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA), which contracts to manage retail programs for the beef checkoff. “We are excited to award this year’s winners for their hard work and continual effort to keep beef on the plates of their customers.”

The 2008 award winners are:

- Chain: Associated Food Stores (480 stores), based in Salt Lake City, Utah.
- Independent: Adam's Hometown Markets (9 stores), based in Cheshire, Connecticut.
- Innovator: The Kroger Company (2,400 stores), based in Cincinnati, Ohio, for their “Sealed for Freshness” innovative packaging program.

Retail Beef Backer Award winners are selected based on their excellent merchandising of beef at the meat case. A third-party judging panel also took into consideration the retailers’ tie-ins with beef checkoff-funded programs such as Easy Fresh Cooking® labels, Beef Training Camp, Summer Grilling promotions, the Beef Value Cuts program, on-pack nutrition labeling and Hispanic Marketing. Applicants are also judged on beef promotions independent of the beef checkoff that focus on increasing beef demand among their customers. Such programs include outstanding beef promotions, co-marketing promotions and customer education programs.

Call For Entries

On the heels of the award presentation, retailers should consider applying for the 2009 Retail Beef Backer Awards. Supermarket retailers of all sizes and formats are encouraged to enter the contest, and anyone (other than an NCBA employee) can nominate a participating retailer to win an award. More information will be made available at www.BeefRetail.org in the spring.

The Beef Checkoff Program was established as part of the 1985 Farm Bill. The checkoff assesses \$1 per head on the sale of live domestic and imported cattle, in addition to a comparable assessment on imported beef and beef products. States retain up to 50 cents on the dollar and forward the other 50 cents per head to the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board, which administers the national checkoff program, subject to USDA approval. The checkoff assessment became mandatory when the program was approved by 79 percent of producers in a 1988 national referendum vote. Checkoff revenues may be used for promotion, education and research programs to improve the marketing climate for beef.

Producer-directed and consumer-focused, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association is the trade association of America's cattle farmers and ranchers, and the marketing organization for the largest segment of the nation's food and fiber industry.

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