

REFERENDUM ON PROPOSED CORN CHECK-OFF

MUST BE RETURNED BY JUNE 15, 2015

On March 17, 2015, the Department of Agriculture (“Department”) and the Montana Corn Advisory Committee (“Committee”) held a public hearing at USDA-ARS Fort Keogh Livestock and Range Research Laboratory to receive input on a proposed corn check-off.

The Department received input from growers, producers, and first purchasers (who in this case are represented by Montana seed dealers). The Department and the Committee have considered the facts and information received at the hearing and, pursuant to Montana Code Annotated § 80-11-512(2)(a), have voted to hold a referendum of affected growers and producers on whether a Corn Research and Market Development Program, along with an appropriate check-off, should be created.

THE PROPOSED FOCUS OF THE RESEARCH AND MARKET DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The Committee identified in its meeting on February 20, 2015, that it is difficult to get neutral third-party analysis on the production characteristics of commercial corn hybrids when grown in Montana. This is due to limited funding for research plots, and the lack of an organized entity advocating for Montana-specific data.

The Committee also identified the need for outreach and education to help producers maximize their yields and begin including corn in their crop rotations.

Funds collected through the check-off proposed by this referendum will primarily be used by the Committee to address these issues. Further expansion into market development may be considered as industry and producer needs change.

THE PROPOSED RATE OF ASSESSMENT AND METHOD OF COLLECTION

The proposed corn check-off, which is the subject of this referendum, is as follows:

\$0.0375 per 1,000 commercial corn seeds purchased for planting in Montana

This equals \$3.00 per 80,000 seeds, which is a common seed count for commercial seed bags. The check-off will be collected by the seller of the seeds, who will submit the dollars collected to the Department for use by the Corn Advisory Committee. The Corn Advisory Committee will set the budget and guide the use of fees collected. All fees collected will be refundable pursuant to § 80-11-516, MCA.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO VOTE IN THE REFERENDUM

Each grower or producer, as defined in § 80-11-503, MCA, is entitled to one vote.

For purposes of this referendum, “Grower” or “Producer” means a person or landowner who is personally engaged in growing or producing corn, a tenant of the landowner who is personally engaged in growing or producing corn, or both the landowner and the tenant jointly. The term includes a person, partnership, association, corporation, cooperative, trust, sharecropper, and all other business units, devices, and arrangements.

REFERENDUM

MUST BE RETURNED BY June 15, 2015

Do you support the creation of a Corn Commodity Check-off program to fund research and education for corn producers in Montana? The check-off amount will be **\$0.0375 per 1,000 commercial corn seeds purchased for planting in Montana**, collected at the time of seed purchase. This equals \$3.00 per 80,000 seeds, which is a common seed count for commercial seed bags.

- YES**, I support the creation of a Corn Commodity Check-off program.

- NO**, I do not support the creation of a Corn Commodity Check-off program.

By Signing below, I verify that I meet the definition of “Grower” or “Producer” as set forth in the section entitled “Who is Eligible to Vote in the Referendum.”

NAME:	SIGNATURE:
ENTITY, IF APPLICABLE:	DATE:
ADDRESS:	For Department Use

RETURN TO: Montana Department of Agriculture
ATTN: Marty Earnheart
PO Box 200201
Helena, MT 59620