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State Helps Fund Attack On Downer Cow Investigations

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A KIRO Team 7 Investigation into Washington's downer cow industry is under attack but the source of funding for that attack might surprise you.

Our Investigative Team has been showing consumers how dairy cattle that are too weak, crippled, or sick to walk were routinely hoisted into a local slaughterhouse. We raised serious questions about the lack of proper federal inspection outside the plant and questions about the humane treatment of cows.

Investigative Reporter Chris Halsne has now discovered a host of state agencies are spending tax money in a campaign to discredit our findings.

Every time you buy a T-bone steak, a hamburger, or a gallon of milk, you're giving a little money to Washington's Beef or Dairy Commissions.

These state agencies are set up to promote their industries. This month, they're doing that by spending time and money criticizing KIRO-TV's coverage of downer



DOWNER COWS INVESTIGATION

[Meat From Dying, Sick Or Diseased Cows Getting into Food](#)
Aired Oct. 31, 2002, 5 p. m.

[Volatile Reaction From Viewers, Feds, To Meat Investigation](#)
Aired Oct. 31, 2002, 11 p. m.

[Downer Cows' Treatment May Be Illegal](#)
Aired Nov. 1, 2002, 5 p. m.

[Downer Industry Thrives Despite Consumers' Concerns](#)
Aired Nov. 1, 2002, 11 p. m.

SURVEY

Should the USDA allow downer cows to be turned into hamburger and other meat products?

- Yes.
- No.

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COWS

Each cow sale in Washington generates \$1.50 for the Beef Commission. It's called a mandatory "fee", but critics say it's really a taxation without representation.

"The State of Washington was reaping a large profit."

Mike Anagnos used to collect the cow-tax money as part of his job as brand inspector for the state Agriculture Department. He says the state is furious about our series on downer cows because our reports hampered the industry, and cut into profits.

"The realities are, it's a business. These guys just want to make money. They want to get these cattle in and on the floor as fast as they can."

Over the past several months, the Beef and Dairy Commissions spent money and time writing a 20-plus-page complaint regarding KIRO-TV's series about downer cows.

We've learned these multi-million dollar state agencies also used staff at the Washington Department of Agriculture and the Attorney Generals' offices to help out.

Dairy Farmer Jay Gordon doesn't care. He wants the Beef and Dairy Commissions to use every means to put a more positive spin on downer cows.

"Their job is to promote the beef and dairy industry and make sure they have a good image. If our name is drug through the mud, their job is to make sure that reputation is enhanced, protected and honored," he said.

Financial records clearly show the Beef Commission's priority isn't the consumer. We pulled the latest state audit and found that in 2001, the agency spent \$791,000 on promotion of beef, but just \$74,000 on consumer information.

KIRO-Team 7 Investigators have asked, but have not been told yet, how much money the state's complaint against us cost you.

We'll tell you as soon as multiple state agencies comply with our open records act requests. Neither the Dairy nor Beef Commissions would comment on this story and refused all interviews with me.

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 [New Revelations From Ex-State Ag Employee On Downer Cows](#)

Aired June 12, 2003, 5 p. m.

 [State Agencies Help Fund Attack On Downer Cow Investigations](#)

Aired June 12, 2003, 11 p.m.

 [Market For Downer Cow Beef Is Dying](#)

Aired June 13, 2003, 5 p. m.



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SURVEY

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require labeling of
products containing
downer meat?**

Yes.

No.

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