



FROM THE
President
by **Mike Weaver**



OCM Needs YOU!

Thank you to everyone who attended OCM's 19th Annual Food and Agriculture Conference this past August in Kansas City, Missouri. Leaders from across the country gathered to share knowledge, build strategy, and take action to fight for agricultural markets that are fair and competitive for all. We hope many of you will be able to join us again next year as we celebrate the 20th anniversary of OCM's founding.

Now more than ever, family farmers from all ag sectors – along with consumers – must to come together and unite in the effort to stop corporate control of agriculture. European farmers are coming to that realization and having success, and we must get this word out to the American people. American families want their food produced by family farmers who care about them and the food and fiber as well as the animals produced to feed their families, not multinational and foreign corporations. It has been my opinion for some time now that nothing will change until we come together in the numbers needed to hold the attention of Congress and demand that they quit pandering to the multinational

corporations as well as get out of the pockets of those corporations. We have been working to achieve this task since I became President of OCM and that will continue to be our major focus until things change for the better for American family farmers.

Looking back over the past year, I am proud of our accomplishments on this front. OCM has organized and is leading a collaboration that represents over 250,000 family farmers and millions of consumers working to defund industrial agriculture's lock on \$750,000,000 of federal funds through meaningful commodity checkoff reform represented in two federal bills that have been filed in the U.S. House and U.S. Senate. We are engaged in blocking state initiatives to increase checkoff taxes, and we continue to fight to get to the truth about NCBA's checkoff activities through our FOIA lawsuit. We have held two successful Congressional Briefings to educate lawmakers on our issues, and we met with the U.S. Department of Justice to explain the devastating impacts of the pending Bayer-Monsanto mega-merger

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Competitive Markets**

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Welcome, Dr. John Boyd, Jr.

We are proud to welcome Dr. John Boyd, Jr. to OCM's Board of Directors. John is a fourth-generation black farmer, businessman and civil rights activist, and Founder and President of the National Black Farmers Association. John has worked closely with national leaders in government, agriculture organizations and rural groups nationwide. He has been featured in The Washington Post, "60 Minutes," "Nightline," CNN and as ABC News Tonight's "Person of the Week." He is a past nominee for the NAACP's highest honor, The Springarn Award, and consistently ranks as one of Ebony Magazine's most influential African-Americans. He has made numerous appearances before Congress in his fight for farmer and agricultural issues, and we are grateful that he is bringing his wealth of knowledge and experience to OCM and our fight for fair and competitive markets. Welcome to OCM, John!

OCM 2017 Policy Brief: Consolidation, Globalization, and the American Family Farm

In August, we published our 2017 policy brief to educate the public, the media and policymakers on consolidation and globalization in the food industry. We explain how the top four firms in almost every sector have acquired abusive levels of power, and how this corporate control has allowed these firms to reap record profits, paying lower prices to the farmers who produce our food and charging higher prices to consumers on the retail side. Because of this monopoly power, the U.S. is losing farmers at an alarming rate, agricultural jobs and

wages are drying up, and rural communities are disappearing. We explain the issues in easy-to-understand terms, then we offer policy solutions to rein in corporations and their economic power and allow an opportunity for U.S. farmers and ranchers to compete in fair and open markets. Read our policy brief at www.competitivemarkets.com/category/policy-research or request a copy by emailing Angela Huffman at ahuffman@competitivemarkets.com or calling 614-390-7552.

IN THE News

OCM Makes Progress on Dairy Checkoff Transparency

From 2012 to 2016, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) failed to submit federally mandated annual reports to Congress accounting for dairy checkoff program activities, spending, and effectiveness, according to USDA documents obtained by OCM. The missing dairy reports follow a history of documented abuses of checkoff tax dollars in the commodity programs and cover-ups of those abuses by the USDA, and it comes as more than 80 farm organizations urge Congress to pass pending legislation that would bring much-needed transparency and accountability to the secretive government programs.

In September 2017, OCM teamed up with the National Dairy Producers Organization to call on USDA to submit the missing reports to Congress as required by law. Under pressure from our members and following news coverage in Politico, Brownfield Ag News, Capital Press, Feedstuffs

and others, USDA submitted the reports to Congress in early October. Over the coming weeks OCM will review those reports to ensure dairy farmers have the transparency they deserve in the checkoff program.

According to federal law, the USDA's secretary of agriculture is responsible for submitting annual reports to Congress accounting for dairy checkoff activities and spending, including an independent analysis of the effectiveness of the program. Former USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack, who was responsible for the reports that were not submitted during the five-year period, now serves as the president and CEO of the checkoff-funded U.S. Dairy Export Council.

Checkoff programs have repeatedly attempted to hinder efforts to shine a light on their misconduct. USDA's Egg Board's illegal effort to persuade government regulators and retailers to halt sales of "Just

Mayo" brand products was only revealed through FOIA action. Meanwhile, USDA's Pork Board has repeatedly refused to process FOIA requests. The National Cattlemen's Beef Association is the subject of an ongoing lawsuit filed by OCM in 2014 to obtain public audit records following the discovery of more than \$200,000 in improper checkoff spending during the equivalent of a nine-day period.

It's time for Congress to hold USDA and its checkoff programs accountable for family farmers' tax dollars. Since checkoff programs have been determined by the federal courts to be activities and speech of the federal government, those funds should be audited and transparent. It's time to pass the federal Opportunities for Fairness and Farming (OFF) Act and the Voluntary Checkoff Act.



Harvest time is here again. We wish all family farmers a bountiful harvest, and we want to remind our members and supporters that you may be eligible for a refund of your hard-earned checkoff tax dollars. Checkoff payments are mandatory, but in more than a dozen states a refund from the state-level checkoff program is available. OCM

member Wes Shoemyer reaped his harvest to the tune of a \$600 refund from the Missouri corn checkoff. Each state has its own refund regulations and process. For the information you need to request a refund, visit our webpage at www.competitivemarkets.com/checkoffrefund or call your state's commodity checkoff office for more information.

19TH ANNUAL FOOD AND AGRICULTURE *Conference Highlights*



On August 11-13, 2017, OCM members and supporters came together in Kansas City, MO to break the stranglehold big agribusiness has on our government and food policy. We addressed many issues we are facing every day, including the problem of market concentration, specific challenges in the local and regional marketplace for producers, economic impacts on rural communities and main streets, and the threat of recent and pending agribusiness mergers. We dedicated an afternoon to discuss-

ing solutions and actions we can and must take in the coming year to bust up monopoly power in agriculture. The majority of our conference sessions were video recorded and can be viewed online at www.facebook.com/pg/CompetitiveMarkets/videos.

Just prior to our conference, we announced the launch of a new organization, Family Farm Action, which will give political muscle to family farmers and rural communities. As a new 501(c)(4) and Political Action Committee (PAC), Family Farm

Action will support candidates who stand up for independent family farms and our rural communities, run state ballot initiatives that limit monopoly power over agriculture, and help develop and push for pro-competition legislation. OCM's Executive Director, Joe Maxwell, serves as the President of Family Farm Action. Learn more at www.farmaction.us.

We want to thank all of our guest speakers and Board members who made this year's conference a success.

WEAVER (continued from page 1)

We continue to fight for the enactment of meaningful GIPSA rules as we await a requested meeting with Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue. Most recently, Senator Rand Paul's office has reached out to us for advice in drafting new legislation that will help level the playing field for U.S. family farmers.

There is no doubt we are making progress, yet as we gain momentum, our opponents are pushing back harder than ever. This is why I am excited to announce that a generous OCM supporter

s willing to match up to \$5,000 for every dollar in contributions we receive now through November 30th. For every dollar that is contributed to our efforts through new memberships, renewals, and donations, another dollar will be matched by an OCM supporter. Now is the time to join us, renew your membership, or contribute however you can. Please help us spread the word by asking your friends and neighbors to join the fight.

We will continue to work hard every day to be the agricultural think tank and advocacy organization that everybody can be proud of.^{MW}

2017 Helmuth Award Recipient: Dr. John E. Ikerd

By Don Stull

The Organization for Competitive Markets presented Dr. John E. Ikerd with The John Helmuth Award at its 19th Annual Food and Agriculture Conference on August 11, 2017, in Kansas City, Missouri. OCM recognized Dr. Ikerd for his superior scholarship on the consequences of, and viable alternatives to, corporate industrial agriculture, as well as his principled advocacy for the ecological, economic, and agricultural sustainability of family farms and rural communities.

John Ikerd grew up on a small Missouri dairy farm and earned his bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees in agricultural economics from the University of Missouri. He served on the faculties of North Carolina State, Oklahoma State, and the University of Georgia before returning to the University of Missouri in 1989 to direct research and educational programs on sustainable agriculture. He retired from the University of Missouri as professor emeritus in 2000, but he has remained a prolific author and committed to the betterment of America's farmers, ranchers, and rural

communities. In this latter capacity, he serves on the board of directors of the Socially Responsible Agriculture Project (SRAP), a national organization that provides support for communities affected by concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs).

Dr. Ikerd is a widely recognized and highly respected authority of sustainable agriculture and sustainable economics. Among his influential books are *Crisis and Opportunity: Sustainability in American Agriculture* (2008), *The Essentials of Economic*

Sustainability (2012) and most recently *A Return to Common Sense* (2014). John is regularly invited to lecture to national and international audiences, and he writes a popular blog on issues of importance to agricultural practice and rural communities.

John Ikerd has long been a friend of OCM, and we are pleased to have the opportunity to honor his many accomplishments and continued efforts on behalf of independent family farmers, ranchers, and the communities in which they live and work.^{DS}





CAPITOL ROUNDUP

ON CAPITOL HILL

CHECKOFF REFORM: We are gaining support for meaningful checkoff reform. The Opportunities for Fairness in Farming (OFF) Act. S. 741 and H.R. 1753 has three U.S. Senators and 11 U.S. Representatives as co-sponsors and the Voluntary Checkoff Act S. 740 and H.R. 1752 has two U.S. Senators and three U.S. Representatives as co-sponsors. Your work is paying off. Please help us end the checkoff abuse and break the stranglehold industrial agriculture interest have on the \$750,000,000 in your tax dollars and join the over 80 farm organizations that have signed on by contacting your U.S. Senator and member of the U.S. House of Representatives, and then let us know so we can drop by their offices in Washington D.C. and follow up. Let the Senate and the House know how important it is to America's farmers to stop the checkoff abuses.

BAYER-MONSANTO MERGER: In

early November, OCM along with other stakeholders will once again be on the Hill educating members of Congress and asking them to take a stand against this mega-merger. We cannot allow three multi-national corporations to control as much as 80% of our seed, fertilizers and chemicals.

**H.R. 3599
PROTECT IN-
TERSTATE
COMMERCE
ACT; CON-
GRESSMAN**

KING (R) IOWA: Congressman King is once again trying to stop any state from passing labeling laws and commodity protection measures. This bill fulfills industrial agriculture's interest in stopping family farmers from differentiating their products in the market and will prevent states from taking action to stop the harm caused by multi-national corporations such as the Dicamba drift.

- H.R. 3599 is an effort to block states from establishing labeling laws that set out differentiations in production that can be used to provide a market for family farmers.
- Congressman King is attempting to stop states and their citizens from setting basic standards for the production or manufacture of agricultural products that are sold within their borders. It seeks to prohibit a state from regulating the sale of agricultural products produced and imported from out of state.

- This legislation could nullify hundreds of state and local measures regarding food safety, production practices, promotion of local agricultural development, and more. This would undercut broadly-supported goals, inject uncertainty into markets and businesses, and undermine traditional areas of state's rights.
- Here are just a few examples of some state laws that would be impacted: alcohol, fire-safe cigarettes, child labor, diseased livestock, manure application on fields, deed standards, labeling of farm-raised fish, maple syrup, raw milk, and other products, exposure to dangerous pesticides, BPA in infant food containers and importation of firewood free from invasive pests.

This is a fight to preserve State's Rights; Our Rights.

IN THE STATES

We won in California: Together we stopped one of the most egregious state beef checkoff bills to be introduced in America. Congratulations to everyone who helped. We stood together and we said, "No thank you, Mr. JBS, Swift and Brazil!"

Fighting in Oklahoma: At the time this newsletter went to print, OCM and other checkoff reform stakeholders were fighting to oppose an Oklahoma state beef checkoff program that would tax farmers and ranchers in that state an additional \$3,250,000 per year. This increase comes on the heels of the Oklahoma Beef Council admitting that over a 10-year period they had allowed \$2,600,000 of beef checkoff tax funds to be stolen. Our members in Oklahoma, to include OCM Board Member Paul Muegge, said enough is enough, they need to clean up their act before we pay another dollar.

Let us know if you have legislative issues that need to be supported or opposed. OCM stands ready to help you!

New OCM Program for Like-Minded Organizations

The Organization for Competitive Markets continues to develop broader strategies to fulfill its mission to be the go-to organization for current information and campaign calls-to-action that are targeted to break the stranglehold large multi-national corporations have on the market and on our policymakers at the state and federal levels. We know as long as these large monopolies control the economic and political power, America's family farmers and consumers lose. OCM wants to be an umbrella organization fighting monopolies that are denying farmers and consumers a fair and just market.

To that end, OCM has created a new Associate Organization Membership (AOM) Program. This program will allow OCM to increase the level of services available to other organizations allowing them to access up-to-date information and hands-on tools that they can use to take action on behalf of themselves and their membership. As an associate member, these like-minded organizations will receive our bi-monthly newsletter, be part of OCM action alerts, become a member of the OCM National Collaboration and they will have access to

organizational tool kits.

While we will continue to work with outside collaborators and stakeholders on individual campaigns as we do now with our meaningful checkoff reform collaboration and Bayer-Monsanto merger stakeholder group, this new program will give the AOM access to a broad range of tools designed for their individual work.

The basic AOM membership is \$200.00 per year. Additional membership levels include a \$500.00 level that in addition to the basic services will provide this level member organization two registrations at OCM's annual conference held in August of each year. A \$1,000.00 membership level, in addition to the basic services, provides two registrations, booth space and recognition for their level of OCM membership at OCM's annual conference.

We all belong to several great like-minded organizations, so please let the other organizations you are a member of know about this opportunity. If they have questions please have them contact Joe Maxwell at jmaxwell@competitivemarkets.com or call 573-721-0927.

Follow Our Blog to Stay Up-To-Date



The OCM blog features timely articles covering important topics related to antitrust and trade policy in agriculture. Visit www.competitivemarkets.com/category/blog to hear from Brenda Cochran, a Pennsylvania dairy farmer, Harlan Hentges, an Oklahoma farm and ranch attorney, Lillian Salerno, former Undersecretary for Rural Development at USDA, and many more thought leaders who are fighting to preserve independent family farm agriculture.



We heard you, and your OCM Board of Directors has responded to your request to allow more individuals to have a say in the operations and management of OCM. The Board has lowered the membership dues for voting members from \$200 per year to \$125, while keeping the nonvoting membership the same at \$50 per year. Let your voice have a vote and become a voting member today. If you appreciate the work of OCM and have had a great year, help us keep the momentum by becoming

a \$500 sustaining member.

You can mail your membership dues or donations to OCM, P. O. Box 6486, Lincoln, NE 68506 or you can pay by debit or credit card online through our secure, online system at www.competitivemarkets.com.

Thank you for your continued support of OCM and all our efforts. For membership questions or assistance, please call Pat Craycraft at 402-327-8390 or pcraycraft@competitivemarkets.com.



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SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2017

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Join or Donate by
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OCM is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization supported by membership contributions, donations, and foundation support. All donations are tax deductible.

Individual Membership

- ☐ \$50 Member: Receives bi-monthly newsletter
- ☐ \$125 Voting Member: Same benefits as \$50 level, plus voting rights
- ☐ \$500 Sustaining Member: Same benefits as \$125 level, and receives strategy and progress updates
- ☐ Other Donation: Amount \$_____

Associate Organization Membership

- ☐ \$200: Organization receives bi-monthly newsletter, action alerts, membership in OCM National Collaboration, action toolkits
- ☐ \$500: Same benefits as \$200 level, plus two conference registrations
- ☐ \$1,000: Same benefits as \$500 level, plus a booth and recognition at annual conference

All members will receive the bi-monthly newsletter electronically, unless you mark this line for a mailed copy: _____

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