ocm
Organization for Competitive Markets

Member Newsletter

Fighting for Economic Justice for America's Family Farmers and Ranchers

ocm
Organization for Competitive Markets
22nd Annual

FOOD & AGRICULTURE
CONFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP MEETING
Severing the Tentacles of Corporate Consolidation

2020 OCM CONFERENCE

Sadly, we cancelled our regular in-person conference out of concern about the health and safety of our members, staff, annual meeting speakers and registrants, the possibility for community spread of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) and uncertainly of what the pandemic would look like in August.

After exploring several "virtual options" we are excited to bring to you several topic sessions with Q&A through Facebook beginning June 25 and continuing through the summer. We hope that you will participate and find these sessions informative.

FIRST SESSION

One Size fits all Food Inspection

CRISIS:

the big 4 are not the solution – more bidding – expansion of processing facilities – more sources for us.

Too often USDA and other government guidelines treat family farms and factory farms the same; requiring the same (often overly expensive) types of inspection and management systems that do not work for all sizes of farms.

SPEAKER: Dr. James Dillon
Lieutenant Colonel at US Army
MODERATOR: Ben Gotschall
OCM Interim Executive Director

Dr. Dillon is a veterinarian and a military officer. He has a BS in Biology and a DVM degree from Kansas State University and has also earned a Masters in Public Health from the University of Texas Health Sciences Center at Houston. He has a large amount of leadership experience in both small groups and larger groups up to approximately 140 personnel in both military and civilian roles. He has led these groups to organize and accomplish various missions around the world in both combat and non-combat environments. Throughout his military career on both active duty and reserve status he has been placed in positions normally reserved for more experienced officers and excelled at these challenges. He possesses a unique blend of veterinary skills, public health and epidemiological knowledge, and leadership, managerial, and administrative skills. **He currently serves as Director of Meat Safety Assurance for the State of Texas and as a DIMA officer in support of Public Health Activity Ft. Hood.**

JOIN US AT: Facebook
FIRST SESSION – One Size fits all Food Inspection
Thursday, June 25 - 7:00 PM (CT)
Email your Questions in Advance to:
bgotschall@competitivemarkets.com
Promotion Allies: Food and Water Watch, RAFI, WORC, National Farmers Union

INSIDE

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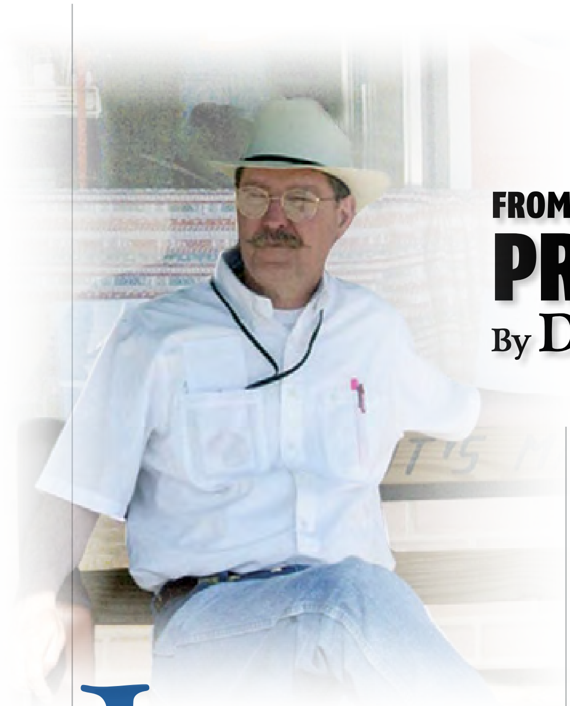


FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Don Stull

I wrote my previous column for the OCM Newsletter the last week in March, when shelter-in-place orders were just beginning, the first meatpacking workers had just tested positive for COVID-19, and coronavirus "hotspots" were limited to coastal cities. How things have changed! Within weeks Covid outbreaks in meat and poultry plants erupted from Washington to Wisconsin, from Texas and Georgia to Alberta and Ontario. NBC News reported on April 28 that at least 5,000 meat and poultry workers were infected and 20 had died. As plants shuttered or briefly suspended operations for "deep cleaning," President Trump issued an executive order classifying meat and poultry plants as critical infrastructure and directing USDA to "ensure America's meat and poultry processors continue operations uninterrupted to the maximum extent possible."

According to the *Food and Environment Reporting Network*, by May 7, the number of confirmed coronavirus cases among American meat and poultry workers had more than doubled: at least 11,946 workers confirmed sick and 48 deaths. The toll continues to climb, as plants, like the nation, reopen. Packer executives brag of their commitment "to the safety of all our team members," even as they petition FSIS to waive line-speed restrictions. And in Kansas, according to *USA Today*, they have repeatedly, and successfully, pushed state officials to allow their employees who have been potentially exposed to COVID-19 to keep working.

On April 20, I received a telephone call from a Minnesota farmer who sells hogs to

The Covid crisis has laid bare the deep underlying structural problems that have long plagued American agriculture in general, meat and poultry production and processing in particular.

the Smithfield plant in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. He had contracted to sell his finished hogs for 38 cents a pound, but when he delivered his hogs he was docked 20 cents a pound because they exceeded the weight specified in his contract. He had been forced to hold them past their prime weight because the COVID outbreak had limited the number of hogs Smithfield was slaughtering. By the time he called me, the plant was shuttered, and the Smithfield buyer blamed "the government" for its closure. He was desperate and didn't know what to do. The farmer hoped I might know someone in USDA who could do something to open up the plant or help him get a better price for his hogs somewhere else. Smithfield's Sioux Falls plant has since reopened. But from across Canada and the United States come reports of cattle backed up in feedyards, of farmers euthanizing hogs and chickens, dumping milk, and plowing under market-ready fruits and vegetables that had been destined for schools and restaurants.

COVID-19 has created a crisis in the North American meat and poultry industry, as more and more meat and poultry workers sicken and die. Farmers and ranchers are being paid less for their animals—if they can sell them at all--while shoppers face limited meat supplies and rising prices. The Covid crisis has laid bare the deep underlying structural problems that have long plagued American agriculture in general, meat and poultry production and processing in particular. Four giant multinational corporations—two of them (Smithfield and JBS) foreign owned—account for 85 percent of beef processed in the United States, 63 percent of pork and over half of poultry. Open and competitive markets for chickens and hogs are no more, as farmers are trapped in contracts that bind them to one company and dictate how they run their operations. The cash market for cattle is all but gone, too. Today the packers own more and more of the cattle they slaughter, and they control much of the rest through "captive supply."

Only about 50 plants slaughter and process 98 percent of all U.S. beef; three plants process 15 percent of America's pork. No wonder the closure of a score of meat and poultry plants disrupts the meat supply chain, stampedes consumers, and rattles the nerves of government officials. But as the saying goes: A crisis is a terrible thing to waste.

Consumer, environmental, and family farm advocacy groups have long sought to reform our food system. COVID-19 has alerted the general public to problems endemic to the industrial food system, and reformers are seizing this time to push for long overdue changes. Some politicians seem ready to listen. Republican senators have asked the Department of Justice to investigate possible market manipulation by beef packers, who have enjoyed record profits from soaring wholesale prices and plunging cattle futures. Also in the Senate, a Democrat and a Republican joined to call on federal antitrust enforcers to investigate meat and poultry concentration in response to numerous plant closings.

The coronavirus pandemic has exposed the dark underbelly of the meat and poultry industry: market concentration and monopolistic practices; low wages and unsafe working conditions for processing plant workers; exploitative contracts that keep farmers and ranchers from receiving a fair price for the animals they raise. But, will the public and our elected representatives demand a more sustainable and humane food system going forward? Or, will they avert their eyes when the pandemic subsides, when the slaughterhouse is once more concealed from their gaze and there is plenty of cheap meat at the grocery?

———————

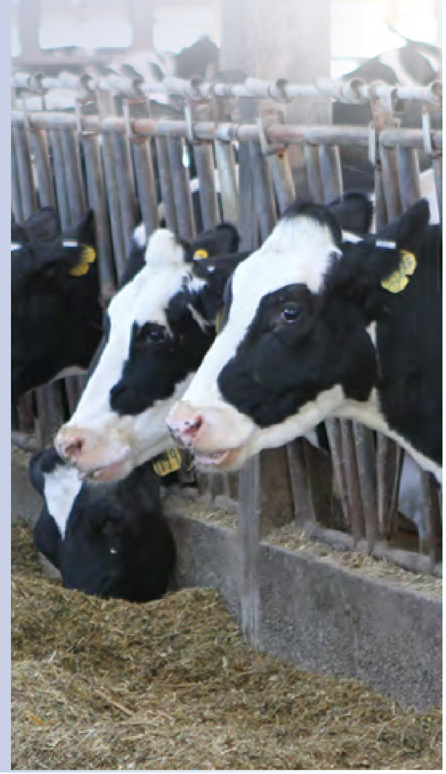
*Portions of this column are taken from my article "Making Meat in the Time of COVID-19," which will appear in the September issue of *Anthropology Now.*

DAIRY DRAMA:
Dean Foods doesn't pay, DFA Continues Consolidation, Producers Push Back

By Ben Gotschall

In the last OCM newsletter, I outlined some of the issues surrounding the acquisition of Dean Foods by Dairy Farmers of America (DFA). That merger was approved by the Department of Justice and officially went into effect on May 1, 2020 when DFA completed its purchase of a majority of Dean's assets and properties. While the

Please see **GOTSCHALL** on page 4



two companies have worked through the transition, the Covid-19 pandemic continued to disrupt the food supply chain, with the dairy industry hit hard, and dairy farmers hit even harder. Several events have underscored these effects, and it remains to be seen if dairy farmers will be able to recover from the disruption, not only of the pandemic, but also of this mega-merger that further consolidated the dairy industry.

DFA acquisition challenged

On May 19, 2020, the grocery chain Food Lion along with the Maryland and Virginia Milk Producers Cooperative Association filed an antitrust lawsuit in U.S. District Court in North Carolina against DFA, challenging DFA's $433 million acquisition of Dean's assets. The complaint alleges that DFA's further consolidation of power will force independent producers and cooperatives to become part of DFA or go out of business. The suit focuses on competition in the Carolina's, where DFA's only real competition are the plaintiffs of the lawsuit.

The plaintiffs argue many of the same points OCM has brought up in regards to this issue, namely that independent dairy producers will be forced out of business, consumer choice will be reduced, and prices will be determined by DFA, for the benefit of DFA and at the expense of producers and consumers. The lawsuit, which calls DFA the "Standard Oil of the modern dairy industry," is not the first to be filed against the country's largest dairy handler, and is not the last.

Dean delays farmer payments

Meanwhile, out in farm country, many former Dean producers awaited the arrival of April milk checks that never came. In May, Dean Foods failed to pay farmers by the required deadline in three regional Federal Milk Marketing Orders: Appalachian, Florida, and the Southeast. At that same time, farmers in Pennsylvania were reporting that they had not been paid by Dean for the month of April, either.

The non-payment could not have come at a worse time for dairy producers, who were (and still are) reeling from the effects of the Covid-19 supply chain disruptions, including dumping milk and receiving deep price reductions. As of early June, it is still unknown whether the farmers in those three regions have been paid. On June 10, the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board announced that it would pursue a claim about the company's milk dealer bond to ensure farmers in that region would get paid. Although independent dairy producers in Pennsylvania had been paid by Dean for April, the company still hadn't paid several cooperatives with members in Pennsylvania.

DFA charges farmers for Covid-19

Even DFA farmers receiving payments throughout the time of the pandemic saw negative effects, having a Covid-19 surcharge deducted from their checks. One Missouri farmer had more than $2000 withheld from his payment, with the receipt from DFA identifying the deduction as "Covid-19 cost." The same farmer reported that $1.14 per hundredweight had also been deducted from his pay price to reflect the cost of dumping milk.

DFA released a statement on the surcharges, stating that:

> *"To provide transparency and track expenses related to COVID-19, we added a line item to April milk checks denoting the specific milk marketing costs associated with the pandemic. This line item is not an additional expense for members, rather it is an accounting of milk marketing costs directly related to the coronavirus. By tracking these costs, we have been able to provide policymakers with data on the actual financial impact of COVID-19 for our dairy farmers. We encourage our members and all dairy farmers to apply for the assistance offered under CFAP, when applications open on May 26."*

It is unclear whether Rick Smith, the president and CEO of DFA, took a Covid-19 pay cut, since his salary is kept a secret, but he works in a $30 million office building and his predecessor, Gary Hanman, made $31.6 million in 7 years, including bonuses. Needless to say, DFA executives are doing quite well, regardless of how many of DFA's producer owners are going out of business. However, an upcoming jury trial in the near future may put some of those same executives on the witness stand to defend their business practices.

American Dairy Farmers vs. Dairy Farmers of America

OCM has reported before that in 2016, DFA paid $50 million to dairy farmers to settle a class-action lawsuit that alleged DFA and its marketing arm, Dairy Marketing Services LLC, had conspired to monopsonize the fluid milk market in the Northeast. A significant outcome of that settlement was that a group of more than 125 farmers in the Northeast opted out of that settlement, instead working together to bring a separate lawsuit against DFA.

The lawsuit, filed in Vermont U.S. District Court, alleges that DFA and other cooperatives agreed not to compete for each other's farmer-members, conspired to share payment information in order to discourage competition and depress prices, and maintained those low prices market-wide by entering into supply agreements with Dean Foods and other dairy processors.

In September of 2019, U.S. District Judge Christina Reiss issued a 58-page ruling that allowed the case to move forward. The judge ruled that the farmers had provided "admissible evidence from which a rational jury could conclude that DFA management favored growth of its commercial operations and empire building over the interests of its farmer-members."

If the jury sides with farmers, according to Leah Douglas of FERN News, "there could be wide-ranging implications for the dairy sector and other agricultural cooperatives. Currently, agricultural cooperatives enjoy an exemption from some antitrust scrutiny under the Capper-Volstead Act, a law dating back to when cooperatives were meant to shore up farmers in the market against pressure from powerful middlemen. The farmers in this case would have DFA's behavior ruled beyond the scope of the antitrust immunity granted by Capper-Volstead. They would also have DFA's supply agreements terminated."

The case is slated for trial on July 1, 2020, and has not been postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. OCM will be monitoring the progress of the trial, and will provide as much information about the process and outcomes as they develop.

Legislative
UPDATE
By Ben Gotschall

The Covid-19 outbreak has exposed the weakness of a highly consolidated food system. Food shortages, price spikes, processing bottlenecks, and the destruction of animals and crops with no markets have left farmers and ranchers struggling, consumers frustrated, the media aroused, and lawmakers scratching their heads. As a result, several new bills have been proposed in Congress to address some of the issues faced by farmers, ranchers and consumers. Some are resurrections of past proposals, and some are new language with a pandemic-era purpose. OCM will continue to monitor this legislation, engage stakeholders, and educate our members and followers as these opportunities develop.

Processing Revival and Intrastate Meat Exemption (PRIME) Act (H.R. 2859./S.1620) – Rep. Massie (R-WV)

This bill would remove the federal ban on intrastate sale of meat from custom-exempt processing plants and allow products processed in a custom-exempt plant to be sold within the borders of the state in which it was processed to be sold directly to consumers or to restaurants and retailers, without the need for federal or state inspection. The bill does not address liability issues or provide for liability reform, and it is unclear if producers would be able to obtain the liability insurance required to sell those products to most grocers, restaurants, distributors, and farmers markets.

New Markets for State Inspection Meat and Poultry Act (S.2814) - Senator Rounds (R-SD)

Currently, 23 states to not have inspection programs "at least equal to" federal meat and poultry inspection programs, and only 6 states have establishments participating in the Cooperative Interstate Shipment (CIS) program. This bill would allow meat and poultry products inspected by Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) approved state Meat and Poultry Inspection (MPI) programs to be sold across state lines. This bill would still allow for CIS to operate, although it is unsure how many plants would continue to participate within states that currently have CIS. This bill would essentially allow states and plants to skip over the complicated CIS program and be able to sell products across state lines. A companion bill to the New Markets bill, the **Expanding Markets for State-Inspected Meat Processors Act of 2020 (H.R. 7162)** was introduced by Wyoming Congresswoman Liz Chenney (R-WY) on June 12.

Inspector Overtime Relief for Small Plants (S.3797/ H.R.6977) - Senator Moran (R-KS)

Currently, USDA funds mandatory inspections in federally inspected plants. If an inspector works more than 40 hours in a week, USDA assesses overtime fees of $80/hour that the plants are required to pay. For smaller plants with lower output volume, this cost is a tremendous burden and inhibits expansion. This bill would allocate funds to USDA, who would allocate them to partially cover the inspector overtime fee. This is a temporary measure and would expire after 18 months.

Food Supply Chain Support (S.3840) - Sen. Stabenow (D-MI)

This bill seeks to help food banks and nonprofits in expanding their services to meet increased need by supplying grants for infrastructure upgrades. It would also establish a donation reimbursement program aimed at increasing donations to food banks and decreasing food waste through funding to states and tribes to purchase surplus food. In order to improve food safety in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the bill also proposes to cover costs associated with upgrades and modifications made by food producers, processors, and handlers.

How We Got Here … The food security crisis in America

And how do we return to a safe and resilient food system?

By **Mike Callicrate**

Old friends in the battle for fair markets - Herman Schumacher, Kathleen Kelley and Mike Callicrate

The year was 1981. It was the year we lost the cattle market Clark Willingham, an accountant and an attorney, not ever a cattleman but certainly a wine and dine consumer who liked the limelight, (Beef, 2001) filed a lawsuit to end the Packer Consent Decree of 1920. End it, he did. The win in that case for Hitch feeders was like a droplet of water hitting sulfuric acid destroying the market and the competition for cattle that kept the small town packing houses, the farmer/feeders, and the mom and pop grocery stores in business. The food supply for Americans was plentiful, top quality, and considered the safest in the world. Consumers knew their product. They knew Prime, Choice, and Select. They knew that aged beef was important to quality and flavor and when they asked a question of the grocery store butcher, the one who cut the carcass, they got an answer they could trust.

"The food supply for Americans was plentiful, top quality, and considered the safest in the world."

What this litigation did to the consumer, and its domino effect, is illustrated by the numbers. According to a report by USDA *Consolidation in the U.S. Meatpacking Industry*, "Four-firm concentration in cattle slaughter remained stable from 1963 through 1977, then rose from 25 percent in 1977 to 71 percent in 1992 …The change in cattle slaughter concentration is unique: no other product class shows as dramatic an increase in any 15-year period" (USDA, 1996).

The decade of the 70's just before the litigation was one of the best in American agriculture and the only time in history where the average return to the American farmer exceeded wages and salaries compared to other segments of the economy (PBS).

Willingham's lawsuit is iconic of the end of that era. The end of competition. The end of fair markets. And the loss of dignity and dreams for small-town boys and girls and the farms and ranches surrounding them. And the end of a safe, secure, and affordable food supply. It denied the consumer from having a choice or any kind of say in the market. A lot of organizations gave lip service to "what the consumer wants" but ultimately, to the packers, what the consumer wanted was irrelevant and somewhat of an annoyance to their bottom line.

***The year was 1981.
It was the year we lost the cattle market***

"This new era of agriculture was about efficiency and economies of scale."

This new era of agriculture was about efficiency and economies of scale. It was about "Get big or get out!" Secretary of Agriculture, Earl Butz said so. (Butz) Efficiency and size took over, with no regard for quality, safety, or food security. By the late 1970s, IBP was the world's largest meatpacker. It had done so by putting the smaller meatpacker out of business and eliminating the "inefficient" grocery store butcher by offering so-called efficient, boxed beef. Chain grocery stores jumped at the new boxed beef, allowing them to eliminate well-paid skilled butchers and offer a cheaper product. They too began to consolidate.

The *Wall Street Journal,* November 1975, ran a front-page story, noting that IBP was larger than all five of its nearest competitors put together, and denouncing the company as a magnet for "criminals, gangland figures, civil wrongdoers ... and people engaged in vicious beatings, shootings, and firebombings." (IBP, Inc) But who cared? Boxed beef was efficient and cheaper. (Vicious Circles)

"The death of the Packer Consent Decree was a bright flashing green light to plunder and pillage one of our nation's most important industries."

In 1981 Occidental Petroleum Corporation, an oil company owned by Angus breeder hobbyist, Armand Hammer, purchased IBP with the intent to expand the boxed beef market into the Soviet Union and to create a consolidated meatpacking operation there, based upon IBP's growth model in the U.S (NY Times, 1981). The death of the Packer Consent Decree was a bright flashing green light to plunder and pillage one of our nation's most important industries.

In 1998 IBP developed an amazing tool to depress prices paid for live cattle, their biggest input cost. It was called the "Formula," a new form of captive supply. Mike Callicrate termed this new formula the "nuclear warhead of captive supplies." Captive supplies were the inventories of cattle the meatpacker controlled, either through ownership, contract, or in some other way, without having to compete. Callicrate said, "IBP didn't invest a single penny or build a single fence, they didn't have to feed an animal or worry if an animal got sick or died, yet they could gain complete control of an inventory of cattle just by giving preference to a few large cattle feeders who were having difficulty selling their cattle in a market that was becoming less accessible by the

Please see **CALLICRATE** on page 8

CALLICRATE (continued from page 7)

day. If the big packers were robbing the bank, it was the big corporate cattle feeders who were driving the getaway car! It was brilliant! IBP got all the cattle they needed when they wanted them. The big packers were now fully managing the market rather than competing in it – and posting record profits." IBP asserted its role as price leader and the other big packers were following. (IBP history)

"Today around half of our ranchers are out of business and over 80,000 cattle feeders are gone."

As cattlemen, we lived the economic collapse caused by formula cattle. Today around half of our ranchers are out of business and over 80,000 cattle feeders are gone. The weakened cash seller became a tool of the packer to depress prices to all cattle producers, including the formula sellers that received preferential prices. We know the formula for its negative effect on prices overall, and its ability to control the flow of cattle into the packing houses, but we often don't think about the impact on the entire food supply.

Here is what it did to the consumer: After IBP captured significant supplies, they weren't totally out of the cash market–they were in it only long enough to drive prices in the direction they wanted. IBP became the price leader with the other big packers following. Their purchase volumes made it difficult for the smaller and regional packers to access important supplies of fat cattle, and their predatory pricing blocked smaller independents from selling to wholesale accounts. Feedyards also began to consolidate. Formula feedyards, receiving preferential pricing, had an unfair advantage over the smaller farmer feeder, who held on as long as he could by value-adding his own feed through his cattle. These smaller feeders saw their Rolodex shrink from twenty buyers down to two and maybe only one. Feedlots, instead of being smaller, environmentally conscious entities that provided valuable soil building manure fertilizer for grain and feed fields, became bigger, more concentrated, highly polluting entities serving the needs of the giant packing companies, and away from the more consumer and labor-friendly local and regional packing houses. (Duke, 2015) And pigs were moved off the land and into factories.

Independent grocers were also having trouble accessing beef carcasses, finding anything except boxed pork and factory produced chickens. They had no choice but to also turn to preprocessed proteins.

Understand this about market consolidation: It is why today, giant plants of 4,000 meat butchers and meat cutters standing shoulder to shoulder processing up to 400 head of cattle per hour, threaten our food safety and security. It is why chicken integrator, John Tyson, the now owner of a further consolidated beef packer, IBP, Inc., can arrogantly, blithely declare that the food chain is "broken" and call for help from the president to get the "chain moving again." He should know it is broken. His company broke it and he is ready and happy to profit from the breaking. (Bloomberg News)

Getting the existing fragile food chain moving again will not fix it. It will only perpetuate the harm. If you are panicking right now because you can't sell your cattle, if you're panicking right now because the grocery store shelves are empty, the biggest mistake you could make is to endorse and support our existing supply chain. To do so will keep cattle prices low, meat prices high and main streets of America empty.

"Everyone along the supply chain is hurting except the big meatpackers."

The efficiency era is summed up this way: The nation's largest meatpacker has bottlenecked beef and other meat, forced men and women back to work through a presidential executive order, and is charging the highest box beef prices ever to consumers, who cannot afford it, while at the same time–paying depression level prices for cattle. Everyone along the supply chain is hurting except the big meatpackers.

And nobody is stopping them.

Why should men and women risk their lives to grind $8 a pound hamburger that only a handful of consumers can afford to buy? Why should cattle producers be paid far less than their costs for the quality cattle they produce? And why should the American consumer, stressed and out of work pay $8 for a pound of hamburger?

This is going to be a white-knuckle ride.

Let's make some points clear: Efficiency, as a mantra of business development, must be recognized for its clear, dangerous failure. COVID-19 is not to blame. (NY Times)

The model of efficiency did this:

1. **Destroyed** small businesses like independent grocery stores and **destroyed** family farming and ranching as evidenced by our boarded-up storefronts in rural America;
2. **Destroyed** food safety as evidenced by meat recalls and CDC food contamination reports;
3. **Destroyed** food security as evidenced by recent empty grocery store shelves and obscene meat prices;
4. **Destroyed** jobs, lots of them, as evidenced by the current unemployment rate yet to be fully disclosed;
5. **Destroyed** access to information about the food system, as evidenced by limited labeling on food;
6. **Destroyed** the consumer connection to the producer by providing false and misleading information on the products they buy;
7. **Destroyed** our independence by making too many believe that efficiency was security–the greatest lie of all. This economic efficiency has drained the wealth of our nation into the pockets of a few.

1996 was a year we tried to hit the reset button and tried to reverse the destructive efficiency model and get back to fair and competitive markets. Herman Schumacher was Vice-Chair of the Commission on Market Concentration in Agriculture (USDA Advisory Group), working hard in the minority on a commission stacked in favor of the agribusiness giants, to get government officials to act. Mike Callicrate was filing litigation against IBP, Inc. fighting anti-competitive practices like captive supply, and Kathleen Sullivan Kelley (A Time to Act) had just published a report on Market Concentration in the Beef Industry. That year, Kelley and Callicrate both spoke to the South Dakota Governor's Beef Conference on a panel with IBP CEO and chairman, Robert Peterson. Herman Schumacher was in the audience.

But January of 1996, was also the year the Beef Industry Council of the Meat Board and the National Cattlemen's Association were merged into one unified organization purporting to represent all segments of the beef industry (NCBA, 2020). Clark Willingham, the accountant and attorney, the man who enjoyed the limelight of his litigation victory against the Packer Consent Decree, was the president-elect of the National Cattlemen's Association and soon to be president of the NCBA.

"With hard-core committed, uncompromising cattlemen and women, R-CALF led the way to the passage of mandatory country of origin labeling ..."

1998 was the year we slammed our fist down on the reset button. It was the year Herman Schumacher, Kathleen Kelley, and Leo McDonnell, Jr. (who later left the group) signed the 501-C6 organization papers to create R-CALF USA. (R-CALF USA) While Callicrate was never on the board of directors, his organizational skills became crucial to building the organization as an organization of independent cattle producers who were hell-bent on fixing the market. There were others too who risked their livelihoods to create an organization that could be the bullhorn for independent producers. Pat Goggins, Johnny Smith, Stayton Weldon, Buddy Blackwell, Margene Euguren, Forney Longenecker, James McKuen, Max Thornsberry, and so many others were critical to the credibility of the fledgling group. With hard-core committed, uncompromising cattlemen and women, R-CALF led the way to the passage of mandatory country of origin labeling less than four years later. Certainly a major victory for the producer and the consumer. A short time later the organization, again, on behalf of the consumer, led the charge against allowing any cattle into the country from a BSE infected country. When the border from Canada closed, another great lie of the meatpackers was exposed: live prices in the US soared to our highest levels ever–and there was no export market. The lie that an export market was essential to shore up domestic prices was shattered. R-CALF USA has muscled in other major achievements over the years.

2020 must be the year for the reboot of our entire food chain, the point when we begin to build a safe, secure, and vibrant food chain that will never again hang producers and consumers. In partnership is our greatest strength. The recent petition calling for mandatory country of origin labeling shows over 340,000 signatures, and it clearly demonstrates how critical the partnership between producer and consumer has become.

R-CALF USA won and won big when the consumer was our partner. It is past time to build and entrench that partner-hip for the good of the whole.

The three of us are reaching out to you. We have dedicated our lives to changing this failed system. We need you to help us change it–to help us fix the problem.

We have a three-point plan:

1. The big meatpacking and big retail food industry must be broken up. Settlement must not be an option. Allowing any percentage of market control will only delay the inevitable collapse of an already broken system. The 1920 Packer Consent Decree is our initial road map (Consent Decree). The Federal Trade Commission was the oversight agency. The five biggest meatpackers held a 75% share of the beef market, in 1920. They were reduced to competitive levels of 25% in the 50s, 60s, and early 70s. We can and must do it again. Our sovereignty, our freedom, our security, and our food safety depend upon it.
2. Create a judicial branch of government that is not controlled by Wall Street and global corporations, but is solely responsible for antitrust law enforcement that protects both consumers and producers from abusive power– the people who buy and the people who produce. The economy should serve the people, rather than the people serving the economy or the corporation. No person should be forced to live in poverty, get sick or die, to make John Tyson rich. (Bloomberg, 2020)
3. Invest stimulus funds into the rebuilding of our broken rural economies, building local/regional food systems, including farm to plate processing and distribution, renewing our rural wealth-creating communities and restoring abundant supplies of high quality, healthy food to people everywhere.

Let us all rally together to fix the problem. Let us join together and drop the "us versus them" mentality that has kept us apart and away from substantive solutions.

Let's fix the problem!

https://nobull.mikecallicrate.com/2020/05/10/how-we-got-here-the-food-security-crisis-in-america/

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FIRST SESSION – One Size fits all Food Inspection

Thursday, June 25 - 7:00 PM (CT)
Email your Questions in Advance to:
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MAKING A DIFFERENCE?

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Individual Membership

___ $50 Member: Receives bimonthly newsletter, regular conference calls with national anti-monopoly leaders, and weekly news roundup
___ $125 Voting Member: Same benefits as $50 level, plus voting rights
___ $500 Sustaining Member: Same benefits as $125 level, and one-on-one strategy and progress updates
___ Other Donation: Amount $_______

Associate Organization Membership

___ $200: Organization receives bimonthly newsletter, regular conference calls with national anti-monopoly leaders, and weekly news roundup
___ $500: Same benefits as $200 level, plus OCM staff availability and 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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