

# ocm

Organization for  
Competitive Markets



## MEMBER NEWSLETTER

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



FROM THE  
**PRESIDENT**  
Vaughn Meyer

## Staying the Course

**A**s we close out 2020, I would like to review what an event filled year this has been for both America and OCM. We have witnessed extremes socially, politically and on the immunology front relating to the recent pandemic of COVID 19. Being an election year, political preferences have consumed us individually and crept into nearly all institutions and organizations!

However I am proud to say OCM has 'Stayed the Course' focusing on our original mission to establish fair and competitive markets for agricultural products and protect those markets from abuse of power. OCM has refused to get caught up in the degrading political infighting of our nation and has chosen the high road of fighting for the preservation of farm and ranch family livelihoods.

OCM is well guided under the new leadership of our new Executive Director, Mike Eby from Gordonville, Pennsylvania. In addition OCM is fortunate to have several new directors dedicated to fighting for fair markets. OCM welcomes new

directors: Joaquin Contente, Hanford CA., Marty Irby, Washington, D.C., Mike Schultz, Brewster, KS., Mike Weaver, Fort Seybert, WV. and Craig Vejraska, Omak, WA. The geographic and livelihood diversity of OCM directors facilitates carrying our missions nationwide. OCM directors are engaged in the broad range of agriculture production with active involvement in the issues from coast to coast. Please see accompanying Directors and Executive Director resume' articles.

OCM has had a very busy summer / fall season with the production of 2 face book live videos centered around federal meat processing, One Size Fits All by Dr. James Dillon and Made in America by Bill Bullard. I am very proud of our Directors and Executive Director, who took time off to attend Cattlemen meetings at Okeechobee and Bartow Florida. These invitational meetings were hosted by Florida cattlemen seeking options for fixing the continued broken market place. I especially thank founding member, director and Vice President Fred Stokes and Executive Director Mike Eby for scheduling and conducting

these Florida meetings. Also thanks to

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*Together we can bring about a new Agricultural resurgence, stifling multi-national corporate abuse and returning profits to American farm families.*

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Photo by Ray Hennessy on Unsplash





Organization for  
Competitive Markets

## *Board Members*

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**VAUGHN MEYER**  
REVA, SD

VICE PRESIDENT  
**FRED STOKES**  
PORTERVILLE, MS

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**JONATHAN BUTTRAM**  
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HANFORD, CA

**MARTY IRBY**  
WASHINGTON, DC

**MIKE SCHULTZ**  
BREWSTER, KS

**CRAIG VEJRASKA**  
OMAK, WA

**MIKE WEAVER**  
FORT SEYBERT, WV

**DAVID WRIGHT**  
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**MEYER** (continued from page 1)

all directors for their support and presentations.

OCM has made great strides this fall advocating on many issues of market injustices. Due to member dedication we have doubled OCM membership since mid-summer and I would like to challenge all members to achieving that goal of doubling membership once again prior to our summer convention.

I extend thanks and my deepest gratification to our Office Manager, Pat Craycraft, for her professionalism in daily management and communications of OCM. Thanks Pat for insuring our OCM office runs efficiently and proactively.

As I write this there are many uncertainties abound with an indecisive election and leadership of our country along with the lingering COVID pandemic. On the positive side, these

unknowns have brought attention to agricultural production and processing. We have witnessed record low farm to retail spreads and record high consumer prices bringing producer/ consumer relationships closer than any period since the 1921 Packers and Stockyards Act. I believe this recognition of American vulnerability of our food safety and availability is rapidly becoming the catalyst for achieving OCM goals. Consumer food choices have regained priority within the household and together we have a great opportunity to renew production agriculture. Together we can bring about a new Agricultural resurgence, stifling multi-national corporate abuse and returning profits to American farm families.

Thanks for all your support,

Vaughn Meyer  
OCM President





# OCM Board meets with Polk County Florida Cattlemen, October 27-29, 2020



From Left to Right: **Joaquin Contente**, OCM Director; **Mike Schultz**, OCM Director; **Vaughn Meyer**, OCM President; **Fred Stokes**, OCM VP; **Tom Dierks**, OCM Secretary; **Mike Weaver**, OCM Director; **Dave Wright**, OCM Director; and **Marty Irby**, OCM Director; **Jonathan Buttram**, OCM Treasurer; and **Mike Eby**, Executive Director.

## Organization for Competitive Markets Addresses disparaging comments from NCBA leadership

LINCOLN, NE – Today the Organization for Competitive Markets issued the following statement from Fred Stokes, VP and founder of OCM, after a series of cattlemen's meetings held in Florida in an attempt to bring industry stakeholders together for the betterment of the industry.



Fred Stokes

This statement follows a campaign of [misinformation](#) by NCBA president Marty Smith and CEO Colin Woodall who attacked OCM and its board members. [NCBA President's interview here.](#)

"Colin Woodall, speaking on behalf of NCBA has resorted to absurd and reckless rhetoric in his attempt to impute guilt-by-association to OCM; claiming it is supported by and in partnership with HSUS. He also makes the charge that OCM is not an advocate for cattlemen and makes the outrageous and likely libelist charge that OCM is a domestic terrorist organization.

Let me address these two matters separately, starting with the terrorist charge. I am generally credited with being the primary founder of OCM. I am a retired Army Military Intelligence Officer who held the nation's very highest security clearance. I served two tours of duty in Vietnam and returned without a scratch. But I received

seven air medals and two awards of the bronze star medal. Two other current board members were previously military officers. OCM has a twenty-two-year record of conduct in the best traditions of our beloved country.

Every member of the Board of Directors over the past twenty-two years of the organization's existence has been an honorable, law-abiding and patriotic citizen of this country. OCM has tenaciously adhered to its mission of making agricultural markets open, transparent, competitive and fair so that independent family agriculture and rural America might prosper. This is hardly the profile of a terrorist organization.

OCM's shining a bright light on NCBA

misdeeds and causing them to become terrified does not make OCM a terrorist organization.

The real terror comes from the caliphate of NCBA, who continues to use cattlemen's own hard-earned tax dollars to put them out of business and to create more consolidation among the four big packers.

As to OCM's relationship with HSUS, it has been limited to "in kind" legal support of OCM's actions delving into NCBA's suspect handling of beef checkoff funds. This support was voluntarily provided with **NO STRINGS ATTACHED**. OCM is neither funded by or in partnership with HSUS.

In 2010 Clifton Gunderson

Accounting firm conducted an independent audit of NCBA's expenditures of checkoff funds at the behest of Tom Jones, President of the Cattlemen's Beef Board. After examination of 1 % of the transactions for a period of two years and five months (9 days), gross "mispending" was found. Unauthorized spousal overseas travel, a \$150,000 loan to NCBA's Executive Director to buy a house and a \$2,000,000 advance to NCBA for unspecified future work were among the many misappropriations found. The finding smacked of the beef checkoff fund being used as an NCBA slush fund. As a result of [the audit](#), NCBA was required to refund to the CBB, more than \$300,000. This was seen by many of us as but the tip of the iceberg. The audit sent shockwaves throughout the industry. Both the CBB President and Executive came under fierce hostility for their audacity in authorizing the embarrassing outside audit. Both resigned!

In February of 2011, a USDA OIG Audit of the Beef Checkoff Program was commenced at the [request of OCM](#) and other allied organizations. A number of OCM members met with the OIG Audit Team at the outset and shared its concerns regarding abuse of these funds. OCM furnished significant information to the OIG investigators during the almost year-long investigation. In almost all cases the investigation team acknowledged finding the information to be factual and useful. I personally had periodic communications with team leader, Mr. Don Pfeil. This relationship was cordial, but ethical and proper. It was clear from these conversations that investigators were focused on the propriety of financial transactions and related aspects, not the supervision of the program by USDA AMS. Mr. Pfeil stated to me, "I am going to follow the money."

A conversation with Mr. Pfeil in December of 2011 revealed that his team had finished their work and that

their findings were now in the hands of the "report writers". Pfeil stated that he expected a report to be publicly released by March of 2012.

There were rumors and speculation as to what the report would reveal. Many thought the more in-depth examination (OIG Audit) would indeed prove the Clifton Gunderson findings to be but a smattering of the irregularities and provide a strong indictment of NCBA. Others took a more cynical view; that NCBA was well connected and thus the audit would be a sham. This view was supported by a conversation overheard at the February 2012 joint CBB/NCBA meeting at the Opryland Hotel in Nashville. A Pulitzer Prize winning reporter from a major newspaper reported that he overheard a USDA AMS representative tell NCBA officials that he (AMS rep.) had seen the draft OIG report which contained some "bad stuff". He continued; "but don't worry I fixed it."

The "first" final OIG Report was released in March of 2013, fifteen months after the conclusion of the investigation. The report writing process had generated thousands of pages of drafts, as the basis for the scant seventeen-page report that effectively exonerated NCBA. Most of us in OCM and in other allied organizations, viewed the report as a whitewash and cover-up.

In the first place, the report did not "follow the money" but rather focused on USDA AMS's oversight of the program. Because of the uproar, or for some other unknown reason, this first report was withdrawn to be reworked and re-released in late [January 2014](#); some three years after the audit began. There were few changes, but the outright vindication of NCBA was removed.

Not only does NCBA have disproportionate influence over who is awarded Checkoff contracts, it also has tremendous influence over the success or failure of entities that are awarded contracts. Anecdotal evidence

Based on NCBA's reporting of membership numbers, they have only one cattleman in thirty-three as members. **So, it appears that cattlemen have been compelled to be the principal funder for an organization that has a mere 3% of total cattle producers as members. Clearly, NCBA has used the approximately \$1.2 billion it has received since 1996 to become the spokesman for the entire industry.**

strongly suggests that NCBA and its affiliated state organizations exerted undue influence to cause non-NCBA contractors to fail. For example, the National Livestock Producers Association previously was awarded the contract to implement the Checkoff's Beef Mobile program, a program that necessitated the cooperation of State Beef Councils for its success. However, based on our best available information, the State Beef Councils (controlled by NCBA) refused to cooperate with this non-NCBA affiliated organization, thus ensuring the failure of the program and exclusion of the National Livestock Producers Association from the Beef Mobile program contract.

The Checkoff Program's clear and unambiguous language prohibits using any Checkoff funds, in any manner, for the purpose of influencing governmental action or policy, with the single exception of recommending amendments to the Order. However, NCBA routinely charges one-half of its officers' travel expenses to the Checkoff. According to the OIG Audit Report itself, 83% of NCBA's total revenue comes from the Beef Checkoff. These funds pay a major portion of salaries and overhead and are essentially the organization's lifeblood.

The [NCBA IRS Form 990](#) for 2017 reflects that the Executive Director position that Mr. Woodall currently holds pays \$574,000 per year in total compensation. Numerous other NCBA officials receive salaries of more than \$200,000.

In August of 2012, The Polsinelli Law Firm of Kansas City filed a suit on behalf of OCM against NCBA and USDA based on the conflict of interest constituted by NCBA's undue influence in the contract awarding process. Immediately, intense pressure came from the Big Ag community, causing Polsinelli to withdraw from the suit.

In May of 2014, the President of HSUS offered legal assistance to support litigation against USDA OIG to compel compliance with a previous and long-ignored OCM Freedom of Information Request. This support was furnished with no strings attached. OCM appropriately expressed its gratitude.

In 2018 NCBA became an Intervenor in OCM'S FOIA suit after learning that 10,000 pages of unredacted financial records and ledgers were deemed relevant and would potentially be released to us. As a pretext for opposing the release, NCBA made the absurd claim that OCM competed with NCBA in the Contract Bidding process and that this "Privileged and Confidential" information would cause them competitive harm.

NCBA, USDA AMS and USDA OIG have all gone to extraordinary lengths to stall and resist release of the records that would show how beef checkoff funds were expended. ***Hard-pressed beef cattle producers are compelled to provide the \$80,000,000 each year to fund the beef checkoff program; they are entitled to know how their money is being spent!*** The protracted and aggressive resistance to the release of records raises an obvious question; ***what are they trying to hide?***

The Beef Promotion and Research Act of 1985 has been a dismal failure in terms of promoting the interests of the U. S. cattle producers who fund the program. Since the program began, per capita consumption of beef has diminished with a resultant loss of market share and many producers have been driven out of business. Those remaining have struggled to remain viable. In terms of promoting the interests of U. S. checkoff-paying cattlemen, it is reasonable to say that the almost \$3 billion that has been spent over the past thirty-five years has been wasted.

NCBA has a long record of working against the interests of cattle producers. They were a plaintiff in litigation

to block implementation of COOL (Country of Origin Labeling); worked against producers seeking mandatory price reporting; against cattle producers that opposed the National Animal Identification System (NAIS); against cattle producers that supported captive supply reform in a major class-action lawsuit; against cattle producers that tried to prevent the premature reintroduction of imported cattle from a disease-affected country; against cattle producers that attempted to ban packer ownership of livestock in both the 2002 and 2008 Farm Bills; and were key in effectively opposing the proposed Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) rules that clarifies and defines how GIPSA will administer and enforce the Packers and Stockyards Act.

Based on NCBA's reporting of membership numbers, they have only one cattleman in thirty-three as members. ***So, it appears that cattlemen have been compelled to be the principal funder for an organization that has a mere 3% of total cattle producers as members. Clearly, NCBA has used the approximately \$1.2 billion it has received since 1996 to become the spokesman for the entire industry.***

***It is my opinion that as long as NCBA is the voice of the industry and the spokesman for producers, the future of independent ranching in this country is very bleak.***

Written by: Fred Stokes  
November 12, 2020





# OCM attends RCALF Meeting, August 19–21, 2020 – Deadwood, SD



From Left to right: **Mike Eby**, OCM Executive Director; **Dustin Kittle**, Humble Law; **Vaughn Meyer**-OCM President; **Dave Wright**, OCM Director; **Craig Vejraska**, OCM Director; **Mike Schultz**, OCM Director; and **Jonathan Buttram**, OCM Treasurer.

RCALF USA held its Annual Conference on August 19th- 21st in Deadwood S.D. at The Lodge Resort. OCM was well represented with Directors Johnathan Buttram and wife Connie, Mike Eby, Mike Schultz and wife Dawn, David Wright, Craig Vejraska and wife Mary Kay and Vaughn Meyer and wife Lois. Also representing OCM were Legal Counsel Dustin Kittle and Ashley Posey.

Day 1, Aug. 19th was Range Allotment Owners Property Rights Day with presenter Dr. Angus McIntosh, Executive Director Range Allotment Owners Association. This was a full day workshop presentation informing producers of their property rights on Federal lands. OCM director Craig Vejraska attended representing Washington, Oregon, and Idaho.

Opening speaker on day 2, Aug 20th, was Tracy Hunt, Wyoming Rancher and Attorney, speaking on “The Dangers of the Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef”.

Tracy presented a very informative and alarming warning on the dangers of global-vertical integration of the beef industry.

Other speakers included Dr. Dianna Moss, American Antitrust Institute, with an Update on Public and Private Antitrust Enforcement; Eric Nelson, Reg. VII RCALF Director with an update on “Foot and Mouth Disease”; Harriet Hageman, Senior Litigation Counsel, New Civil Liberties Alliance, presenting “Halting Government Overreach R-CALF USA’s Mandatory RFID Lawsuit”; Patrick McGahan, Senior Associate, Scott+Scott Attorneys at Law LLP, with an update on “The Fed Cattle Cartel R-CALF USA’s Antitrust Lawsuit Update”; and Michael Stumo, Chief Executive Officer, Coalition for a Prosperous America, presenting “Balancing U.S. Trade and Protecting Sovereignty to Create Jobs, Growth, and Prosperity”.

Day 3, Aug. 21st began with Zach Mottl, Chief Alignment Officer and Owner Atlas

Tool Works, “The Impact of Globalization on U.S. Manufacturing and What Can Be Done”, followed by David Wright, OCM Director “The History of the Checkoff”. Next was David Muraskin, Food Project Senior Attorney at Public Justice presented “The Unconstitutional Checkoff R-CALF USA’s Lawsuit Update”, followed by Mike Schultz, RCALF COOL Committee Chairman and OCM Director giving us a COOL update. Closing speaker was Rohit Chopra, United States Federal Trade Commissioner speaking on USDA’s Proposed Rule Under the Packers and Stockyards Act. Commissioner Chopra’s presentation centered upon Made in America labeling. He has also been a past presenter at OCM conventions.

On Saturday following the convention, OCM directors and counsel traveled to Sodak Angus Ranch in northwest S.D. to view the cattle herd. Following the ranch tour, many visited Mt Rushmore Memorial and the Crazy Horse Monument.





# Annual MEMBERSHIP MEETING

## JULY-AUGUST 2020 UPDATE

BY **Pat Craycraft**

We continued our virtual annual membership meeting by mail. A Director nomination request was sent out to all voting members on July 3 with a July 17 deadline. With your assistance, we received a total of seven nominations that were placed on the ballot with some background information on each of those nominations. An official ballot was sent out on July 17 with instructions to vote for four. All ballots were received or postmarked by July 31. Four directors were elected to serve for a 3-year term by our voting members. The new elected directors were: Jonathan Buttram, Mike Eby, Mike Schultz, and Craig Vejraska. We also filled a vacant director position with Marty Irby.

### MEET OUR NEW DIRECTORS:

#### **Buttram, Jonathan**

Jonathan Buttram is currently serving on the OCM board and is the president of the Alabama Contract Poultry Growers Association, he is a cattle farmer and has raised poultry for 45 years. Jonathan has been an advocate for a fair marketplace for family farmers for the past 25 years.

#### **Eby, Mike**

He is passionate about the family farm and sustainable policies and has no regrets raising our four children on our seven generation PA dairy farm. Now that the cows are sold, he wants to spend the second half of his life's career on promoting "sustainable policies". He has been an active board member of National Dairy Producers Organization since 2011 becoming Chairman in 2014. The last two years he has worked relentlessly on Growth Management and antitrust. Working together with likeminded organizations is going to be what it takes to create policy change within the co-ops and Washington DC.

#### **Irby, Marty**

He is a former 8-time World Champion horse rider, Past President of the Tennessee Walking Horse Breeders' and Exhibitors Assn., former Communications Director and Sr. Policy Advisor on Agriculture in the U.S. House of Representatives. Currently

Executive Director at Animal Wellness Action and one of the hill's top lobbyists for 2019. He believes in OCM's mission, and has long thought the organization has made, and will continue to make great strides for farmers who utilize more sustainable agriculture methods and who have the guts to fight back against the monopolization by multi-national corporations such as JBS, Cargill, and Smithfield.

#### **Schultz, Mike**

He has been married to his wife Dawn for 35 years and has two girls and three granddaughters. He grew up in agriculture and on his family homesteaded in NW Kansas, owns land and runs a 100hd cow/calf operation, a haying and baling business, a plumbing business and started the 24/7 Fuel Depot. He built Western Kansas Sanitation/refuse service, founded the Kansas Cattlemen's Association as well as worked with the founders of R-CALF USA. He has testified in Kansas legislative hearings and represented R-CALF USA at the 2018 Livestock Price Reporting meetings in Washington, D.C., all while still operating and managing as a City Superintendent and law enforcement officer for 33 years. He is very involved in business, concerned about concentration and consolidation. He supports independence, freedoms with rules and justice for all. He has a saying that "YOU EARN MY RESPECT, I DON'T GIVE IT AWAY, REGARDLESS OF WHO YOU ARE" and I stand by it.

#### **Vejraska, Craig**

Sunny Okanogan Angus Ranch is owned and operated by myself and my wife, Mary K., along with sons Todd and Scott. The ranch is located in the heart of cow country in North Central Washington State. We run a herd of commercial and registered Angus cattle. Sunny Okanogan Angus Ranch is a third-generation ranch started by myself and my father, Lou, in the early 1960's. He has been active in the livestock industry as the owner of Okanogan Livestock Market. He served two terms as president of the Washington LMA. As President of the Washington Angus Assn, my wife and I hosted the very first National Angus Conference and tour in Washington State. In addition to the cattle business, he has served as Okanogan County Commissioner. During his term he was elected President of the Washington Counties Risk Pool. As President of the Risk Pool, he negotiated the general liability benefit and employee benefit packages for 39 county governments.

At our August 10, 2020 Monthly Board Meeting, after electing our full board, nominations were made for President and Vice-President for consideration. If there had been more than one nominated for each position, another ballot would have been sent out to voting members for their vote. There being only one nomination for Secretary and one nomination for Treasurer, Tom Dierks became the Secretary and Jonathan Buttram became our Treasurer by acclamation.

Since this election, our director, Mike Eby was hired as OCM's Executive Director. The Board nominated Joaquin Contente to fill his vacant position. The Board voted unanimously to elect Joaquin Contente as an OCM Director. Contente is a dairy farmer from Hanford, CA.

We know this has been a long process, but in the time of Covid-19, we felt this was the best solution to be able to continue OCM business safely. In conclusion, we approved our bylaw changes, approved the minutes from our last membership meeting (8/10/19) and elected our directors and officers for the 20-21 year. We appreciate your patience and thank you for your participation.





BY **Marty Irby**

# Organization for Competitive Markets Addresses Beef Checkoff President's Cowardly Misinformation, Failure to Disclose NCBA's Partnership with World Wildlife Fund and Humane Society of the U.S.

TAMPA, FL – Today the Organization for Competitive Markets issued the following statement after a series of cattlemen's meetings held in Florida regarding the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture's Beef Checkoff Program, a quasi-governmental agency known as the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA).

The statement follows a campaign of misinformation by NCBA president Marty

Smith who attacked OCM, it's board members, and cowardly deflected open conversations related to NCBA's consistent pattern of spending hard-earned farmer dollars to further the monopolization of industrial agriculture and policies that work against the interest of the very cattlemen who've funded NCBA for decades.

"OCM stands firmly in support of putting more farmers back on the land, and reigning in

*the egregious and illegal activities NCBA continues to engage in. NCBA president Marty Smith, was invited to speak with stakeholders in his home state who simply wanted to engage in an open dialogue on how to solve the radical declines of beef prices that have shuttered the industry, and furthered the globalization of industrial agriculture now controlled by a monopoly of four big packers.*

*"The meetings were not initiated by OCM*





## “OCM stands firmly in support of putting more farmers back on the land, and reigning in the egregious and illegal activities NCBA continues to engage in.”

*and came to fruition as a result of Florida cattlemen who requested OCM attempt to bring industry stakeholders together for the betterment of the industry. Smith’s cowardly disparagement campaign, and failure to disclose NCBA’s partnerships with the [World Wildlife Fund](#), [Humane Society of the U.S.](#), and the [ASPCA](#), is simply the ‘pot calling the kettle black,’ and Smith should be ashamed of his actions.”*

OCM, along with more than 250,000 farmers and ranchers across America, the Heritage Foundation, and others have been pushing for checkoff reform and pushing to advance the Opportunities for Fairness in Farming (OFF) Act, [S. 935/H.R. 5563](#), introduced this Congress by Sens. Mike Lee (R-UT), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Rand Paul (R-KY), and Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) in the Senate and Rep. Dina Titus (D-NV) in the House. Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-FL) has cosponsored the bill in the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, as well as Rep. Mark Pocan (D-WI), Rep. Steve Cohen (D-TN), and Rep. Joe Neguse (D-CO).

“It was disappointing that once again NCBA was not willing to participate in current industry discussions,” said **Vaughn Meyer, president of the Organization for Competitive Markets.**

“NCBA president Marty Smith’s attack against OCM board member Marty Irby is disparaging, and hypocritical as NCBA has partnered with both the Humane Society

of the U.S., ASPCA, and World Wildlife Fund,” said Mike Eby, executive director of the Organization for Competitive Markets.

Documentation of NCBA’s partnerships with The HSUS, ASPCA, and WWF can be found [here](#), [here](#), and, [here](#).

The OFF Act has received endorsements from the [Journal Times](#), [Muskogee Phoenix](#), [Kenosha News in Wisconsin](#) in 2020 and we’ve also gotten some recent additional press on the bipartisan support in the [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#). [The Daily Caller’s 2018 Investigation](#) on the Dairy Checkoff revealed numerous abuses, and the [Government Accountability Office’s 2017 report](#) clearly reported evidence of the need for checkoff reform.

**Further information regarding the corruption of commodity checkoffs and the 10 most egregious abuses of the checkoff programs is below:**

1. In 1999, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) [found](#) that USDA had “relinquished too much authority to its primary contractor, the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC), and has placed the NPPC in a position to exert undue influence over Board budgets and grant proposals.”
2. In 2000, the majority of American hog producers [passed a referendum](#) to end the pork checkoff, only to have USDA overturn their decision.
3. In 2010, an [independent audit](#) of the equivalent of just nine days of beef checkoff program spending found more than \$200,000 in improper spending by the primary beef checkoff contractor, the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA), including the use of checkoff dollars for lobbying and overseas vacations.
4. In 2014, after waiting more than 18 months to receive Freedom of Information Act records from USDA on expenditures of the Beef Checkoff Program, the Organization for Competitive Markets was filed a [lawsuit](#) to obtain public records relating to Beef Checkoff audit

reports. NCBA has entered the case blocking the release of over 12,000 documents. This case has been ongoing for four years.

5. In 2015, documents obtained under a Freedom of Information Act request showed that the [American Egg Board illegally used checkoff dollars](#) to attempt to halt sales of an egg-free mayonnaise product.

6. In 2016, it was discovered that the [Oklahoma Beef Council lost 2.6 million checkoff dollars](#) to embezzlement by a staff member who wrote 790 fraudulent checks to herself during a 10-year period.

7. In 2017, [USDA came under fire](#) for failing for more than four years to publish legally required annual financial reports on the \$400 million per year dairy checkoff.

8. In 2018, the Ohio Beef Council [illegally used government property](#) to promote a fundraiser for a gubernatorial campaign on behalf of the trade and lobbying group, Ohio Cattlemen’s Association. According to the Ohio Cattlemen’s Association’s brochure, the Ohio Beef Council is also actively engaged in soliciting campaign contributions on behalf of the Ohio Cattlemen’s Association’s Political Action Committee (PAC) through the state agency’s email domain.

9. In 2018, [a federal judge ruled](#) that the USDA unlawfully approved spending \$60 million of hog farmers’ checkoff money on a defunct promotional campaign.

10. According to the [NCBA’s 2015 IRS Form 990](#), beef checkoff funds make up approximately 73% of the lobbying group’s total annual budget. [As much as 72%](#) of the NCBA CEO’s nearly half a million-dollar salary comes from beef checkoff funds. NCBA membership accounts for [less than 4%](#) of cattle producers.



**BY Mike Eby**  
Executive Director

This month efforts are underway for a big year-end push on the Opportunities for Fairness in Farming Act, H.R. 5563/S. 935 to get more cosponsors added by the end of the 116th Congress. OCM Board Member, Marty Irby re-introduced me as the new Executive Director at OCM to Christine Godinez from U.S. Rep. Dina Titus' (D-NV), the House bill's sponsor and we've planned out a strategy to garner those cosponsors. Thus far, we've picked up three new Members this month, and the full cosponsorship list for both the House and Senate is below. We greatly appreciate Marty's long-time leadership on this legislation and willingness to serve OCM diligently and tirelessly on Capitol Hill.

# Inside the Beltway: An Update on the Opportunities for Fairness in Farming (OFF) Act and Efforts for Checkoff Reform

## House

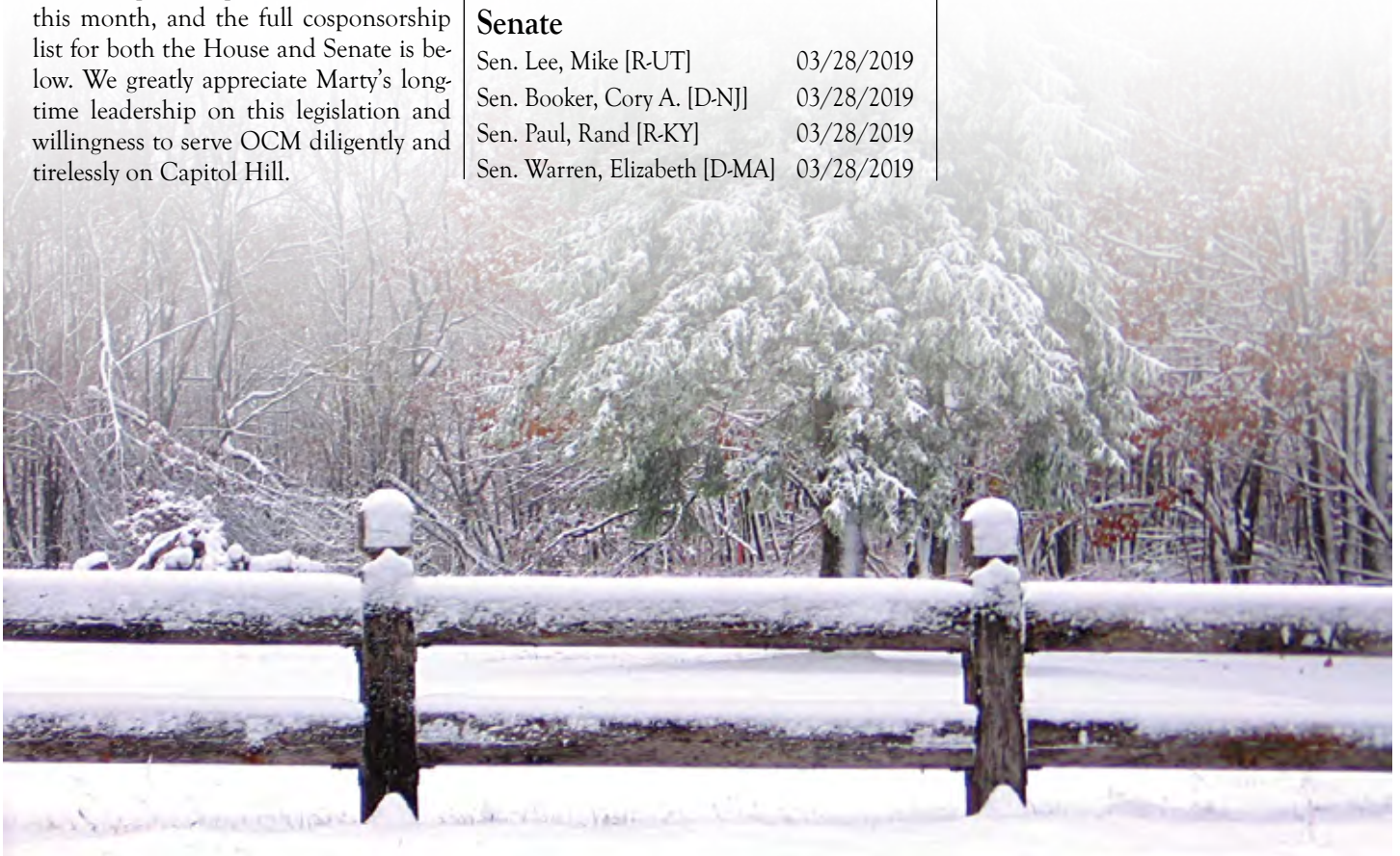
Rep. Titus, Dina [D-NV-1]	01/09/2020
Rep. Gaetz, Matt [R-FL-1]	02/03/2020
Rep. Pocan, Mark [D-WI-2]	02/05/2020
Rep. Cohen, Steve [D-TN-9]	02/27/2020
Rep. Neguse, Joe [D-CO-2]	06/04/2020
Rep. Blumenauer, Earl [D-OR-3]	11/16/2020
Rep. Cicilline, David N. [D-RI-1]	11/16/2020
Rep. Cardenas, Tony [D-CA-29]	11/16/2020

## Senate

Sen. Lee, Mike [R-UT]	03/28/2019
Sen. Booker, Cory A. [D-NJ]	03/28/2019
Sen. Paul, Rand [R-KY]	03/28/2019
Sen. Warren, Elizabeth [D-MA]	03/28/2019

We'll continue charging ahead in December to also add Senate cosponsors once the Senators' offices have gotten back with us on our target list. In the meantime, please call your Members of Congress at 202-225-3121 and ask them to cosponsor the Opportunities for Fairness in Farming Act, H.R. 5563/S. 935 for checkoff reform.

Mike Eby  
717-799-0057







### 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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- DECEMBER  
**2020**

## MISSION STATEMENT

*The mission of the Organization for Competitive Markets  
is to work for transparent, fair, and truly  
competitive agricultural and food markets.*



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