



FROM THE **PRESIDENT** Vaughn Meyer

Greetings All,

As I write this I can't believe June is close around the corner with 2021 nearing the half way marker! 2021 has come out the gate on a dead run keeping OCM staff and directors busy working on many new and old issues in addition to working with many new policy directives from Capitol Hill.

Thanks to our committed staff and directors, OCM policy has been involved in numerous issues including the OFF Act, seeking anti-trust enforcement to restore market competitiveness and as in the past advocating for mandatory COOL with import restrictions. The beef checkoff referendum has been a very time intensive issue with a shared goal with RCALF to reach 100,000 signatures by July 1st 2021.

Two of the new administration policies

we have been watching and responding to include President Biden's Made in America Plan and the proposed 30-30 plan to set aside 30% of our land and waters for nature conservation by 2030. This second plan has far reaching tentacles capable of perpetuating future unknown consequences for national food security.

Speaking of "food security," 100% of OCM's work is centered upon maintaining adequate nutritional nourishment for our country through independent family

Fighting for the independent family producer is a continuous battle which cannot be won single handily by any one organization but rather by like-minded producer organizations with common goals.

farms and ranches. Keeping these families in production agriculture is dependent upon maintaining a competitive market place free of foreign and domestic corporate monopolization.

Fighting for the independent family producer is a continuous

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AUGUST 21, 2021



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MEYER (continued from page 1)

battle which cannot be won single handily by any one organization but rather by like-minded producer organizations with common goals. Today's agriculture is facing many new challenges centered on environmental, animal, land and humanitarian stewardship. There is not a one size fits all approach to educating consumers and government of the daily issues farmers and ranchers face and therefore we must continue to work in cooperative spirit as division does not conquer battles.

Our Washington D.C. OCM director Marty Irby along with Executive Director, Mike Eby and others have been working out details and agenda for OCM's Summer Capitol Hill Congressional Sessions on June

29th and 30th. The event promises to be a very informative exchange of information and ideas with our Congressional delegations. Hope many of you can join us for this special event.

Also, OCM will hold our annual meeting on Saturday Aug. 21st at Rapid City S.D. following the RCALF convention. Their convention will host a wide variety of informative speakers along with social activities for the whole family. Make plans for a great summer vacation to these events and the Black Hills of South Dakota. For more information call or stay tuned to the OCM web page.

Have a great summer and hope to see everyone in South Dakota for our OPEN Annual Membership Meeting on July 21.

Vaughn Meyer

CompetitiveMarkets.com





Empowering dairy farmers

Knowledge, tools, ideas shared at barn meeting in Lancaster County

By **Sherry Bunting**, Special for *Farmshine*

GORDONVILLE, Pa. -- **Empowerment. One word with power in it.**

"I got to thinking about introducing this session and thought everyone knows what empowerment means, right? Give power. But then I looked up the opposite of empowerment," said Kristine Ranger, a consultant in Michigan working with farms and writing and evaluating grants. She traveled to Gordonville, Pennsylvania with National Dairy Producers Organization board member Joe Arens to the farm of Mike Eby, NDPO chairman, for the 'Empowering dairy farmers' barn meeting Friday, April 23.

What is the opposite of empowerment?

"Here are the words in the dictionary," said Ranger. "Disallow, forbid, hinder, inhibit, preclude, prevent and prohibit. Have any of you been experiencing any of that as you try to build a livelihood with your dairy farms?"

Good question.

From there, the daylong barn meeting moved headlong into weighty topics, but stayed focus on the positive concept of encouraging producer involvement in seeking

accountability and transparency in the systems that govern dairy.

A thought that kept surfacing in this reporter's mind listening to the panel of speakers Friday was this: The longer something goes uninterrupted, the more vulnerable it is to become corrupted.

Although the sunshine and spring planting kept in-person attendance low, the event was livestreamed on visual and audio with producers listening in from all over.

"If producers do not hold their co-ops accountable, then silence is your consent," said Gary Genske.

Genske, a certified public accountant since 1974 based in California with a dairy in New Mexico kicked things off. He presented details about the roles and responsibilities of cooperatives, boards and members. He shared his insights into improving dairy farm milk prices.

Genske is a member of the NDPO board, and he highlighted the marketing concepts of 100% USA seal for milk and dairy products, returning to the true standards for fat and components in beverage milk that are still used today in California, and moving

toward aligning milk production with profitable demand.

The Genske Mulder firm does the financial statements for 2500 dairy farms each year and 10,000 farm tax returns annually. He sees the numbers and knows the deal.

Walking attendees through the various aspects of USDA regulation and the Capper Volstead Act, Genske gave producers the tools and encouragement to accept their responsibilities as cooperative members.

In October, he had a successful lawsuit in Kansas City. After requesting documents from the cooperative in which he is a member and being denied or provided documents that were mostly redacted, he took the issue to court.

After a two-day hearing, the judge ruled in Genske's favor on his request for documents, as a cooperative member, with a stated purpose.

In short, Genske said, "We have to put people in the position of taking care of the members... We want to cull cows not dairy farmers."

Please see **EMPOWERING** on page 4



Traveling from Michigan to the farm of Mike Eby (center) for an 'empowering' meeting were Joe Arens, NDPO board member and Kristen Ranger, a consulting working with farms in Michigan. Ranger worked with Eby to secure a grant for the in-person meeting and multi-media production. In addition to serving as NDPO chairman, Eby is executive director of Organization for Competitive Markets (OCM) and a member of the Grassroots PA Dairy Advisory Committee, among other things. Photos by Sherry Bunting



"This is it," said Bernie Morrissey. "The dairy farmers made me successful, so this is me giving back." He talked about the whole milk education effort and the push to legalize whole milk choice in schools. If ever there was an example of the opposite of 'empower', it would be the treatment of whole milk by industry and government, especially since 2008. The steep decline in fluid milk sales from 2010-2018 is starting to stabilize as consumers and policymakers are getting the message. Each step is hard work.

EMPOWERING (continued from page 3)

Bernie Morrissey, chairman of the Grassroots PA Dairy Advisory Committee talked after lunch about the 97 Milk effort when farmers empowered themselves to market whole milk, since no one else was; and all kinds of prohibiting, hindering, forbidding, preventing and precluding had been going on.

"It started with Nelson Troutman who painted the first roundbale, just like that sign: Drink Whole Milk 97% Fat Free," said Morrissey pointing to the large banners and holding up the Drink Whole Milk School Lunch Choice Citizens for Immune Boosting Nutrition yard signs.

With a joint effort underway now for a little over two years – working to educate lawmakers and consumers about whole milk and pushing efforts to legalize whole milk choice in schools, Morrissey said "It's working. Things are happening."

Dick Bylsma of National Farmers Organization (NFO) traveled from Indiana to brief producers on joint efforts between NFO, Farmers Union and Farm Bureau to empower dairy farmers by getting their individual votes back in Federal Order hearings. He traced the history of Federal Milk Marketing Orders, and the genesis of bloc voting at a time in history when there were hundreds of thousands of farmers and communication was slow.

"It's time to end bloc voting," said Bylsma, and he laid out some of the efforts underway around that proposition.

While dairy and beef checkoff programs use government-mandated funds collected from producers for valuable local and state promotion programs linking producers to consumers, it is the direction of national checkoff programs – engaged with WWF and the largest processors and retailers in this way -- that has producers like Karina Jones, a fifth generation Nebraska cattlewoman concerned.

Jones heads up the petition drive for a producer referendum on the \$1/head beef checkoff. The effort began in South Dakota and is spreading nationwide via R-CALF and other national and state organizations.

During the farmer empowerment barn meeting hosted by Mike Eby of National



With the FMMO map on the screen behind him, Dick Bylsma of NFO talked about the history, purpose and hot FMMO topics of the day. "We have to end bloc voting," said Bylsma. The most empowering tool a dairy producer can have is the right to vote on milk order changes, instead of being bloc-voted by the cooperative.

Dairy Producers Organization (NDPO) and Organization for Competitive Markets (OCM) at his farm in Gordonville, Pennsylvania recently, two of the day's speakers talked about the need for transparency and accountability in mandatory checkoff programs.

Marty Irby of OCM talked about the OFF Act, which is bipartisan legislation seeking to amend the checkoff laws to reaffirm that these programs may not contract with organizations that engage in policy advocacy, conflicts of interest, or anticompetitive activities. It would require publication of all budgets and disbursement of funds for the purpose of public inspection and submit to periodic audits by the USDA Inspector General.

"It's not about taking those promotion dollars away, but to have a just system of checks and balances," said Irby about the proposed legislation.

But others are taking a grassroots vote approach -- concerned about government oversight of what is already determined to be 'government speech' funded by producer checkoff.

Jones talked at the barn meeting about the massive effort to gather over 100,000 signatures by July 2021 asking USDA to conduct a nationwide Beef Checkoff Referendum. A vote on the beef checkoff has not been conducted in 35 years. (See checkoffvote.com and insert in this week's Farmshine)

"It's time to re-check the checkoff," said Jones about the beef petition. "We want to signal to USDA that as cattle producers we are ready to vote again."

She explained that in order for the Secretary of Agriculture to consider a referendum request, 10% of producers must sign the petition. This includes anyone who sold a beef animal and paid the \$1/head checkoff, in the 12 months from July 2020 through July 2021, including beef cow-calf producers, seedstock producers, backgrounders, cattle feeders, dairy producers, and youth showing and selling livestock.

According to the 2017 Census, 10% of the beef producers would mean 89,000 signatures needed.

"But we don't know the vetting process the Secretary will use to approve or deny the petition request, so we want to reach over 100,000 signatures by July 2021," said Jones.

"The cattle landscape today is much different from 35 years ago," she said. "Our checkoff does not support promotion of American-born-and-raised beef. We want to equalize the power for the grassroots U.S. cattle producer... the power and the dollars are falling into the hands of the few."

According to Jones, the checkoff referen-

dum petition seeks a return to balance as well as increased transparency and accountability, through the voting process. Proponents of the right to vote believe producers should be able to fund education and promotion that takes a stand for real, USA-produced beef, something the trends and supply chain partnerships emerging today -- along with "government speech" rules -- make difficult.

She talked about "mavericks" who were elected to the beef board in the past and tried to change the power structure of the lobbying groups and processing industry involvement. Jones said the current structure has gone on so long -- uninterrupted -- that a referendum petition is the only avenue many beef producers see today as a way to bring accountability back.

"This is a call to action. Many producers are still not aware of this beef checkoff referendum petition," said Jones as she urged producers to be bold and harness the opportunities to set a direction that changes the balance of power.

These are just some fast highlights from a day of deep learning. More from these speakers and additional speakers on co-op involvement, systems accountability, and other empowering topics -- including more from Genske about ending the silence and exercising rights and responsibilities with communication tools that work for cooperative members.

Similar in-person meetings recently encouraged producers in Michigan and northern Indiana, said Ranger.





NAMI, Myth or Fact?

by Vaughn Meyer

Recently, the North American Meat Institute (NAMI) published a list of facts on common beef market myths which was sent to Congressional constituents in an attempt to derail ongoing support for the Senators Rounds and Smith letter to Attorney General Garland. The Rounds/Smith letter directs the government, specifically the Attorney General Office, to investigate the meatpacker stranglehold over our meat processing markets and if any violations of anti-trust laws and fair competition principles are occurring.

In their letter to Congressional leaders, NAMI spouts many falsehoods and attempts to create many shallow myths. Within their first myth NAMI attempt to disclaim USDA's figures that show the four largest packers control over 85% of the processing market. To substantiate their shallow claim they separate the fed slaughter from non-fed slaughter thereby reducing their market control to 70%. Sorry NAMI, fed slaughter and non-fed slaughter are both processed meat and in addition, imported meats which are justified as necessary mixing ingredients for fed slaughter are 100% captive supply controlled by you (the big4)!

NAMI attempts to sway producer support from Congress by claiming cattle markets are functioning as economics would predict as to when cattle supplies increase, prices decrease, and – vice versa. This claim is a falsehood as evidenced by the markets for the past 6 years where the U.S. cow herd is at the lowest level since the 1980s and prices at the retail counters are at record highs. What NAMI is failing to factor in is the ever-expanding import supplies which translate into captive supplies for market manipulation. They

To take back control of your checkoff dollars go to checkoffvote.com and sign up for a referendum for the first vote in 35 years!

claim these imported supplies do not hurt domestic supply prices as they are lean product necessary for ground beef grinding but the fact remains clear that 35% of our domestic production is in direct price competition with imports.

Also in NAMI's attempt to justify imports as a good management tool for U.S. producers, they cite a U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) statistic claiming exports average a 68% premium over imported meats. This claim validates the need for an Attorney General and DOI investigation as it substantiates the profiteering of packers over non-

fed domestic producer cattle!

Probably the most callous myth NAMI attempts to defuse is, "Large price disparities are leading independent cattle producers to go broke." They justify this as a myth because Congress provided a safety net through CFAP to get through this (COVID) once-in-a-lifetime event! Well, these market swings have been occurring nearly weekly at the will of the packer; generated through curtailing market participation on any given time period. For many producer families, unfortunately, NAMI is correct in that market swings are often a once-in-a-lifetime event as generations of family ranching heritage come to an end!

In conclusion, let's move on from Myths to Facts:

NAMI concludes their rant with the statement, "The North American Meat Industry is the leading voice for the meat and poultry industry." They fail to mention this meat industry lobbying attempt is funded by producer checkoff dollars compliments of independent family cattle producers. As producers, your mandatory checkoff dollars fund Cattlemen's Beef Board (CBB) authorization requests (ARs) to do communication, promotion, and research projects of which NAMI (your checkoff contractor) has received hundreds of thousands of dollars. Each AR contains implementation fees which upon crossing over that mythical firewall often transform into lobbying efforts against producer interests! NAMI consistently charges a 20% implementation fee resulting in tens of thousands of your hard-earned dollars bolstering packer interests over producer livelihoods.

To take back control of your checkoff dollars go to checkoffvote.com and sign up for a referendum for the first vote in 35 years!

https://www.meatinstitute.org/ht/display/ReleaseDetails/i/191584/pid/287?fbclid=IwAR0ifqdEyKPAwWMIugi_t8l38Egd-MEW7j09EAvgvOOtwue4WtyD19H4JU4g

Federal Politicians Poison Race relations with Giveaways

By Taylor Haynes

Having lived through the Jim Crow era ended by a successful Civil Rights movement, I am incensed at the reverse discrimination exhibited by the Congress and the Biden Administration.

The \$5 billion loan forgiveness for black farmers and farmers of color in the \$1.9 trillion COVID 19 relief bill is racially discriminatory. It violates the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by discriminating against white farmers.

I am well aware of the history of discrimination by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture. This is documented by lawsuits filed beginning with *Pigford vs. Glickman* in 1997. The politicians, executive and legislative branches, could address these problems at the source.

Senate bill 4929 proposed by Senator Corey Booker authorizing the Government to purchase land to grant to non-white farmers is quite unconstitutional and discriminatory as well. One could assume that these are well meaning attempts to “square” things (reparations). However, the facts do not support the well-meaning premise.

Human nature is to envy one’s neighbor’s success to some degree in the most honest of circumstances. However, when one person or group sees overt favoritism it engenders a far stronger emotion, resentment.

These two programs will rekindle the ra-

cial hatred that was essentially gone until the arrival of President Obama. Politicians like President Obama and Senator Booker and others of that ilk are race hustlers. Whether on their own, or via being manipulated by unknown and unseen others, they are attempting to weaken our republic by pitting the races and ethnicities against one another. This is taking Affirmative Action and its ability to promote tension between the races to catastrophic levels. Black farmers and ranchers must resist being used as political pawns in this manner. This is the new approach to servitude.

These giveaways would deny the sacrifices, sacredness, and the success of the Civil Rights Movement of the mid-sixties, thereby desecrating the efforts made by those who participated in that very successful endeavor.

Remember Dr. Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks the late John Lewis and too many others to name. Also remember Viola Liuzzo who was murdered by two Ku Klux Klan members, who represents the many white people who risked all by participating in and supporting the non-violent movement.

These “give away” programs now being advanced are part of an ongoing narrative portraying our country as systemically racist, and only white people can be racist. My observations and experience are quite to the contrary.

These giveaways would deny the sacrifices, sacredness, and the success of the Civil Rights Movement of the mid-sixties, thereby desecrating the efforts made by those who participated in that very successful endeavor.

First, a few of my observations. After the Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act blacks and whites worked and associated in evolving situations. These associations over time produced the result of mutual respect and acceptance. Blacks were seen in many positions previously reserved for whites only. Such as U.S. Air Force (USAF) Major Robert H. Lawrence, a pilot and member of the Manned Operating Laboratory for high resolution photographic imagery of Americas Cold War adversaries. Then there is Colonel Guion Bluford PhD, USAF, an astronaut, and Aerospace engineer. And Dr. Ben Carson, product of a single parent home, raised on welfare in public housing, became a world-renown Pediatric Neurosurgeon. Mr. Robert L. Johnson is the first black billionaire, co-founder of the Black Entertainment Network. There are countless examples of black people enjoying their American dream in all endeavors including sports and entertainment.

Raised in a farming family in Northwest Louisiana. By the grace of Almighty GOD, his son our LORD and savior Jesus Christ I was able to earn a Mechanical Engineering Degree at Southern University & A&M college. While at Southern, I participated in a co-op program with Tennessee Valley Authority. My first “white collar” job experience. My supervisor and colleagues were all white. They were wonderful. While they stressed high professional standards of performance, they were very helpful and mentoring at the same time. The other co-op students with one exception were white, from various major universities in the Southeast and were very inclusive socially. I was just another co-op.

My career included holding an engineering position in the mining industry to building a surgical practice and cattle ranching business in Wyoming. I have always been treated the same as my colleagues in business and livestock production.

This is the heart of the Civil Rights movement: Equal justice for all. Oppose S. 4929. *Taylor H. Haynes M.D. is the principal and chief executive officer at the Bull Mountain Cattle Company in Laramie, Wyoming who serves as a director at the Organization for Competitive Markets.*



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**APRIL-MAY-JUNE
2021**

MISSION STATEMENT

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



OPEN Annual Membership Meeting

August 21, 2021

Holiday Inn Rushmore Plaza

505 N. 5th Street - Rapid City, SD

Hotel Reservations: Holiday Inn (605) 348-4000 or
Howard Johnson (605) 737-4656
Ask for the 'R-CALF USA' Rate (\$119.00)

We will be forgoing our usual Convention this year, but in compliance with our bylaws, will have an Open Annual Membership Meeting in Rapid City, SD on June 21st. This will follow R-CALF USA's annual convention which many of our board directors and members will be attending. We welcome all members and others to attend this meeting.

We will be electing 4 new directors

at this annual meeting. If you have any nominations for OCM voting members to be considered for the OCM Board, please send them to the NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE at pcraycraft@competitivemarkets.com or by mail to: PO Box 6486, Lincoln, NE 68506.

DEADLINE IS AUGUST 11, 2021.

Please include contact information and a short bio for consideration. All nominations must be a voting member and willing to serve on our board. Nominations may also be made at the meeting.

If you want to attend the R-CALF Convention prior to the OCM OPEN Annual Membership Meeting, please register online on their website: www.rcalf-convention.com.