



# MEMBER NEWSLETTER

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



## FROM THE PRESIDENT Vaughn Meyer

independent processing infrastructure.

This past fall OCM was well represented at the National Association of State Meat Inspectors by CEO Mike Eby, Dr. Taylor Haynes and Fred Stokes. OCM is very fortunate to have these individuals representing us and extending our mission to work together for the betterment of the beef industry.

This fall, in addition to assisting the development of new beef processing infrastructure, OCM has been closely aligned with several proposed legislative bills to increase market transparency through greater packer mandatory negotiated cash market participation. To date, none of the bills containing mandated participation levels have made their journey through congress; however, an extension of the current mandatory price reporting is nearing reality with its recent passage in the House.

RCALF CEO Bill Bullard recently presented statistical justification for mandatory negotiated cash trade based upon the doubling of cash trade within the past 4 months which resulted in \$15 market surge for fat cattle. That \$15 dollar per hundred weights equates to \$195 increase in value for a 1300 lb. steer. He concludes that an 11% increase in negotiated cash market volume is associated with producers receiving \$200 per head more for their cattle.

OCM is focused upon continued efforts to developing fair and transparent markets for family agriculture. Successful independent family agriculture is dependent upon the ability of producers to receive fair market value for their produce. OCM is dedicated to creating fair market discovery through independent infrastructure expansion, true price discovery and the right of producers to label their products.

2021 has been and extremely busy

year of transition for our country and OCM as well. I am confident that some of the seeds sown in 2021 will become fruition to a brighter future for America's farmers and ranchers in 2022.

I thank our staff, directors and members for their dedication and support to our mission and wish all a very Merry Christmas with family and friends. May God bless you and America with future peace and good health.

## INSIDE

- 2-4** **Presentation to:  
National Association of  
Meat Inspectors**  
by Fred Stokes

---

- 5** **The Off Act**  
by Taylor Haynes

---

- 6** **Recognizing  
One of Our Own**  
by Marty Irby

---

- 6-7** **OCM Opposes Senate  
Bill S.3229**  
by Vaughn Meyer

---

- 7** **The Off Act**  
by Marty Irby

---

- 8-9** **Beef Industry**  
Full Measure News  
with Lisa Fletcher

---

- 10-11** **In Memory of  
M. L. 'Cap' Dierks**  
July 2, 1931 ~ October 22, 2021

---

- 12** **2022 Member  
Renewal Form**

**G**

Greeting fellow Producers and Consumers,

As I begin to write this report, I must reflect on what a year of change for both OCM and our nation! Nationally with the

change of administration we have witnessed new and renewed initiatives to uphold and strengthen independent production agriculture and consumer food security. Also, we are thankful to our Congressional constituents for their growing awareness and actions regarding the plight of family agriculture and its devastating effects to rural communities.

I am also thankful and privileged to work with a great Staff and Board of Director who advocate tirelessly for the necessary changes to defend family agriculture from the grips of global corporate interests. This year we have been very fortunate to have 3 new directors assist OCM in achieving our goals and they are Ms. Jerika Bumbeloe (AL), Dr. Taylor Haynes (WY), and Ms. Deborah Mills (MN). I thank them for their contributions to our board and I especially thank founding member/ Director Fred Stokes for his 25 years of dedication to our organization and industry. Mr. Stokes is currently assisting OCM in an advisory capacity and overseeing OCM's goals for expanded market transparency through development of more



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**PRESENTATION TO:  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE  
MEAT INSPECTORS**

By

**Fred Stokes**

October 26, 2021

First let me thank you for inviting us to plead our case at your convention. I want to especially thank Doctor James Dillon. I'm not sure whether I should refer to him as Doctor Dillon or Colonel Dillon, but we especially appreciate his tolerance and help for our cause over the last couple of years.

For twenty-two years now, OCM has been about advocating for open, transparent, competitive, and fair agricultural markets; for both the buying and selling side of these markets. We have confronted the concentration in agriculture and the resulting monopolies and monopsonies that are the instruments of a rigged system. A system that has systematically and increasingly shortchanged farmers and ranchers and now threatens the very existence of independent family agriculture. Doctor Neil Harl, a well-known former economist from Iowa State University is often quoted as saying; *"market concentration and vertical integration are a deadly combination"*.

In 1998 the big packers broke hog prices down to 8¢ per pound. Overnight, the 667,000 independent producers were reduced by 90%. The cash market was replaced with contracts. A writer friend of mine wrote, "in today's agriculture everyone works for the man, they're tractor drivers for Cargill and hog house janitors for Smithfield. The big corporations don't own farms they just own farmers".

Today, the largest hog operation in America (Smithfield) is owned by China. The big corporations have

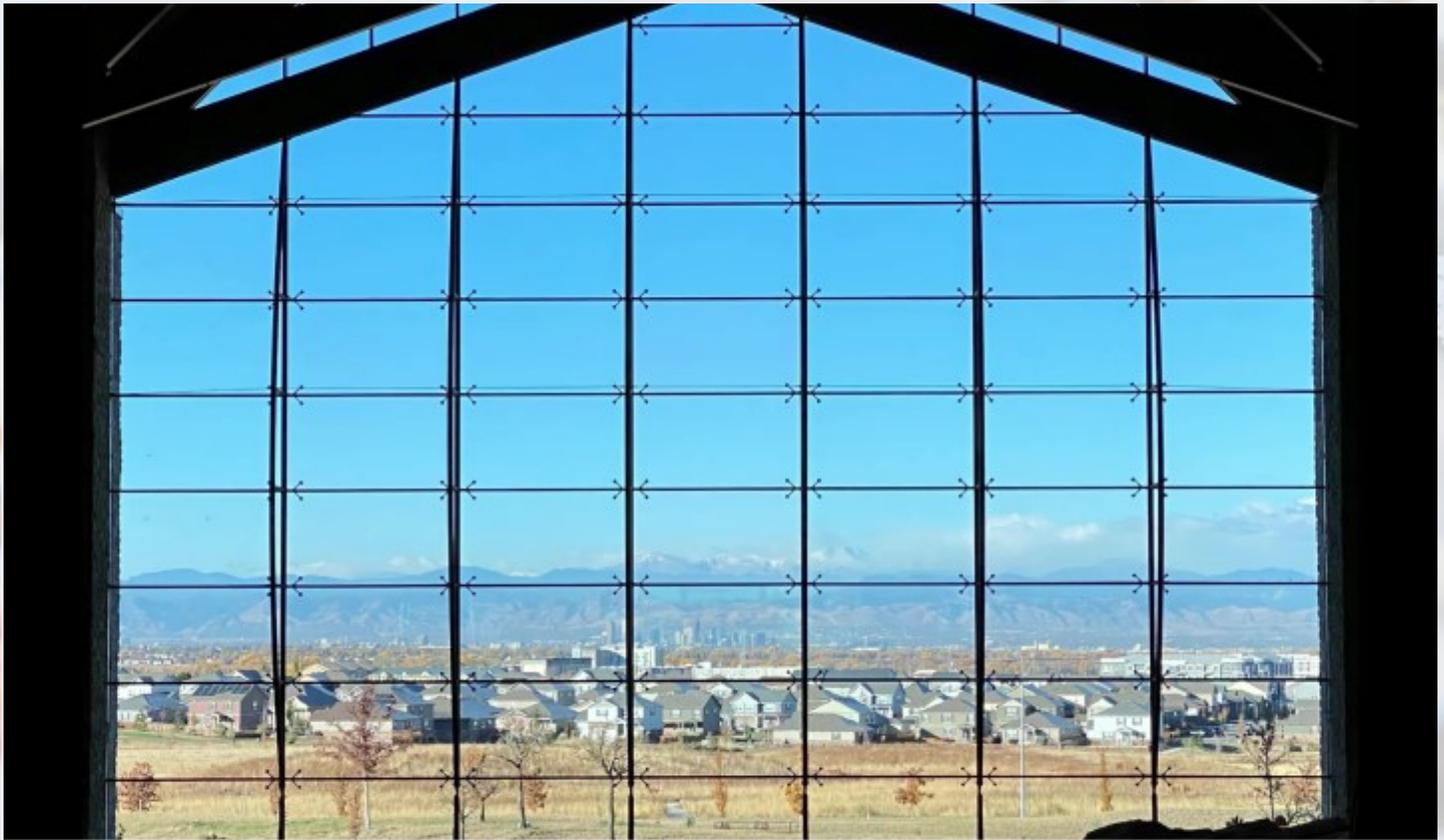
managed to contractually shift the burden of financial investment, labor and market risk to the producer while maintaining iron-fisted control. Proud farmers become sniveling serfs at the bottom of a corporate dominated vertical production chain. Folks, that is CHICKENIZATION! It has devastated independent production agriculture. The poultry and hog industry have succumbed: two down, one to go! **Is the cattle industry next?**

Year after year that portion of the food dollar that goes to the producer has gotten smaller and smaller while a disproportionate and ever-increasing share goes to the processor and retailer. The most graphic example of this is the margins being exacted by the beef processors in the last year or so. Using as a pretext, the Tyson plant fire in Kansas, the processing slowdown resulting from the pandemic and the JBC cyber-attack, the big four concocted a phantom supply chain logjam and used it as justification for paying less for cattle and charging more for boxed beef. Their margins and profits are outrageous and unprecedented. You can bet the ranch that they will exploit this developing economic supply backup and work this scheme to again gouge their customers and mug cattle producers.

Something has to be done! Somehow, we have to bring about competition in the cattle market. Expanding the independent meat processing sector would seem to be an obvious way. We simply need more bidders for our cattle.

See [Presentation to NASMI](#) on Page 3

**DISCLAIMER:** All author's written opinions are their own and are not intended to imply the organizations position. OCM has membership with diverse viewpoints on all issues and is committed to one principal; competition.



Gaylord Rockies Resort & Conference Center, Denver - OCM invited to speak at the NASMI (National Association of State Meat Inspectors) meeting on 10/26/21

### **Presentation to NASMI** (continued from page 2)

For more than a year now, OCM has pursued expanding processing as a means of advancing competition and binging about a fairer price for our cattle. Expanding independent meat processing is now our major project. We are working with USDA, other governmental agencies, and several other NGOs in this effort.

In March of this year, USDA announced the appointment of a “Senior Advisor for Fair and Competitive Markets”. Probable due to our name and mission, OCM was contacted early on by this individual and a working relationship has ensued. We have also established a rapport with the current USDA Chief Economist.

In a July Press Release, USDA Secretary Vilsack announced a \$500 million appropriation to expand meat

processing, perhaps a belated action stemming from the 2010 Fort Collins workshop of the Obama Administration. At that event, producers pointed out the problem with lack of “decentralized meatpacking” and urged bringing back small and medium-sized meat packers.

In an announcement on September 9th, the Administration released a plan for bringing about better market competition. The plan included a compelling indictment of the existing situation.

There have been several encouraging signals from Capitol Hill, calls for an investigation of anticompetitive behavior by packers, a stronger enforcement of the Packers and Stockyards Act, allowing state-inspected beef to be shipped in interstate commerce and others.

USDA has renewed its effort to

resurrect the Packers and Stockyards Act of 1921 by rulemaking that would more precisely define certain violations of the act and strengthening the argument that a demonstration of harm to competition across the industry is not required to invoke the Act. There is also a legislative initiative to much more aggressively enforce the Act. Action is also being taken to preclude beef from foreign sourced cattle being sold with a “product of USA” label.

To strengthen its campaign to expand independent meat processing, OCM has teamed up with a long-standing ally, American Antitrust Institute (AAI). Our antitrust laws are not being enforced and survival of these fledgling plant star-up will likely require some predator control.

See **Presentation to NASMI** on Page 4

**Presentation to NASMI** (continued from page 3)

The point I am trying to make is that the stars are in very good alignment to make a strong move forward. I see this as perhaps our best chance ever to bring about competition in cattle markets!

We envision increasing staffing to enable a day-to-day, vigorous, and ongoing effort to facilitate an expansion in independent meat processing; I emphasize the word “INDEPENDENT”. We want to be the one to find the elements for a potentially successful start-up and advise, refer, assist, and do everything we can to make it become a reality. We do not profess to currently be experts in meat processing, but we know or will come to know experts. We won’t be making grants or loans, or writing business plans, or designing plants, or a number of other aspects of starting up and operation a plant but we aim to be the bridge to those who can do these things.

Let me give you an example. I am currently working with a successful family-owned independent grocery

chain here in Mississippi. They own a dozen stores and are a thriving business. Beef is the profit center for these stores. I am encouraging the CEO to consider the starting up of a beef processing plant. They have a captive market for the end product. Right now, is their best time ever for such a start-up. There is state and federal support and incentives and strong consumer preference for local and domestically produced foods.

Another aspect of our effort is to call attention to the situation here in the Southeast. We produce 25% of the nation’s calves but suffer big discounts due to the lack of feeding and processing this this region. These calves are typically shipped more than a thousand miles and then the beef is shipped back to the Publix and Winn Dixie store down here. A very inefficient way of doing business that generates a lot of unnecessary diesel smoke.

We have demonstrated that we can successfully feed and process cattle down here. We need a special attention and incentives for a feeding and processing infrastructure here in the Southeast.

The last point I want to make is that we need the support of you folks as we go forward with this effort.

First off, we need your help in identifying a couple of prospective hires to drive this initiative. Folks with your kind of background, who know the business and the various players throughout the system. We need candidates who understand that the system is broken and the need to repair it. Individuals who see this as an opportunity to do something constructive, a righteous cause rather than a job. We are presently embarked on a fundraising undertaking. We hope and expect to find the resources to hire these two people, to make this thing happen. Your help would be much appreciated.

I am happy to try to answer your questions.



**Fred Stokes**

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# THE OFF ACT

What's the big Deal?

By

**Taylor H. Haynes M. D.**

Vice-President

The Organization for Competitive Markets

The big deal is to investigate the various livestock checkoff programs. This is needed at this time because the referendum promised when the checkoff began never happened.

Why has the OFF Act has caused consternation for some so-called cattle trade associations?

It should be clear that a “cattle” trade association that disagrees with the OFF Act does NOT represent cattle producers!

The beef checkoff is a one dollar per head sold assessment paid by those selling cattle. Note, selling live cattle is not the same business as selling beef!

Producers mostly sell at cattle auction markets. Backgrounders and feed lots are the prime purchasers. The purchasers need to purchase our feeders at the best price they can get. We producers need the highest price we can get. Competition for our feeders should make for a fair market for all. In the past 25 years 82,964 feedlots have gone out of business. Most of these were small to medium sized, family-owned operations. This loss decreased competition for producers' cattle. This caused downward pressure on prices received by producers. However, the consumers are paying record high prices at the supermarkets.

The “beef industry” begins with the meat packers and culminates with the retail outlets. Some meat packers have been allowed to own feedlots in violation of the packers and stock yard Act.

This ownership allows the packers to manipulate the cash market depress the prices received by independent feeders. The price depression and decreased competition at the auction houses, are reflected in the lower prices received by the producers.

The checkoff dollar has been used by subterfuge to support lobbying by the so “called” cattle trade associations which oppose the OFF Act.

Meat packers and retail outlets don't pay the checkoff fee. Have you ever seen a commercial for live

cattle? Why not?

The purpose was to increase per capita beef consumption in the USA. Theoretically, increasing cattle sales and improving the lot for our domestic producers and the entire chain and stabilizing prices to the consumer.

Let's look at the results.

The beef-checkoff was included in the 1985 farm bill. It was instituted in 1988. The per capita beef consumption in the USA was 97pounds. In 2020 it decreased to 88 pounds. In1988 the USA beef cow herd was about 87million mother cows. In 2020 it decreased to 31 million mother cows. Domestic beef cattle operations numbered about 930,000 in 1990 and declined to 730,000 in 2017.

People are eating less beef per person. However, the domestic beef production is 20-30% less than the total amount of beef consumed. This reflects the growth in the population of the United States of America. The gap is filled with imported beef. Thus, the emphasis on beef exports as an indicator of market health is misleading if not downright dishonest. Based on domestic production beef exported as product of the USA can't be all domestically produced. Some if not most of this exported is beef imported and repackaged as product of the USA.

The “cattle” trade association which opposes the OFF Act uses checkoff dollars to lobby against Country Origin Labeling of all beef products. This is despite the tendency of one of the” Big Four” meat packers, both past and present, to import contaminated beef.

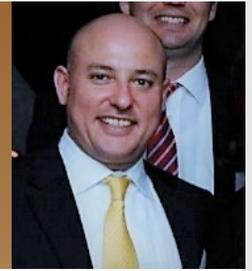
It's been stated by some that the checkoff is working as intended. If that's true, then it was intended to drive the domestic producer out of business. Clearly, we were misled from the inception of the beef checkoff program. If it was simply terminated, it would save the family cattle producer.

Data above is taken from USDA Economic Research Service and or USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service reports.

# RECOGNIZING ONE OF OUR OWN

## Marty Irby

Named one of The Hill's Top Lobbyists for 2021



"I'm deeply honored to have been named as one of the top lobbyists in the nation for the third year in a row and am truly grateful for the tireless work that our supporters and my colleagues have dedicated to achieve tangible progress for animals," said Marty Irby, executive director at Animal Wellness Action. "While 2021 has been a very challenging, proximity to Capitol Hill and work ethic are the key ingredients for any successful lobbyist, and I offer my deepest gratitude to The Hill for this honor."

"Marty has a unique ability to bring unlikely allies together for a common purpose," said Mike Eby executive director of the Organization for Competitive Markets. "Our work with both farmers and advocates to reform the mandatory USDA Commodity Checkoff Programs and pass the Opportunities for Fairness in Farming Act is one such example. Working with a wide array of legislators

and stakeholders on both sides of the aisle has been a key factor in Marty's success."

As COVID-19 continues to hamper in person events, meetings, and fly-ins, to D.C., Irby, who also serves on the board of directors of the Organization for Competitive Markets (OCM), coordinated and led one of the first fly-ins to Washington in June, 2021 to advocate in person with farmers and ranchers from South Dakota, Alabama, Mississippi, Nebraska, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Kansas, Washington, and Wyoming for the reform of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture's Commodity Checkoff Programs, the Opportunities for Fairness in Farming (OFF) Act led by Reps. Dina Titus, D-Nev., Nancy Mace, R-S.C., and Sens. Mike Lee, R-Utah, Cory Booker, D-N.Y., Rand Paul, R-Ky., Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., and Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., as well as other sustainable agriculture issues.

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

### THE ORGANIZATION FOR COMPETITIVE MARKETS (OCM) OPPOSES SENATE BILL S.3229 KNOWN AS THE COMPROMISE CATTLE MARKET BILL

by Vaughn Meyer

President

The Organization for Competitive Markets

OCM President, Vaughn Meyer said, "The mission of OCM is to work for transparent, fair and truly competitive agricultural and food markets and S.3229 is merely an extension of the current lack of market transparency which allows packer domination in the market place".

S. 3229 introduced by Senators Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), Jon Tester (D-Mont.), Deb Fischer (R-Neb.) and Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) is a compromise attempt to combine S. 949, the Spot Market Protection Bill, and S. 543, the Cattle Market Transparency Act of 2021. Under this union the bill crafters have neglected the dire need for the im-

mediate market transparency measures necessary for independent cattle producer and feeder survival.

Since the 2015 cattle market crash, precipitated by Congressional Country of Origin Labeling rejection, cattle producers have sought Congressional assistance in regaining their lost markets. One of the two key steps to rebuilding the cattle industry is establishing greater cash market transparency.

See [OCM Opposes Senate Bill S.3229](#) on page 7

## OCM Opposes Senate Bill S.3229 (continued from page 6)

S. 3229 fails to include immediate mandatory negotiated cash market levels that were originally inclusive in S. 949. Without immediate established cash purchase minimums, producers may have to endure two more years before any cash market reconstruction can occur and then it will be subject to a lengthy USDA approval process. Farmers and Ranchers desperately need immediate intervention to break the stranglehold of corporate consolidation in our food and agricultural economy.

In addition to no present cash market discovery for producers, S.3229 precipitates regional scapegoats for differing cash market purchasing requirements whereby regions of higher transparency levels may be reduced by regions with lower 18 month cash market averages. This regionalized approach of S.3229 exempts more than half of the United States translating into a "get home free card" for many big four packing plants. Differing industry regional requirements will only serve to create producer animosity, create transportation burdens and dictate processing facility locations.

OCM understands and appreciates the need for industry consensus to fix the ongoing monopsony market power which is depriving thousands of family producers and feeders of their livelihoods. However any consensus must have immediate and lasting solutions for the economic equality of all participants.

OCM, in keeping with our mission for transparent, fair and truly competitive agricultural and food markets, supports only compromises with:

1. Immediate nationally mandated cash market discovery to restore market competition, ensure market access and establish a true market basis for all marketing agreements.
2. Provide equal terms and treatment toward all individuals, localities and regions in accordance with the 1921 Packers and Stockyards Act section 202 (7 U.S.C. 192) (b).
3. Provide equal access to all purchase agreements / contracts for all participants as set forth under the Packers and Stockyards Act.



## THE OFF ACT by Marty Irby

The Opportunities for Fairness in Farming (OFF) Act, [H.R. 4291/S. 2861](#), led by Reps. Dina Titus, D-Nev., and Nancy Mace, R-S.C. in the House and Sens. Mike Lee, R-Utah, Cory Booker, D-N.J., Rand Paul, R-Ky., Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., and Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y. designed to address the corruption and mismanagement of funds at the USDA's Commodity Checkoff Programs is making progress this year.

Both Mace and Gillibrand, are new first-time cosponsors of the legislation and significant leaders in their respective caucuses. The House bill has also been cosponsored by Reps. Steve Cohen, D-Tenn., Tony Cardenas, D-Ca., and Earl Blumenauer, D-Oregon, but we are need of more action from the farming, ranching, and sustainable agriculture sectors to Capitol Hill.

We encourage OCM Members to call their Members

of Congress at 202-224-3121 and ask them to cosponsor the bill, as well as writing into their offices to ask the same. With the inaction of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees our goal for the 117th Congress is to garner a hearing in the U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform (OGR), on which Rep. Mace sits. As a freshman, Mace has already gained tremendous influence as the Ranking Member of one of the Subcommittees of OGR.

The full committee is led by Chairwoman Carolyn Maloney, R-N.Y., and Ranking Member James Comer, R-Ky., the former Kentucky Agriculture Commissioner who is also very close with Senator Paul. We need an influx of messages from around the country sent in to help secure a hearing and ask everyone to write in here: [Report Waste, Fraud, or Abuse | House Committee on Oversight and Reform](#).

# BEEF INDUSTRY

Sunday, October 31<sup>st</sup> 2021

## Full Measure News with Lisa Fletcher

OCM Interviews with Mike Eby and Fred Stokes from DC Fly-In June 29, 2021

### Full Measure with Sharyl Attkisson/Sinclair Broadcast Group

Watch the Video at <https://fullmeasure.news/news/shows/beef-industry>

If you've been to the supermarket lately, you've probably noticed the price of meat is going up and fast. But while the price you pay has never been higher, many American cattle ranchers say they're struggling. We sent Lisa Fletcher to Oklahoma to find out why.

When it comes time to feed this prized angus herd, a simple tap of the truck horn gets an immediate response.

But feeding the cattle is perhaps the only easy part of the business for John Pfeiffer, who has been farming here in central Oklahoma since 1985. His family has been in the state for generations.

**John Pfeiffer:** My grandad talks about when he went through the 30s and they were actually getting paid \$10 a head for the cows to kill them because there wasn't any market for them.

Things are better than they were for John's grandad, but much in his business depends on factors ranchers

can't control, like the price of feed, or how much they can sell their animals for.

**Pfeiffer:** It's always been difficult for farmers to make a living. They've always talked about that they're asset rich and cash poor.

And right now, there's a strange contradiction in the beef business: while prices at the supermarket keep rising, many of those who raise the cattle aren't seeing higher profits.

**Lisa:** Are you getting more money for your cattle?

**Pfeiffer:** No, we're not.

For more than a decade, retail prices of beef have been steadily rising, going from \$6:81 to \$12:28 per pound for sirloin steak between 2001 and now.

Over the same time, the price for live cattle, has stayed flat, between \$120 and \$160 dollars per hundred-weight.

See **Beef Industry** continued on page 9



## Beef Industry (continued from page 8)

Fred Stokes is also a cattleman, after a 20-year military career, including two tours in Vietnam, he returned to the family farm in Mississippi. When we caught up with him in the summer, he was in Washington DC with fellow farmers, discussing what's wrong with the cattle business and meeting members of Congress.

**Lisa:** What are family farmers up against right now?

**Fred Stokes:** Extinction, probably.

**Lisa:** Who's getting all the money?

**Stokes:** Right now, the beef packer. They are totally ripping people off.

Stokes helped found a farmers group called the organization for competitive markets, it says the U.S. beef industry has become too concentrated with just four meatpacking companies controlling more than 80% of the market.

**Stokes:** There's no question that they have the leverage to exact whatever they want, whatever portion they want from the beef dollar. Between them and the retailer, they take so much off the plate that there's simply not enough on average for the producer to get by.

And it's not just smaller ranchers sounding the alarm, the Vice President of the U.S. Cattlemen's As-

sociation recently said this at meeting of the Senate Agriculture Committee.

**Justin Tupper:** Since 2015, corporate packers gross margin ballooned from an average of \$100 to \$200 a head, to well over \$1000 a head. Packers have enjoyed unbelievable profits, harvesting around 120,000 head per day, while cattle producers go out of business and consumers pay double or even triple at the meat counter.

Of the four big meat packing companies, two are Brazilian-controlled. A trade group that represents them has accused the government of scapegoating them saying low prices for cattle ranchers are a result of market forces, with more animals than existing production plants can handle, creating a buyer's market for live cattle.

For consumers, it all means higher prices now and in the future, and because of loopholes in labeling rules, it isn't even clear where the beef is coming from.

Mike Eby is a 7th generation dairy farmer and cattle rancher from Pennsylvania.

**Lisa:** Explain to people who don't know, why is country of origin labeling so important to an American farmer?

**Mike Eby:** Here you have beef that is brought in from other countries, maybe blended with the American beef, repackaged once it gets

here, and they can then slap a "Made in the USA" on it, because it's in a styrofoam container that is "Made in the USA." So, to the consumer that's purchasing, they just assume that it is in the U.S. and there is no differentiation between beef that is brought in from other countries, such as Brazil.

Except for the price. Often making foreign beef, because it costs less - the choice of Americans who think they're supporting U.S. farmers because there's no requirement to tell consumers the true country of origin.

Farmers, like John, say they are holding on as best they can - watching their profits disappear, and quite possibly their family farms along with them.

**Sharyl (on-camera):** What is the Biden administration saying about this?

**Lisa (on-camera):** They've accused those four major meatpacking companies of quote: "pandemic profiteering" for near-record profits. The Department of Agriculture says it's looking at ways of addressing the problem. Some members of Congress are looking towards legislation for more price transparency. Even the Department of Justice is looking into this. And meanwhile, there are some cattle ranchers that are trying to raise money to build their own processing plants.



Mike Eby and Vaughn Meyer - DC Meeting 6/29/21



# IN MEMORY OF M. L. 'CAP' DIERKS

JULY 2, 1931 ~ OCTOBER 22, 2021

Former Nebraska State Sen. Cap Dierks,  
a champion for rural America, dies at age 89.

Cap was born on July 2, 1932 in O'Neill, NE to Lyle and Alys (Sanders) Dierks. He attended Saint Mary's Academy in O'Neill and graduated from Ewing High School in 1950. He obtained his BS in animal science from UNL and was a charter member of AGS Fraternity. He served in the US Air Force from 1954 to 1956 during the Korean conflict. He then received his Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine from Kansas State University in 1961. He met his wife Gloria (Zoeller) of Manhattan, KS and they married on December 27, 1958. Together, they have four children: Jon, Tom, Chris, and Stephanie. He loved that his was a fifth-generation ranch."

As a veterinarian, Cap practiced out of O'Neill and also worked the Atkinson and Burwell livestock markets and traveled widely to help ranchers and farmers with their animals. He served on the Ewing school board, the St. Anthony's Hospital Board and represented the 40th Legislative District for 20 years from 1987 to 2003 and from 2007 to 2011. He was a charter member of the Organization for Competitive Markets. He will be remembered most for his integrity, unwavering promotion of Nebraska agriculture and natural resources, and his staunch protection of the unborn. The Dierks family lived in Ewing and ranched nearby. Five members of his family, a son, son-in-law, and grandchildren, are also veterinarians.

Among his many legislative efforts were school funding and a pathway for ethanol and wind development in Nebraska. Additionally, he was active in ag market reforms, both locally and nationally, including mandatory price reporting. His veterinary practice informed his efforts to promote animal welfare reform. For his efforts, he was inducted into the Nebraska Hall of Agricultural Achievement.

"Rural America lost one of its very best champions," said John Hansen, president of the Nebraska Farmers Union, describing Dierks as "one of the most influential and respected state senators" in the Legislature in the last 35-plus years. "He argued things from a moral and ethical and policy perspective, so he raised the level of debate on a lot of discussions. "Former U.S. Sen. and Nebraska Gov. Bob Kerrey and current Sen. Deb Fischer offered similar praise. "Cap was a man whose faith and love of Nebraska combined with the virtue of caring about the opinions of everyone made him a model of what public service is at its best," Kerrey posted in a tribute on Facebook. "I trusted and loved this man completely. Young Nebraskans: Remember him. Be like him. You cannot do better."

Dierks was known for his ability to listen to others and care about what they think.

In the 1998-1999 period, thou-

sands of hog producers were put out of business in Nebraska, in many cases taking down local ag supply, feed, and banks with them. There was a genuine crisis. Senator Dierks was the Chair of the Agriculture Committee. He stepped up with a sweeping set of ag market reforms that were mostly enacted to deal with the crisis. That is what true leaders do when faced with a crisis.

Senator Deb Fischer, a Nebraska state senator who served alongside Dierks, said she got to know Dierks while advocating for Nebraska's schools. "He was a champion in the Nebraska Legislature for our state's children and our state's school districts. ... He was always a gentleman, sincere and honest in every relationship, and he had the deep respect of all who knew him."

**Former Senator Frank Kloucek/  
South Dakota commented:**

Sen Cap Dierks was there for wind development, Mandatory Livestock Price Reporting, Cool, Standing Bear Missouri River Bridge, Family Farm Act, Rural School Funding, Contract Growers Bill of Rights, reducing meat packer concentration, Missouri River sedimentation and so much more!

See [In Memory of M. L. 'CAP' DIERKS](#)

page 11



State Sen. Cap Dierks of Ewing (center) opening a boxed ham from Cuming County hog producer Paul Peters, on his right, Jan. 7, 1999, at the Lincoln legislator's office. Steve Cady, executive director of the Nebraska Pork Producers Association in back, fellow Sens. Jennie Robak of Columbus to the left. Boxed hams were left at Dierks' office for shipment to lawmakers in Washington, D.C.

Credit: Omaha WORLD-HERALD photo

### **In Memory of M. L. 'CAP' DIERKS** (continued from page 10)

Senator Cap Dierks was there for Nebraska, for all family farms and for our nation. Cap Dierks stood tall not just in stature but in life itself.

His ethics and beliefs were as solid as a rock. His efforts to help rural Nebraskans and rural Americans were infallible. His hard work ethic is leg-

endary. As a veterinarian he worked cow herds until every cow and calf was processed no matter what. As a legislator he worked until every law he wanted was passed or used to find a solution to very serious issues. His soft-spoken voice and unwavering determination for democracy and justice in rural America was unwavering.

I had the honor of working with Senator Dierks and a core group of

Midwest Legislators. We formed the Midwest Farm Price Coalition. We introduced similar bills in Nebraska Iowa South Dakota Minnesota Missouri Kansas and Oklahoma and had Farm Rallies and even went to Washington DC to stand up for fair prices for independent ag producers. Senator Dierks was an integral part of our success.



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

OCTOBER–DECEMBER 2021

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