



MEMBER NEWSLETTER

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

FROM THE PRESIDENT Vaughn Meyer



Greetings American Independent Farmers and Ranchers,

I hope 2022 finds all of you in good health and embodies the resurgence of fair and transparent markets for the produce of your toil.

2021, in the rearview mirror, was probably the year of greatest directional change for our country including agriculture. With the change of administration in Washington there has been the long-awaited recognition of giant packer/retailer oppression against fair markets for independent agriculture producers. The Biden Administration plan for returning transparent competition to the cattle industry includes restoring competitive marketing, enforcing competition rules and expansion of processing infrastructure.

It is this construction of independent processing plants that OCM Founding member, Fred Stokes, believes is the most important tool in the toolbox for creation of more independent market choices for local producers. In a July Press Release, USDA Secretary Vilsack announced a \$500 Million program to expand meat processing. Mr. Stokes said, "I see this as perhaps our best chance ever to bring about competition in cattle markets!" OCM Executive

Director Mike Eby and Fred are leading the charge creating an OCM pilot resource for independent pasture to plate beef marketing. From founding an organization fighting for competitive markets to fighting corporate giants in the packing industry through creating more independent processing choices for independent family producers, OCM and the cattle industry are fortunate to have Fred Stokes leading the charge. Fred and Mike Eby, a former dairy producer who has personally witnessed the woes of industry vertical integration, are perpetuating the OCM mission for fair and transparent agricultural markets through packing, processing, and retail infrastructure expansion.

Along with the Biden administration plan for restoring competitive markets, many Congressional leaders have introduced legislation safeguarding producer's rights to differentiate their produce against foreign imports. The American Beef Labeling Act (S.2716) introduced by Senator John Thune requires the United States Trade Representative, in consultation with the Secretary of Agriculture, to institute a means of reinstating mandatory country of origin labeling for beef in compliance with all applicable rules of the World Trade Organization. Country of origin labeling (COOL) was law prior to 2016 and was instrumental in supporting U.S. beef against foreign captive supplies through consumer preferences. OCM supports S.2716 and I encourage all producers and consumers alike to call your Congressional representatives and request they sign on, so Americans know what they are eating.

Currently, our nation's leaders are taking notice that efficiencies of large corporate food production do not guarantee food security for consumer

consumption. Now is the time for all producers to voice support for the programs and legislation which will prevent further industry vertical integration and rebuild independent family agriculture.

OCM works daily to support independent family agriculture and we invite you to join our mission of fair and competitive markets by which farm and ranch families and their rural communities can flourish. Please invite your neighbors to check us out on Facebook or <https://competitivemarkets.com>.

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Denver, CO
February 2022 |



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Competitive Markets

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MEAT PROCESSING PROJECT UPDATE

By
Fred Stokes

OCM had a very good meeting last month at the Cutting Edge Meat Company in Leakesville, Mississippi. Mike Eby our executive director flew in from Pennsylvania and he, Dwight Jackson, and I drove down to southern MS. Todd Vowell and two of his meat specialists were there as was Dave Foster who drove over from Baton Rouge. Scott Hicks (owner) gave us the cook's tour of his impressive operation.



*Left to Right: Dwight Jackson, Scott Hicks, Fred Stokes and Mike Eby
Cutting Edge Meat Company, Leakesville, MS*

Cutting Edge Meat Company became operational this past November. The building is 15,000 square feet and very well designed. Scott is an engineer and designed things himself. There is room for future expansion, and Scott envisions doing so.

At the conclusion of a two-hour discussion, there was firm agreement by Jackson, Hicks, and Vowell to become parties to a supply chain with Dwight Jackson pulling together producers who would raise what we believe at this point to be the requisite genetic and phenotypical cattle and feed them to finish. Cutting Edge Meat Company would then process the cattle to meet the requirements of Vowell Family Supermarkets and their other customer base. Todd Vowell agreed to be the marketing arm of the supply chain. There was an agreement to begin the effort by paying the cattle producer the (perceived) actual market price for fat cattle. Todd Vowell would then pay Cutting Edge the price they could purchase the various boxed primal from other sources. Cutting Edge would take measures to determine its costs and profit margin.

See [Meat Processing Project UPDATE](#) on Page 3

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



*Left to Right: Scott Hicks, Fred Stokes and Dwight Jackson
Cutting Edge Meat Company, Leakesville, MS*

Meat Processing Project UPDATE (continued from page 2)

After generating enough data to evaluate and gauge profitability at the various stages, there would be a negotiated pricing arrangement that would be fair and reasonable for each of the marketing chain participants. There was an evident attitude of “fair-play and live-and-let-live”. Everyone left the meeting with enthusiasm and high expectations.

Dwight Jackson, Scott Hicks, and Todd Vowell all committed their support for and participation in OCM’s effort to obtain funding and become the “facilitator” for developing and replicating this sort of supply chain arrangement. They understood and supported the ultimate objective of bringing about competition in the current highly concentrated meat processing industry.



*Left to Right: Scott Hicks, Dwight Jackson, Greg Bennett, Kevine Gunter, Todd Vowell
and Fred Stokes - Cutting Edge Meat Company, Leakesville, MS*

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

24th Annual Food & Agriculture Conference & Membership Meeting

“Freedom to Market” Building the Infrastructure for our Future

July 28 to July 30, 2022
Marriott Kansas City Airport
Kansas City, MO

Special OCM Room Rate of \$119.00++
Reserve your room early to be at the hotel for all the activities.

Last Day to Book for SPECIAL Rate:
Thursday, July 14, 2022

Click here to Register for OCM special room rate:
[Book your group rate for Organization for Competitive Markets](#)

**Or CALL for your reservation at
(800) - 228 - 9290 Ask for “OCM” Block**

WATCH FOR MORE DETAILS

Determination & Dedication Built Your Farms and Ranches

For over 20 years the Organization for Competitive Markets has been Determined to restore the marketplace with multiple buyers competing for your Livestock.

OCM is Dedicated to solving the growing Price Gap between Packers and Producers by:

- Collaborating with USDA to expand Independent Meat Processors, giving Producers and Consumers more options
- Supporting the majority of Cattle purchased by Packers come from Cash Markets
- Advocating Mandatory Country Of Origin Labeling be Implemented

**The competition over margin is fierce
with your OCM membership**

We Can Win

competitivemarkets.com/membership/

OCM membership provides a platform for individuals and organizations to join their voices in demanding fairness and justice within the marketplace.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE?

2022 MEMBERSHIPS ARE DUE RENEW/JOIN/DONATE TODAY!

The Organization for Competitive Markets (OCM) is a recognized national leader working to bring economic justice for family farmers, ranchers and rural communities by fighting to break the abusive corporate power that extracts the wealth out of their pockets. OCM provides a platform for individuals and organizations to join their voices in demanding fairness and justice within the marketplace. Working together we can ensure everyone receives their fair share of America's prosperity they build. By becoming a member, you will have access to the information and tools you need to join the fight.

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

- As an **Individual Member** (\$50) you will receive OCM's informative quarterly newsletter and each week you will receive our **NEWS ROUNDUP** by email.
- As a **Voting Member** (\$125) you will receive all the benefits of an Individual Member, and you gain the right to vote at **OCM membership meetings**, setting the course of OCM's future.
- As a **Sustaining Member** (\$500) you receive all the benefits of the Individual and Voting Member, plus you will have access to the inside strategies of OCM's ongoing campaigns through one-on-one conversations.

ASSOCIATE ORGANIZATION MEMBERSHIP

OCM's strength comes from collaborating with other like-minded organizations. Let OCM provide you with the information and services you need to succeed by becoming an Associate Organization Member.

- As a \$200 Associate your organization will receive OCM's informative quarterly newsletter, and each week your organization will receive our **NEWS ROUNDUP** by email.
- As a \$500 Associate your benefit package will include the benefits of the \$200 member plus two conference registrations, giving you a head start on attending OCM's annual conference.
- As a \$1,000 Associate your benefit package will include in addition to those listed for the membership levels above booth space and recognition at our annual conference.

DONATIONS

Your support and donation can make a difference. All donations to OCM are recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)3 non-profit tax deduction. Please send your donation TODAY. All donors will receive the OCM Quarterly Newsletter and the **NEWS ROUNDUP** by email.

Join/Renew/Donate today by selecting the level of membership that works for you:

_____ \$50 Individual Member _____ \$125 Voting Member _____ \$500 Sustaining Member

_____ \$200 Associate Organization _____ \$500 Associate Organization _____ \$1,000 Associate Organization

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Individual Name _____

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City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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Newsletters will be sent by email unless you check here to receive a mailed copy _____.

Membership is January-December, Make checks payable to: **OCM, P.O. Box 6486, Lincoln, NE 68506** or pay by debit or credit card through our secure, online system at www.competitivemarkets.com.

REPORT— NATIONAL FARMERS UNION ANNUAL MEETING

Denver, CO - February, 2022

OCM's executive director Mike Eby was in Denver CO late February at NFU's 120th annual convention. Elected as Pennsylvania Farmers Union's VP, Mike had the unique opportunity to visit with other state presidents on issues that matter to OCM's membership. In years past OCM has attended as an exhibitor, but this year given the connections opted instead to mingle with attendees. This had proven to be a wise decision of the board giving Mike the opportunity to connect with those actively involved with the expansion of independent beef processing.



*Scott Blubaugh, President of OK Farmers Union and Mike Eby
2022 NFU Meeting, Denver, CO*

One such example is Scott Blubaugh, president of the Oklahoma Farmers Union. Scott has been in the news recently testifying at the US Senate hearing and dialoguing with President Biden, USDA, and DOJ about the harm of vertical integration and captive supply within the meat industry. OCM credits Scott for his effort in this area but is even more excited about what he has been able to accomplish locally within his state. During the pandemic, Scott focused his resources towards assisting the native American tribe in expanding meat processing facilities to further bring competition and more choices to the marketplace. OCM has been and continues to be in dialogue with Scott as we attempt to replicate in Mississippi tribal-owned processing facilities.



Mike Eby and Senator Jon Tester of Montana - 2022 NFU Meeting, Denver, CO.

As great as it is to expand beef processing, nothing is more important than being able to differentiate that beef in retail. No one understands this better than Senator Jon Tester of Montana. Senator Tester has been a longtime advocate for Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling. Mike had the opportunity at the NFU convention to be able to personally thank Senator Tester and look for ways to assist in spreading the message of labeling our USA beef.

ocm

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MISSION STATEMENT

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

JANUARY– MARCH 2022

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