



FROM THE PRESIDENT —

Taylor Haynes

What's Up With The Farm Bill

The present Farm Bill, which authorizes funding for the various government nutritional and support programs, will expire at the end of September 2023. The subsequent Farm Bill is currently being written. The Farm Bill also governs food production and purveyance, for domestic and imported products. In that light OCM and allies have been very active in Washington DC, conducting 90 meetings with congressional representatives in July.

As president of OCM, I attended a listening session at the White House where we met with senior White House staff and the USDA person in charge of competition. There were eleven animal agriculture groups represented and one major labor union. We spoke in order with a three-minute time limit.

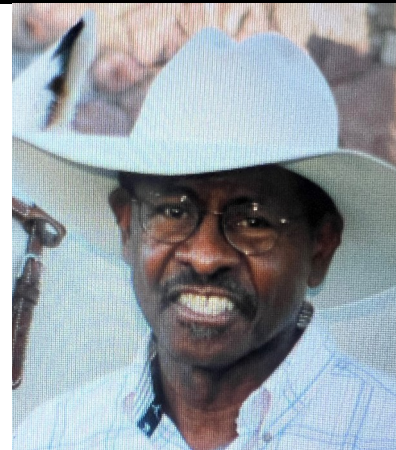
The session theme on the invitation was “competition *priorities*” in the upcoming Farm bill. I was the second advocate to speak. I open with restating the theme then asked in the Socratic method “how can I compete if my competition can use my label?”

I know what a Ford is, what a Chevy is and the elegance of a Brooks Brothers suit. As an American with choices, I choose Boot Barn/Wrangler as it is somewhat cultural and readily available in my neighborhood. Alternatively, there is absolute fraudulence being committed by the “Product of the USA” label on beef products in the meat cases in our stores. This elicited a negative body language reaction from two of the Farm Bureau and NCBA representatives.

Next, I stressed that the beef checkoff not only does not benefit the cattle producer it has been used to lobby against the accurate labeling of our product thereby removing the opportunity of choice for the consumer. There is at least a twenty percent chance that the product they choose will be imported.

The greatest concern is that it might be Brazilian. There is Mad Cow disease and foot-in-mouth disease in Brazil. Therefore, I noted in a true free enterprise system the beef checkoff should be voluntary. People purchase health insurance, car insurance etc. because they get a benefit from the expenditure.

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OCM 25th Annual Conference Highlights

On July 28 in Kansas City, MO., OCM met for its 25th Annual Food & Agriculture Conference. With a full itinerary, the group's focus this year was the 2023 Farm Bill. Members in attendance came from AL, MS, FL, NE, KS, MO, PA, VA, WV, CA, SD, WA and WY.

OCM welcomed several industry experts to speak at the conference, such as Andy Green, USDA senior advisor on competitive markets to Secretary Tom Vilsack, who offered an update on upcoming USDA regulations, and Mike Conaway (R-Texas), former U.S. House Agriculture committee chairman, who discussed the EATS Act.



OCM discusses upcoming Farm Bill at annual meeting.

(From left) Beau Sheets, Dave Wright, Taylor Haynes, and Mike Schultz speak at the OCM conference.

Marty Irby presented on the Off Act (*Opportunities for Fairness in Farming Act*), a part of the Farm Bill and the **AMP Act** (*Agriculture Marketing Protection Act*). The group also discussed the funding OCM raised to prevent the EATS ACT from being included in the upcoming Farm Bill. In June, **OCM launched a campaign against the EATS Act** that centers the opposition of family poultry, pork, and dairy farms as well as independent cattle ranchers. Specifically, it highlights their concern that Chinese interests are not solely focused on land rights; they are aggressively acquiring entire agricultural companies, posing a significant threat to our farming sovereignty. "The EATS Act is nothing but a Trojan Horse designed to put family farmers out of business and give multinational conglomerates like JBS and Chinese-owned Smithfield an even greater advantage than they already have," Schultz said.

Additionally, OCM is pushing for **checkoff reform**. The organization, along with other groups, continue to work to achieve checkoff reform so family farmers can stay afloat, and has been a leader on the OFF Act since it was first introduced as a previous iteration in 2016.

At the meeting, OCM Board Director and former Cattlemen's Beef Board Member **Dave Wright**, Neligh, NE, noted his concern with "continued scandals" within the USDA's Commodity Checkoff Programs. As a proposed solution, OCM is advocating for the **Opportunities for Fairness in Farming (OFF) Act**, which was first introduced in 2016. "It's time to end the corruption within the beef checkoff and others and I believe the OFF Act that would achieve that end continues to see more support than ever," Wright said.

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(Annual Conference Highlights continued)

Joaquin Contente presented issues for Dairy Producers; and **Mike Weaver** and **Jonathan Buttram** on poultry issues. After lunch **Dr. Max Thornsberry D.V.M.** discussed mRNA injection in the food supply and Foreign Animal Disease.

In the afternoon, **Fred Stokes** moderated a two-hour panel discussion on developing needed infrastructure in the Southeastern Region to feed and process more of the calves produced there, rather than shipping them and incurring a substantial price discount. Presenters were Todd Clemens, Okeechobee Livestock Market, Dave Carter, Flower Hill Institute, Chris Young, American Association of Meat Processors, Chip Perrin, Coastal Plains Meat Company and Todd Vowell, Vowell's Markets. Retail opportunities were discussed by **Beau Sheets**, Coordinator/ OCM Packers Project, **Taylor Haynes** OCM President, and **David Wright** OCM Director.

The day wrapped up with an open discussion on Politics in D.C. led by **Marty Irby**. At the banquet the Helmuth Award was presented by President Haynes to **Pat Craycraft** our Office Manager of 25 years for dedication to OCM and her devoted professional service to OCM and the Ag Industry very much appreciated. And finally, at the banquet we introduced **Andy Greene from USDA** as our **Keynote Speaker**.

OCM ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

OCM's Annual Membership meeting held on Saturday saw the reelection of Board Directors Jonathan Buttram from Albertville, AL, Craig Vejraske from Omak, WA, Mike Weaver who hails from Fort Seybert, WV., and Mike Schultz of Brewster, KS as well as the reelection of the 2023-24 officers by unanimous consent with no opposition. Taylor Haynes of Laramie, WY will continue to serve as President, Schultz as Vice-President, Marty Irby of Washington, D.C. as Secretary, and Jonathan Buttram as Treasurer.

“I'm honored to be selected to serve as President of OCM for a second term and appreciate the membership's confidence in our leadership,” said **Taylor Haynes, President of OCM, and founder of Wyoming's Independent Cattle Producers Organization**. “We've made great strides over the past year and I'm especially encouraged by the launch of our latest campaign against the terrible Marshall-Hinson EATS Act. Furthermore, I applaud the decades of work dedicated to the organization by Pat Craycraft and congratulate her on receiving the Helmuth Award this year – OCM's highest honor.”

“Many thanks to the members of OCM for giving me the opportunity to serve as Vice-President for another year,” said **Mike Schultz, Vice-President at OCM and founder of the Kansas Cattlemen's Association**. “The groundswell of support for our position on the major farm bill issues we witnessed last week in our Nation's Capital was tremendously encouraging, and OCM is now in a stronger position than we've ever been.”

“I am deeply humbled and honored that the membership has given me the opportunity to serve as board Secretary for a second term,” said **Marty Irby, Secretary at OCM who is leading the group's lobbying efforts in Washington, D.C.** “If the National Cattlemen's Beef Association thinks their recent slanderous personal attacks are working for them, they're dumber than I thought. They've only motivated me to work twice as hard to defeat the EATS Act and see the enactment of the OFF Act that would bring reforms to the scandal-ridden checkoffs who use family farmers' own money to put them out of business and give favor to multi-national conglomerates in China and Brazil.

“What I witnessed last week in Washington was the most encouraging moment in my 22 years of visiting Capitol Hill and I believe OCM is changing the game for producers and giving Big Ag a run for the money they've robbed from us,” said **Jonathan Buttram, OCM Treasurer and President of the Alabama Contract Poultry Growers Association**. “Our finances are in great shape and we have the opportunity to make greater change and have more impact than we ever have in the upcoming Farm Bill – I appreciate the membership's confidence in reelecting me to serve another term.”

“It's time to end the corruption within the beef checkoff and others and I believe the OFF Act that would achieve that end continues



(President Tyler Haynes addressing OCM's Annual Membership Meeting)

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to see more support than ever,” said Dave Wright, OCM board Director and a former member of the Cattlemen’s Beef Board who witnessed the corruption first-hand. “Our most sincere thanks goes out to Pat Craycraft for her tireless work—there’s no living person more deserving of the Helmuth Award.”

Other business included

- the movement to launch small processing plants to compete with the big four packers in the Southeastern U.S. brought up by founder Fred Stokes from Porterville, MS;
- various membership fees and categories within the organization;
- OCM’s July Fly-In to Washington, D.C.;
- the establishment of OCM’s 501 (c)(4) affiliate Competitive Markets Action; and the breakdown and details about funding OCM has raised to help prevent the inclusion of EATS in the upcoming Farm Bill.
- A motion was made by member Connie Buttram from Albertville, AL, to have board Secretary Marty Irby oversee public correspondence to OCM’s email membership list, social media, and public-facing communication under the oversight of the Executive Committee.

Vice-President Mike Schultz also addressed the international discussion focused on CO2 emissions in American agriculture and the slanted messaging he’s seen from that movement.

OCM Board Director and former Cattlemen’s Beef Board Member Dave Wright from Neligh, NE, brought up the issue of continued scandals within the USDA’s Commodity Checkoff Programs and OCM’s work to pass the OFF Act.



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USDA commodity checkoff programs put swamp politics ahead of farmers

Beef and pork consumption have fallen in recent years.

**By Marty Irby and Jonathan Buttram - -
Wednesday, April 5, 2023—The WashingtonTimes**

In 2023, consumption of chicken in the United States has hit an all-time high, outpacing that of beef or pork. According to the Department of Agriculture, beef was consumed at an average of 84.4 pounds per person per year in 1970, and in 2023, that number is expected to be 56.7 pounds per person. In contrast, chicken consumption is up from 40.1 pounds in 1970 to an estimated 101.9 pounds projected for 2023 — all without the help of USDA commodity checkoff programs — quasi-governmental slush funds that hamper competing sectors.



Originally intended to collect and pool money to be used for promotion and research, commodity checkoff programs were established to help farmers — large and small producers alike — market their products. Paid directly from mandatory farmer payments and deemed a federal tax by the Supreme Court, these programs were never intended to be used for lobbying efforts, nor were they to fund campaigns against any other commodity or agricultural product.



Unfortunately, history has proved otherwise. Since the inception of these programs, inappropriate relationships between checkoff boards and lobbying organizations have formed. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been misused, and these checkoff programs, as they are being managed, do not work in the best interests of independent family farmers. Groups such as the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association, or NCBA, and National Pork Producers Council, or NPPC, have long used these funds to put small farmers out of business, picking winners and losers in the marketplace and putting the interests of multinational corporations like Chinese-owned Smithfield and Brazil-based JBS above those of the American farmer.

One financial review of only three days of the NCBA’s books proved the beef checkoff improperly spent more than \$300,000 on inappropriate activities. Imagine what one would find if we checked a whole month or year. On the pork front, the NPPC, through its famed “Pork: the Other White Meat” campaign, has spent farmer dollars engaging in anti-competitive practices that have left some pork producers stuck in the mud and others out of business.

Hog farmers must pay 40 cents per head sold into the pork checkoff, but it’s only those pink pigs — the ones you’ve seen like Wilbur in “Charlotte’s Web” — that actually have “white meat.” Berkshire or “heritage hogs,” the “spotted” pigs like the ones raised at White Oak Pastures in Bluffton, Georgia, and Gunthorp Farms in LaGrange, Indiana, produce red meat with more marbling, much different than the “Pork: the Other White Meat” slogan seeks to sell.

The NPPC’s slogan has, in many cases, disparaged those products and shut down heritage hog farms across the nation. In 1970, the U.S. saw 871,200 pork producers; in 2023, only 67,000 remain.

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(USDA Commodity Continued)

Climbing to record heights without a checkoff program and the swampy federal bureaucracy that comes with it, chicken has overtaken the consumption of beef for many reasons: dietary trends, price and availability (i.e., cut-up, precooked and fast-food offerings), to name a few. Although many factors play a role, it's worth noting that consumption of both beef and pork has fallen in the years since the checkoff programs for each were instituted. These checkoff programs must be fixed. In 2023, Congress is set to take up the Farm Bill, an opportunity that comes once every five years that lends a pathway for the enactment of legislation to address the problems in these programs.

That's why Sens. Mike Lee, Utah Republican, and Rand Paul, Kentucky Republican, along with Rep. Nancy Mace, South Carolina Republican, introduced the bicameral Opportunities for Fairness in Farming (OFF) Act, S 557/H. 1749. The bill is backed by 80 farming organizations, including the National Farmers Union, the Organization for Competitive Markets, and more than 250,000 farmers and ranchers in the U.S. It is also supported by conservative groups such as FreedomWorks, The Heritage Foundation and R Street.

The bill doesn't seek to abolish the checkoff programs, as beneficiaries are misrepresenting. It would instead require transparency, accountability, and a system of checks and balances that would allow farmers to see where their dollars are being spent. It would also prohibit checkoff funds from being used for lobbying efforts and prohibit funds from being used to pay for staff and programs of trade associations that favor multinational corporations pushing independent farmers out of business. In addition, it would prevent disparagement of one product over another. Allowing the federal government to pick winners and losers in the marketplace is unacceptable.

Agriculture Committee leaders in Congress, Sens. John Boozman, Arkansas Republican, and Debbie Stabenow, Michigan Democrat, and Reps. Glenn Thompson, Pennsylvania Republican, and David Scott, Georgia Democrat, should join with leaders of the OFF Act, along with the quarter million farmers backing the legislation to include the measure in the Farm Bill set to be enacted this year.

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Time for Congress to Help Farmers vs the Giant Meat Packers and Poultry Integrators

By Mike Weaver

Unbelievably, our U.S. House of Representatives has again aligned with the giant multi-national meat packers and poultry integrators to circumvent implementation of new USDA rules to protect farmers and ranchers from abuse by these big corporations.

The Biden Administration proposed these changes almost two years ago and now the House has defunded their implementation even before they have taken effect. The USDA sees these changes as:

Statement of Need:

Differences in size and imbalances of power between parties in contractual poultry growing arrangements can have detrimental effects on one of the contracting parties and may result in marketplace inefficiencies. An often-cited concern is the live poultry dealer's full control over inputs, e.g., chick, feed, medication, etc., to the poultry growing process. Industry members have asked the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) to address such imbalances by specifying the conduct that would be considered violative of the Packers and Stockyards Act (Act).

Revisions to regulations pertaining to the Packers and Stockyards Act (Act) clarify the types of conduct by packers, swine contractors, or live poultry dealers that the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) considers unfair, unjustly discriminatory, or deceptive and a violation of section 202(a) of the Act, regardless of whether such action harms or is likely to harm competition. The rule also clarifies the criteria and/or types of conduct that would be considered unduly or unreasonably preferential, advantageous, prejudicial, or disadvantageous and a violation of section 202(b) of the Act.

Sections 202(a) and 202(b) of the P&S Act are broadly written to prohibit unjustly practices and undue preferences and prejudices. Industry members have complained that the regulations effectuating the Act are too vague and do not provide adequate clarity about the types of conduct or action that are likely to violate the Act. This rule is needed to provide essential clarity about what would be considered violations of the Act, regardless of whether such violations harm or are likely to harm competition.

Executive Order 14036 Promoting Competition in the American Economy, directs the Secretary of Agriculture to address unfair treatment of farmers and improve conditions of competition in their markets by considering rulemaking to address, among other things, certain practices related to poultry grower ranking systems. AMS is responding to numerous complaints from poultry growers about the use of tournament systems

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SAVE THE DATE -May 1-2, 2024

26th Annual Food and Agriculture Conference and Membership Meeting

OCM will convene its 26th Annual Conference at the Golden Nugget Biloxi Hotel in Biloxi, MS for 2 days of presentations and discussions on expanding cattle feeding and meat processing infrastructure in the SE. We want to capture the full value of the calves we raise for our producers and rural economies. Let's keep them here rather than shipping them.

We anticipate a comprehensive and insightful program, a large attendance and an event that will be the catalyst for developing a network of independent supply chains. Other topics TBA.. Bring your spouse and friends.

CONTACT: Fred Stokes 601-527-2459 or tfredstokesfarm@gmail.com

MARK YOUR CALENDAR — Join us in Biloxi May 1-2, 2024

(From the President Continued)

The Farm Bureau representative nervously blurted out-of-turn that we must expand exports to help the producer. I reiterated that domestic production falls at least twenty percent below domestic consumption. The USA is the best beef market in the world, so we don't have excess to export. We also are noted for the high quality and pristine conditions we maintain during production. This is because of our love for the land and livestock in our care, backed by our environmental and animal welfare statutes. Labeling imported beef as a product of the USA undermines our ability to compete. This practice puts the USA producer at risk. Exporting foreign beef as product of the USA will destroy the American producer when Mad Cow disease or foot-in mouth disease is found in beef so labeled. Of the twelve groups represented, nine agreed with OCM positions.

This brings me to the next attempt to divert from the points raised above. "Look at the great prices the producers are receiving today." Supply and demand have kicked in. Prices were in the same neighborhood in 2014. Mandatory Country of Origin (MCOOL) Labeling was in effect. The beef cow inventory was about 31 million. Country of origin labeling was rescinded, and prices fell 43% by 2020, while the beef cow inventory remained in the same neighborhood. In 2023 the beef cow inventory declined approximately 3 million beef cows about 9%, feeder prices increased 243%. This disproportionate increase is due to the efforts of OCM and others to reform the beef checkoff and demand accurate labeling. Prices will crash again if the Farm Bill is finalized without at least MCOOL. OCM is diligently trying to get the the Opportunity For Fairness in Farming ACT (OFF Act) into the Farm bill. The OFF Act encompasses MCOOL and at least an OIG Audit of the checkoff program.

(Time for Congress to Help Farmers Continued)

and recognizes that measures beyond disclosure and transparency may be necessary to address those practices, given the economic power imbalances and competition concerns that exist in today's markets. Responses to requests for comment have helped AMS tailor further policy development and rulemaking under the Packers and Stockyards Act, as amended, to address, through specific prohibitions, limits, and/or conventionalities, potential unfairness that may arise from the use of the tournament contracts in the poultry sector.

Very similar changes were proposed in 2010 under the Obama administration but never took effect due in part to Congress defunding their implementation back then. These regulations do nothing but help protect farmers and ranchers from abuse by these big corporations.

Included too are provisions to clarify and help stop abuses of farmers and ranchers for so called "forward contracts" and other backroom arrangements by beef and pork processors.

It's way past time Congress and USDA quit being lackeys of the Giant Multi-National Corporations and stand up for the farmers and ranchers that feed this country and a large part of the rest of the world.

Do your part and contact your Senators and Congressmen to let them know you support these efforts to stop abuse by these Giant Corporations. The viability and existence of family farmers as we know them stands in the balance.

Where are the Dairy Checkoff Reports?

By Deborah Mills

Dairy Producers are turning to the Legislative Branch of the U.S. Federal Government for help because they are frustrated with the management of their Dairy Checkoff Funds. Dairy Producers voted to self-impose a Tax because they bought into the concept that their Dairy Checkoff dollars would be used to promote fluid milk sales and reduce dairy surpluses that should have resulted in improving producer farm gate pay prices.



Is the Dairy Checkoff program working as intended? The recipients of the Checkoff dollars loudly declare Yes! The answer is mixed among Dairy Farmers.

The National Dairy Promotion and Research Board is the biggest farm commodity checkoff with annual checkoff revenues of \$364 million in 2021. The Dairy Board contracts with Dairy Management, Inc. (DMI), a lobbying organization, handing over \$110 million in checkoff dollars in 2021. Demand for fluid milk has continually declined since the implementation of the Checkoff, Cheese demand has increased, overall milk surpluses continue and producer profitability remains unstable despite the farmer-funded Checkoff programs.

Who have been the true beneficiaries of the Dairy Checkoff dollars? Instead of promoting the products of the struggling dairy farmers who fund them, DMI engages in high-profile partnerships that benefit giant corporations: \$5.8 million to Domino's Pizza and \$6 million to the NFL Fuel Up to Play 60 campaign which is a partnership between the NFL and schools to teach kids to get active and choose food options such as yogurt and other dairy products.

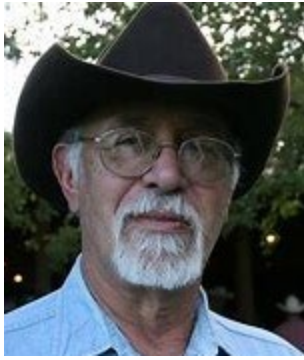
The results of these Checkoff-funded campaigns have not preserved family dairy farms, the U.S. lost over 20,000 dairy farms between 2010 – 2020. Dairy Farmers' are funding thousands of checkoff-related jobs with their Checkoff dollars while tens of thousands of Dairy Producers have been driven out of business by low milk prices.

What oversight do Producers have with their investment? The pushback on Checkoff transparency is so intense, one has to ask themselves why the beneficiaries of Agricultural Commodity Checkoff programs, i.e. those who are tasked with managing the farmer's funds, are so dead set against the farmer investors wanting access to the records of their investments.

Dairy Producers are frustrated with DMI's mediocre results of the promotion campaigns. The USDA is required by law to describe "activities conducted", account for the receipt and disbursement of all Checkoff funds, and include an independent analysis of the effectiveness of the Dairy Checkoff Program. From 2020 - 2023, USDA failed to submit federally mandated annual reports to Congress accounting for dairy checkoff program activities, spending, and effectiveness.

This isn't the first time: As Politico reported in 2017, USDA failed to submit the required reports between 2012-2016 under USDA Secretary Vilsack. Following pressure from farm and advocacy groups, the reports were eventually published by USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue under the Trump administration. Once again under Secretary Vilsack Checkoff reports have not been submitted. Producers are being denied the basic right to have their questions about their investment answered.

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Fixing the Cattle Price Discovery and Transparency Act

August 7, 2023

By—Gilles Stockton, Grass Range, Montana
(*OCM Helmuth Award Recipient*)

After years of depressed prices, we ranchers and cattle feeders are desperate for Congress to do something – do anything! It was in this context that the 50/14 concept was conceived. When the “negotiated spot market” for fat cattle got down to less than 20% of the total, it became a problem that obviously needs correction. Particularly since the prices derived in this very thin market are used by the packer cartel to buy the remaining 80% of cattle – the “captive supply.” Clearly, the cattle industry has a corrupt price discovery mechanism.

The idea is that if beef packers are required to buy more of the cattle on the “negotiated spot market” this market dysfunction would be corrected. Many felt that 50% of the fat cattle should be purchased on the “negotiated spot market” for delivery no more than 14 days in advance. Hence 50/14.

As a result of the advocacy of cattle producers and their organizations, a bipartisan group of Senators, led by Senators Grassley and Fischer have proposed “The Cattle Price Discovery and Transparency Act” which would put the 50/14 concept into law. Unfortunately, there is a big flaw.

First, we should more clearly understand that the “negotiated spot market” for fat cattle is a “negotiated” market. Whenever you have a “negotiated” market, you lose transparency because each transaction is made in secret from all of the other transactions being negotiated in the same time frame. Therefore, the party who has the most information has the most power. Packers clearly control the information and has the least to lose if an individual purchase is not confirmed.

Furthermore, in a recent op/ed “Please We Want No New Subsidies” Bill Bullard (CEO of R-Calf) demonstrates that the “negotiated spot market” transactions are all made at the end of the week all at the same time. A practice that looks suspiciously like packer collusion. The sellers, the ones who have the most to lose, are not allowed time to negotiate with each of the four potential buyers or even confer with one another about bids being offered. It is a matter of take the price offered or feed your cattle for another week.

Because of the Mandatory Price Reporting law, the results of these “negotiated” sales are eventually reported to USDA and the average price derived by this corrupt mechanism is then used to price the “captive supply” cattle committed to be delivered that coming week. What you have is a “Captive Market” pricing the “Captive Supply.” This can never work honestly, even if the “negotiate spot market” is substantially greater than 20%.

There is, however, a simple way to fix this. “The Cattle Price Discovery and Transparency Act” directs USDA to come up with a plan to increase the numbers of cattle purchased in the “negotiated spot market,” and directs USDA how they should proceed. However, the Act also allows for packers to buy fat cattle through an electronic auction market, but does not require that this actually happens. The sponsors of the Act need to put teeth in this provision.

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OCM Legislative Update: The American Family Farmer Nation is Rising Up

By Marty Irby

It's been quite an interesting few months in Washington, D.C. OCM, along with our new 501 (c) 4 affiliate, Competitive Markets Action (CMA), has been making waves on Capitol Hill in our two-part Farm Bill Summit held July 17-20, and September 17-21 in our Nation's Capital. During these events OCM members conducted nearly 200 meetings in person with legislators and their staff. We also conducted an additional 75 or so meetings via Zoom and other platforms during the August recess when Members of Congress were back home in their districts and states.

Thanks to grant funding we've secured to fight against the so-called Ending Agriculture Trade Suppression (EATS) Act, H.R. 4417/S. 2019, and our allies in the war to reform USDA's scandal-ridden Commodity Checkoff Programs each of you are forced to pay into, swampy and controversial industrial agriculture groups and their backers in China like Smithfield, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) – that represents only 4% of beef producers – and the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC), are petrified over the progress we are making. EATS would nullify more than 1,000 state laws that protect independent family farmers and most of OCM's membership that foreign agribusinesses continue to try and stamp out of the marketplace.



OCM Members on Capitol Hill in July 2023 with the organization's anti-EATS billboard truck

The Opportunities for Fairness in Farming (OFF) Act, H.R. 1249/S. 557, led by Reps. Nancy Mace, R-SC, and Dina Titus, D-NV, in the House, and Sens. Mike Lee, R-UT, Rand Paul, R-KY, Cory Booker, D-NJ, and Elizabeth Warren, D-MA in the Senate, has garnered several new cosponsors including Reps. Victoria Spartz, R-IN, Mike Lawler, R-NY, Greg Casar, D-TX, and Mark Pocan, D-WI. We're building tremendous momentum by working together with groups like R-CALF,

Farm Action, FreedomWorks, the Heritage Foundation, and American Grassfed Association. Most have recognized that the only way to defeat our enemies in China and their puppets in the U.S. is by working together, and I have so been inspired over the past few months to see so many of you come together and rise up for the common good.

We've also recently hired former U.S. House Agriculture Committee Chairman Mike Conaway, R-TX, and his former Committee Staff Director Scott Graves to help us in our lobbying efforts to defeat EATS. And we've brought on board Vinnie Trometter, who hails from Williamsport, PA, in the Congressional District currently represented by House Agriculture Committee Chairman Glenn "G.T." Thompson, R-PA, to help with our lobbying efforts to defeat EATS and secure the enactment of the OFF Act as well. I'd like to add a special thanks to the Alabama Contract Poultry Growers Association and the Buttram Family for their support in helping with OFF.



OCM Members with U.S. Sen. Tommy Tuberville, R-AL, in September 2023 on Capitol Hill

There's no doubt we've killed the EATS Act as its currently written. Its own sponsor Sen. Roger Marshall, R-KS, said on RFDTV: "We're getting the heck beat out of us," something I've never heard a legislator publicly say about their own bill. Perhaps deep down, Marshall realizes introducing the EATS Act was a big mistake – one that garnered him far more enemies than allies. Marshall's angered countless producers, including OCM Vice-President and founder of the Kansas Cattlemen's Association Mike Schultz who said: "It's a crying shame to see my senator, Roger Marshall, leading this assault on producers and states' rights." EATS is truly the worst assault against family farmers brought by a U.S. Senator in modern times.

Unfortunately, Marshall's counterpart in the House – Rep. Ashley Hinson, R-IA, seems to have doubled down like her predecessor Rep. Steve King, R-IA, who ran his own Congressional career into the ground several years
(Continued Page 10)

(OCM Legislation Continued)

ago championing similar measures in the previous two farm bills among other things. Hinson and others in the House appear to be working on a slimmed down version of EATS that would still overturn the 2018 election that secured the enactment of Proposition 12. A modified version of EATS would still put countless pork producers in jeopardy of losing their livelihoods, and we must continue to oppose it.

On the upside, Clemens Food Group in Pennsylvania, whose products are marketed under the label of Hatfield Meats, as well as PennAg Industries Association, and Brent Hershey, the President of Hershey Ag in Marietta, PA, all came out swinging against EATS, and are now actively lobbying against the bill as well. The question is how will Chairman Thompson respond? We even saw Sid Miller, the Texas Commissioner of Agriculture, speak out against EATS as well. American producers don't want to see states' rights or their livelihoods destroyed.

The Processing Revival and Intrastate Meat Exemption (PRIME) Act, H.R. 2814/S. 907, led by Reps. Thomas Massie, R-KY, and Chellie Pingree, D-ME, in the House, and Sens. Angus King, I-ME, and Rand Paul, R-KY, in the Senate, that would help open up markets and small processing plants also continues to build steam with more than 50 House cosponsors and 7 in the Senate. While we are not actively lobbying on the bill, we continue to monitor its progress and support the measure as OCM founder Fred Stokes continues to explore ways for us to engage on the ground in Mississippi and other Southeastern States in this domain



OCM, Farm Action, and American Grassfed members with Rep. Nancy Mace, R-SC, at the Capitol Hill Club in Washington, D.C. in September of 2023

Like most things in Congress, both the House and Senate seem to have 'kicked the can down the road' on the Farm Bill that expires September 30, and we will not

likely see a new Farm Bill enacted before the Spring or Summer of 2024, leaving producers lingering in uncertainty. We will continue to keep you posted along the way and in the meantime remain encouraged that we are winning, and that you'll help us keep up the good fight.

OCM Treasurer and President of the Alabama Contract Poultry Growers Association Jonathan Buttram may have said it best in a recent article published by 1819 News: "As a proud American and lifelong producer, I'm elated to see our members rally and rise up to defeat industrial agriculture and their backers in China on a level never seen before. The industrial agriculture mafia is petrified of our work and the OFF Act because they see the writing on the wall and we hope they soon meet the same fate as New York's infamous 'Five Families.'"

(Mills continued from Page 7)

The Opportunities for Fairness in Farming OFF Act will resolve many of the issues surrounding the checkoff programs. The OFF Act wouldn't end Checkoff but merely increase transparency and oversight of the program's activities and finances. Producers and supporters are currently meeting with the members of the Senate and House of Representatives to include the Opportunities for Fairness in Farming (OFF) Act in the 2023 Farm Bill.

(Stockton continued from Page 8)

In general, auction markets are the best form of price discovery and electronic auctions are a very cost-effective way to buy and sell. There is no technical reason that an electronic market for fat cattle would not work very efficiently, just as they do for marketing feeder cattle. However, although there have been numerous attempts, no electronic market for fat cattle has been successful because the packers have no incentive to use it. From the packer's perspective, the "negotiated spot market" works just fine.

In order for the packer cartel to buy through independently operated electronic market auctions, Congress would have to specifically require that they do. If the sponsors of the "Cattle Price Discovery and Transparency Act" were to amend this Act to require that packers start purchasing fat cattle through independent electronic marketing platforms, we would finally be on the road to a truly competitive and transparent price discovery mechanism. This amendment need only set specific targets for its adoption. Private enterprise would do the rest.

We can have a price discovery system and market that is transparent and competitive - but only if we so demand and only if we convince Congress that this is the proper way to restore competition to the fat cattle market.

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OCM MISSION STATEMENT

Keeping the spirit of Teddy Roosevelt, the original monopoly buster, OCM strives to foster and recreate food production locally, providing consumers truly transparent "Farm to Table" food systems in communities across America. OCM's actions will stimulate local commerce while making food availability and food safety more certain.

JULY—AUGUST—SEPTEMBER

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SAVE THE DATE—MARK YOUR CALENDAR

May 1-2, 2024

**26th Annual Food and Agriculture
Conference and Membership Meeting**

**Golden Nugget Biloxi Hotel and Casino
Biloxi, Mississippi**

JULY—AUGUST—SEPTEMBER

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