



FROM THE PRESIDENT — Taylor Haynes

“THE FARM BILL”

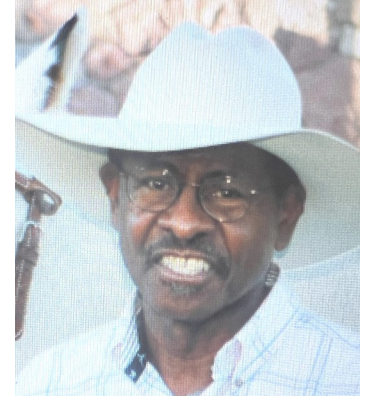
The “Farm Bill “is supposed to be redone every five years. The 2018 Farm Bill was due to be redone by September 2023. It appears that a renewed effort to get it done this fall is underway. In that light we need to reassert the need for checkoff reform and mandatory country of origin labeling of USA raised beef. The OCM team conducted 407 meetings with congressional and Senate staff and representatives on Capitol Hill in 2023. We also partnered with Moms of America for an additional 70 meetings.

The checkoff program is a charge of \$1.00 per head for tax beef producers for each animal sold. It was included in the 1985 Farm Bill and was instituted in 1988 and amounts to approximately \$50,000,000 annually. The program was intended to promote beef consumption. In 1988, the per capita beef consumption was 97 pounds and by 2022 it had declined to 58 pounds. In 1990 the number of cattle producing operations numbered about 930,000, and by 2023 that number had declined to about 730,000.



This has resulted in 20 to 30% of the beef consumed in the USA being imported. This drastic decline in domestic production has contributed to the record high prices consumers are paying. An additional concern here

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is the imports are repackaged and labeled as products of the USA! Some of these imports come from Brazil where Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (Mad Cow Disease) and Foot in Mouth disease are still a problem.

**20 to 30% of the beef consumed
in the USA being imported.**

The Beef Checkoff program is the only tax collection program not audited by the OIG, and the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association



(NCBA) is the largest recipient of beef checkoff funds. This organization is opposed to mandatory country-of-origin labeling! A lawsuit filed by OCM (US) in 2010 forced an external audit. However, the court chose and specified a 9 day period that could be audited. The Clifton-Gunderson CPA firm performed the audit. The audit found that \$33,000 per day was misspent.

**The Beef Checkoff program is the only tax
collection program not audited**

Therefore, it is critical to ensure food safety that annual audit of the beef checkoff program and Mandatory Country of Origin labeling of beef products be included in the 2024 Farm Bill. Please contact and encourage your Senate and congressional representatives to support these measures.

Op-ed: If American farms belong to the American farmers, stop the EATS Act

YELLOWHAMMER - Alabama

GUEST OPINION By [Jonathan Buttram](#)—July 29, 2024



Farmers across the nation face a vicious attack on their farms and freedom. As a poultry farmer, cattle rancher, the President of the Alabama Contract Poultry Growers Association, and a patriotic American, I feel it is my duty to warn my countrymen against the Ending Agricultural Trade Suppression (EATS) Act, H.R. 4417/S. 2019.



(U.S. Department of Agriculture)

This perilous piece of legislation—brought before Congress by Rep. Ashley Hinson (R-IA) and Sen. Roger Marshall (R-KS)—states that it will take away farmers’ burdens by eliminating many state agricultural laws. In reality, the EATS Act gives foreign corporations like the Chinese-owned Smithfield Foods the opportunity to take over our property and businesses, and therefore our livelihoods.

If the EATS Act is enacted, it would abolish state laws that prioritize family farms, and manage the health of our children, and prevent the spread of disease. Instead, it would give these aforementioned foreign entities control over American livestock production. Instead of American farmers controlling the industry, corporations from across the world would be deciding the fate of American agriculture.

My business has suffered from my advocacy for American farmers, but I will not let it stop me from speaking out for what is right. Family farmers deserve to control their livelihoods and should not fear their business dwindling because of foreign influence. Lawmakers should answer to their constituents, not the corporations signing their paychecks.

(Buttram Continued on Page 6)

Monopoly and its Effect on Dairy Producers

Midwest Dairy Farmer—OPINION

Last night while watching the 60 Minutes segment featuring Lina Kahn, commissioner of the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), and her attempts to reign in monopolies in various areas of the economy, I couldn't help but think about my industry, Dairy, and the monopolies that have been created by the seemingly never-ending mergers and consolidations. Dairy seems to be in a never-ending state of consolidation.

Is every corporate merger evil and unnecessary? Of course not. But when you get to a point where there is literally only one place to sell or buy goods and services, that is the definition of monopoly. They have used this plan in the animal agriculture industry for years. Dairy is no exception.

The Dairy Farmers of America (DFA) purchase of Dean's Foods created a huge conflict of interest in procurement of raw milk and hardly anything was said. We were all told to not ask too many questions, lest we might not have a place to put our milk. I don't market milk with DFA. But at my Co-op's Leadership conference, with the Dean's bankruptcy filing only a few days old, we were told of the plan to have DFA take over Dean's assets. So obviously our Co-op leadership was working on the details with DFA. I asked our general counsel how such a takeover would work, given DFA's cooperative status, what with Dean's obvious corporate structure, how is he being so sure that this was going to happen and in a relatively short time frame to boot. He said to me, "Don't you worry about those things. They are being handled. We just need to make sure you have a place to put your milk." In other words, scare us into compliance. You don't need to know the details. The big boys have got this. That is how an incredible amount of vertical integration of the dairy industry took place in a matter of a few months. All under the watchful eye of the Department Of Justice (DOJ) and USDA.

How can a dairyman be sure, that his Co-op, a Co-op that literally owns the processing facilities in which his raw milk is to be processed, is giving him a fair price for his commodity? It's not possible. Even though the dairyman should be privy to any and all documents that are associated with the dispersal of his raw milk, dairy farmers are often not allowed to see Co-op sales and use, or frankly, any documents deemed by the Co-op to contain sensitive or protected information. Cooperatives selling raw milk to their own subsidiaries, often, if not always, Corporate entities, is a situation that screams conflict of interest. If DFA owns the processing company, why would they care what prices the raw milk bring? If documents pertaining to such transfers are deemed protected, how does one find out? By filing suit against your own Co-op? I think you get the idea. Not gonna happen. At least not often.

DFA, in many areas, is the only place dairymen can market raw milk. And their control is only getting tighter. DFA is also controlling raw milk hauling in many of the same areas. Then you add the processing layer created by the Dean's acquisition. This kind of market dominance is supposed to be illegal. Dairy has almost caught up to the kind of vertical integration the meat industry has known for years.

Four companies control all of the meat. Farmers in animal agriculture have literally no choice where to sell their commodities. They sell into closed markets. In dairy, even if several Co-ops operate in a certain area, there is no freedom to change. From what I understand, in pork and poultry, it's even worse. You only produce if you have a supply agreement. You can bet that is the ultimate goal of the dairy industry. For now, the USDA is working to "modernize" the Federal Milk Market Orders. Without going into a whole lot of explanation, the FMMOs are the complicated rules under which milk is priced. The new changes, as I see them all will benefit the processor, save for one. The change that will benefit the dairyman is simply a return of the formula to the old way of calculating the Class 1 price, the way Class 1 had been calculated forever. Until it was changed, by an amendment, without public comment, and without congressional oversight. That change has cost the Dairy Producers literally billions of dollars in the pricing of raw milk. The return to the old way of computing the Class 1 mover is the only sure positive for the dairy farmer in the FMMO modernization. As I see it. The rest economically benefit the processor, to the detriment of the dairyman.

(Monopoly Continued on Page 6)

Giant Poultry Companies Paying Up for Their Abuse of Growers

By Mike Weaver



The five major poultry companies called "integrators" are paying for their abuse of the farmers who raise chickens for them.

Tyson, Perdue, Koch, Sanderson, and Pilgrims Pride have come forward to settle a class action lawsuit filed in 2017 accusing them of colluding together to set grower pay. It was obvious when a Tyson grower in Texas was making the same per pound for raising chickens as a Pilgrims grower in West Virginia.

University studies have shown that poultry growers earn an average of as little as \$2.00 per hour for the 24 hour a day work and responsibility to raise the companies chickens you buy in the grocery store. This while having millions of dollars invested in a facility built to company specifications to raise the birds.

Growers are forced to compete for their pay based on company inputs over which they have no control. The companies supply the chicks and feed to raise the birds to a specified weight and growers are forced to compete against their neighbors for their pay. If a grower is supplied inferior quality chicks and/or feed it is impossible to make a good chicken out of it.

Growers are ranked against every other grower whose chickens are processed the week their birds are picked up and their pay is based on who raises the biggest birds on the least amount of feed. If they have been supplied poor quality chicks or feed their production can be so poor that it costs them more to raise the birds than they are paid. This is especially prevalent in the winter months when heating costs can be excessive. The houses have to be heated to 90 degrees for a flock of new chicks regardless of the outside temperature.

The five major integrators who were the first to settle have paid a total of \$169 million for their misgivings. The funds after attorney fees will be divided amongst all 24,000 poultry growers who are a member of the "class" in this action. The majority of smaller integrators are expected to come forward and settle their liability in this action in the near future.



EATS Act-Buttram Continued from Page 3)

The EATS Act is a dire threat to rural communities. We must prevent this legislation from obstructing the forthcoming Farm Bill. If the bill were to pass with the EATS Act addition, it would destroy American agriculture as we know it.

I plead with you to reach out to your Congressmen and Senators and express your concern for the EATS Act. Our mission is obvious, we must come together to prevent corporate greed from tainting our farms. The EATS endangers our way of life. We cannot let the Farm Bill pass with it attached as an amendment and must put all differences aside and remind Congress that American agriculture belongs to American farmers. It is essential that they protect and prioritize the family farms that make American agriculture so great.

U.S. Sens. Tommy Tuberville and Katie Britt, as well as Reps. Barry Moore, Dale Strong, Terri Sewell, Robert Aderholt, Jerry Carl, Mike Rogers and Gary Palmer should all stand strong and vocally oppose the inclusion of the EATS Act and other measures like it from being included in the upcoming Farm Bill.



Jonathan Buttram is president of the Alabama Contract Poultry Growers Association and board treasurer at the Organization for Competitive Markets. He resides in Albertville, Alabama.

(Effect on Dairy Produces Continued from Page 4)

This has been going on for years and it's getting worse. All of it under the watchful eye, or dare I say complicity of the federal government through the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) under the USDA. You know, the government entity that is supposed to support the agricultural sector. Instead, we get programs to benefit farmers based on race and gender. Conservation programs designed to take land out of production. Climate change initiatives of questionable merit. Many of those financed with our own money through Checkoff, which the USDA also oversees. All while the small family farmers leave the industry and production shifts to larger and larger operations.

Ms. Kahn of the FTC is making monopolies and their effect on society the target of scrutiny. The economic system of capitalism will not work if monopolies are allowed to exist. Period. Capitalism is a system of "free and open trade." But by definition, a monopoly stifles competition, thereby negating the "free and open trade." Lina Khan knows this. When Lesley Stahl asked what was the problem with Amazon, because they bring her goods at "reasonable" prices, Ms Kahn immediately responded with, "How do you know what a reasonable price is when Amazon has no competition for which you are able to compare"? Or words to that effect. One hundred percent do I agree. Lina Khan immediately cut through the bullshit. With no competition, you are simply trusting corporate America to be fair. And that is ridiculous. Beyond price, it is just plain dangerous to allow the kind of market dominance that is currently being fast-tracked. We have already seen what happens to supply chains when the production of a product is confined to only one source and that source goes offline. It's not pretty.

This young woman is standing tough against huge corporations who see her as a threat to their bottom lines. I hope she turns her sights on the dairy industry and all of animal agriculture. There is more than just corporate bottom lines at stake. What is at stake is nothing less than the food security of our country. If monopolies are her thing, there is a big one in the Dairy industry. In my humble opinion.



Organization for
Competitive Markets

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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.

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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.

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