

With A "Steak" In Montana's Future

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Thank You!

Montana Cattlemen's Board of Directors would like to thank all our members for their continuing support of our organization. Without you there would not be a Montana Cattlemen's Association!

We always welcome and encourage comments and collaboration on our many issues. We not only need monetary contributions, but especially voices to get things done. This year MCA, along with Farmers Union and Northern Plains Resource Council, presented a COOL bill to the Montana legislature. Although we weren't able to get it passed, we did make some progress. If we continue to promote the issue, hopefully we can get the Montana legislature to pass COOL at the next session.

To be successful MCA needs additional participation from our members. There are many important issues to address on behalf of Montana cattle producers, but our active membership has been dwindling in recent years. Our current president Jim Baker has committed to an extra year of office, but we need new blood on our board to continue getting the word out and promoting our issues. Please consider helping us by becoming a board member – just let me know if you are willing!

We will be having our annual Cattlemen's Day in Lewistown at the Yogo Inn on December 7th. This is a central location in Montana and we hope to once again have a great agenda as well as live entertainment. More information will be sent in November, but please mark your calendar now for December 7th. Those of you who have attended Cattlemen's Day in the past, know how informative it is!! We will also have a drawing for a Ruger 10/22 autoloading Model 1103 rifle at Cattlemen's Day. Everyone who has paid dues for 2019 is automatically entered in this drawing.

Thank you again for your support and I look forward to hearing from you.

Jan McDonald, Treasurer

406-467-2251

P.S. I've included three articles in this mailing that may be of interest to you. Also, if you haven't yet renewed your dues, enclosed is a membership renewal form. It's not too early to start thinking about gifts for Christmas so the MCA brand book order form is also included.

*Note that membership is **free** with the purchase of a brand book!*

Up Against Monopoly

by Jim Hightower

Farm Aid, the top-notch group of researchers and advocates who've tracked family farm issues for nearly 34 years, reports that just two giants now control 60% of all raw milk processed nationwide — a concentration that works to suppress the farm price of milk. But the processor monopoly is more severe than that number suggests. Because of rigged marketing rules and the perishable nature of milk, farmers sell regionally, and these markets are even more locked down by the Big Two. The largest — Dean Foods, an \$8 billion behemoth — controls 90% of dairy markets in Wisconsin and Michigan, 70% in New England and 70-90% in several other states.

Most of today's farm commodities are sold into noncompetitive markets controlled by fewer and fewer multinational corporations. For example, the Big Four processing/marketing giants control production of 55% of all turkeys, 59% of chickens, 66% of hogs, 70% of soybeans, 80% of corn and 84% of beef. Again, the real level of price-busting concentration is greater than these percentages indicate, for most of the regional markets where farmers actually sell are controlled by only one or two buyers.

Notice, though, that the same corporate powers holding down farm prices are holding up consumer prices. Every year, less and less of each food dollar we spend goes to the people who produce, and more and more to enrich monopolist middlemen. The USDA reports startling and growing income inequality between farmers and corporate interests: Less than 15 cents of your food dollar now goes to farmers.

Being at the mercy of monopolistic commodity buyers is only part the farmers' plight. For farming supplies, they also must deal with a handful of noncompetitive sellers for such expensive essentials as seed, tractors, fertilizers and crop loans. For instance, just two corporations (John Deere and CNH Industrial) control nearly half the U.S. farm machinery market. Aside from price, these manufacturers gouge farmers with such devious ploys as prohibiting them or local shops from repairing their own machines. Instead, the companies mandate expensive, time-wasting reliance on often distant dealerships.

For diabolical manipulation of market power, though, few can match the raw greed of seed monopolists. Until recently, these kernels of new life were sold in a vigorously competitive market, but the seed industry has rapidly devolved into a rigidly controlled global cartel run by a handful of biotech giants. In 1996, farmers (and gardeners) could buy from some 600 independent seed companies in the U.S. By 2009, only 100 remained. By 2016, just ten corporations controlled 75% of the global seed market. And in the short time since, a series of megamergers has essentially eliminated the competition: Dow Chemical took over DuPont; ChemChina swallowed Syngenta, the Swiss biotech conglomerate; Germany's BASF bought out multiple seed producers; and Bayer, the voracious German colossus, has been allowed to consume Monsanto.

Today, two-thirds of the world's crop seed supply is controlled by only four private entities — with Bayer controlling a quarter to a third of the global seed market. In just two decades, U.S. farmers have seen the price of seeds for major row crops nearly quadruple, even as the pay they receive for raising those crops has plummeted.

Even worse than the monopolists' pricing is their use of their financial and political clout to establish a legal fiction that allows them to own patents on seeds, the most fundamental resource in agriculture. They've genetically tampered with seeds to make corn, soybeans and other crops withstand heavy applications of toxic, weed-killing chemicals. And who are the biggest peddlers of these chemicals? The seed monopolists. (Bayer sells \$12 billion in ag chemicals, 21-22.9% of the global agrichemical market.) Thus, farmers are now doubly squeezed by higher-priced patented seeds and by the cost of the expensive chemicals they require. Meanwhile, the seed monopolists prohibit farmers from saving seeds from this year's crop to plant next year's (a practice as old as agriculture). It's a deliberate restraint of trade that shackles farmers to abusive corporate masters, nature to ever-more-toxic pesticide regimens and humanity to monocultures vulnerable to pandemic crop disease and climate change.

Fortunately, there are many good folks working to support our farmers and fight ag monopolies. For 30-plus years, Willie Nelson, Neil Young, John Mellencamp, Dave Matthews and friends have headlined Farm Aid's star-studded all-day extravaganzas to raise money and awareness to help keep family farmers on the land. But Farm Aid works year-round: Its 800-FARM-AID hotline and Farmer Resource Network support farm families in crisis, finding resources to access new markets, transition to more sustainable, profitable practices — and survive. Visit FarmAid.org for more information.

Populist author, public speaker and radio commentator Jim Hightower writes "The Hightower Lowdown," a monthly newsletter chronicling the ongoing fights by America's ordinary people against rule by plutocratic elites. Sign up at HightowerLowdown.org.

Non-logic and the NCBA

By Gilles Stockton

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) is currently making a media and lobbying push to have the United States Mexico Canada Agreement (USMCA) - better known as NAFTA-II - ratified by Congress. In their press info NCBA states: "USMCA maintains science-based trade standards while rejecting failed policies of the past, like mandatory country-of-origin labeling." This statement reveals two of NCBA's fixations because along with opposing COOL, the NCBA is obsessed with more exports while denying any negative effects of beef and cattle imports.

Apparently in the NCBA world view only through more exports can cattle producers prosper. They manipulate trade statistics to make it look as though we export more beef than we import by conveniently not accounting for the nearly two million head of live cattle imported from Canada and Mexico. The NCBA then claims that exports increase beef's value by \$313.39 per head. I don't know how they made up that number, because I am certainly not making \$313.39 per head on cattle sales. What is clear, however, is that imported cattle are strategically used by the beef packing cartel to manipulate the market, yet NCBA totally ignores the fact that the market for cattle is neither transparent nor competitive.

Many of us had high hopes that re-negotiating NAFTA would result in a better trade agreement, but that does not seem to be the case. Corporations still have every incentive to outsource their manufacturing and they can still hide their profits in off-shore tax havens. Food safety standards are still not equivalent. The workers still have no rights. Environmental pollution is still happening. The World Trade Organization (WTO) can still overrule domestic laws, and COOL is still not allowed. The upshot from the point of view of cattle producers, is that beef and cattle imports still undermine our domestic market.

As for our Canadian neighbors, why do they remain dead set against US consumers knowing that they are eating Canadian beef? I understand that they think that they are protecting their interests, but COOL is the least of their problems. Their real issue, which unfortunately affects us too, is that Canadian cattle funnel into a captive supply system that results in lower prices for both them and us. If our Canadian colleagues would wake up, they would realize to what degree that they are being used. What they should do is petition their government to insist that the US enforces the Packers and Stockyards Act. Real market competition would cure a lot of problems on both sides of the border.

I recently had a conversation with Congressman Greg Gianforte and asked him if he would support a bill to restore COOL. He said no, because the cattle industry is not in agreement over this issue. I guess in his estimation, ninety percent of consumers and a majority of cattle producers can be ignored because a handful of NCBA lobbyists say so. Mr. Gianforte is running to be our next governor. If he comes to your town, a good question would be to ask him if he supports COOL. If enough people ask, maybe he will have a change of heart.

Senator Tester is totally in favor of COOL. In fact, his support for COOL was key both when it was first passed in the Montana legislature in 2005 and later in Congress in 2008. If you see him tell him thanks. As for Senator Daines, I don't know his position. He is running to defend his seat, so it would be a good time to get him on record.

This is a good question to ask all of the men and women running for various national or state offices. The same advice for those of you who might be reading this in another state. Ask your candidates if it makes sense that all imported manufactured items and foods carry a mandatory country of origin label except for pork and beef. And if that doesn't make sense to them, remind them that NAFTA-II is not an improvement and COOL must be restored.

MY FAKE NEWS CHECKOFF

By Vaughn Meyer, Reva, SD

This past week, the Cattlemans Beef Board (CBB) shared the “good news” results of our producer Return on Investment (ROI) study. Dr. Harry Kaiser, professor of economics at Cornell University, conducted another 5 year ROI update embodying more positive attributes for beef producers. Dr. Kaiser’s analysis concluded a 71 cent increase over our 2014 ROI of \$11.20. Seventy-one cents doesn’t appear to be a huge increase after the 2014 \$5.65 ROI increase, however, Kaiser gives us the tools to calculate our investment portfolios. He says, “The revenue generated by the Checkoff ultimately filters back down to the producer level.” Essentially, he says a producer could calculate their own return from their investment in the Checkoff by taking the total amount of their investment and multiplying it by \$11.91. The sum of that equation is what a producer should be able to conclude as their own return.

While the CBB is beating their “good news” drum, apparently no one clued in CBB and Dr. Kaiser that since the 2015 Beef Checkoff assistance in repealing Country of Origin Labeling, no profits have filtered down to producers. Actually gigantic 40 percent losses to market cattle and 48 percent producer calf prices have robbed producers of \$30 billion dollars the past 4 years.

In the 2014 the checkoff ROI was positive on the high market years when Dr. Kaiser’s research was taking credit for the market gains established by COOL restrictions on beef labeling. However, after the 2015-2016 markets were pillaged by our two top contractors, we found the actual ROI for 2015 was a minus \$328. Using two more years of producer losses accompanied by two more years of contractor fees, the true calculation of Dr. Kaiser’s 2019 ROI is a negative \$173.75. This latest ROI update is a slight improvement but it still contributes to the downward death spiral of thousands of farmers, ranchers and main street businesses.

The recent Dr. Kaiser / CBB ROI proclamation is nothing but “Fake News” fabricated to cover up the theft of producer dollars by the big 4 corporate packing monopolies. In the past, two of these foreign monopolies have demonstrated they are above our laws and regulations with their underhanded dealings!

This recent ROI update is nothing new as our checkoff has a whole plethora of “pat your back” tools for producer hypnosis including an ongoing University of Wyoming checkoff funded Beef Sustainability study. Preliminary results of this study brag of more whopping producer benefits including a \$57.67 per acre valuation increase for our ranches, a \$726 valuation increase per cow and eighty-six cents / pound benefits on 5 weight cattle!

Another ongoing “feel good” producer communication is the recent US Meat Export Federation (USMEF) May export value was \$313.39 / head. This is the extra value to each beef animal due to exports. USMEF receives approximately \$10 million annually of your Beef Checkoff dollars with matching funds from USDA.

Producers should be gratified because without the \$1,139.39 sustainability and export benefits cows would be worthless. In accordance with CBB proclamation an average producer with 200 cows can expect approximately \$517,600 in increased assets of cattle, real estate and investment portfolios which will lend credibility to his loan balance sheet.

All this “feel good-fake news” should have producers laughing all the way to the bank; however, on a serious note thirty billion dollars in producer losses are unsustainable to our industry as well as the sovereignty of the United States America. Our Beef Checkoff equates to a money laundering scheme designed to feed the packer- NCBA policy presence in Washington D.C.

In the past our Checkoff has secured membership in the Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (GRSB) which conforms to United Nation control under Agenda 21. The principle members of GRSB promote agriculture practices aimed at control and removal of animal agriculture from high priority areas.

If our Beef Checkoff wants to boast sustainability, it should be centered on the first priority of keeping family farmers and ranchers on the land. In lieu of creating fabricated producer communications it would make more sense to conduct a study of why per capita beef consumption has fallen 22.4 pounds or 28.4 percent since 1985. Maybe CBB could invest our checkoff dollars to study the market effects of imported beef wrapped in a USA label?

The bottom line is, “your Beef Checkoff has aided and abetted the demise of nearly 400,000 producers since 1984.” A huge proportion of your annual 80 million dollars transcends across that superficial fake fire wall between checkoff affairs and policy lobbying procedures; lobbying efforts which have escalated packer profits to new highs at producer’s expense.

U.S. agriculture is experiencing some of the toughest economic conditions of the past 90 years resulting from control of production agriculture by a few monopolistic global corporations who ultimately dominate marketing and much of the daily production inputs. Our only hope for survival is to get involved and demand checkoff and market transparency.

P.S. If you have not received your “trickle down” checkoff ROI, you might want to calculate according to DR. Kaiser’s figures and bill to CBB or state beef councils including late payment fees!

Name: _____

Ranch Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ County: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

Own cattle: ____ Yes ____ No

Tribal member: ____ Yes ____ No

**** SPECIAL OFFER: Receive *FREE* membership with MCA brand book order!**
A one-year membership in MCA through December 31, 2019 free with purchase of any book.
See brand book order form on reverse page

Annual Membership Dues—January 1 through December 31, 2019

Membership Dues:

Cattle Producer ~ \$50 _____

Associate Member ~ \$50 _____

College Student ~ \$25 _____

Junior Member ~ \$25 _____
(Age 18 & younger)

OR ~ Optional Premier Memberships:

Gene Autry level ~ \$100 per year _____

Roy Rogers level ~ \$150 per year _____

John Wayne level ~ \$200 per year _____

Additional Optional Contribution _____

TOTAL AMOUNT SUBMITTED: \$ _____

Only members owning cattle have voting rights ~ One member—one vote
Associate members do not own cattle but are supportive of MCA goals

**WHEN YOU JOIN MCA OR RENEW YOUR DUES
YOU WILL BE AUTOMATICALLY ENTERED TO
WIN A RUGER 10/22 AUTOLOADING RIFLE
MODEL 1103 (Retail value \$309)**



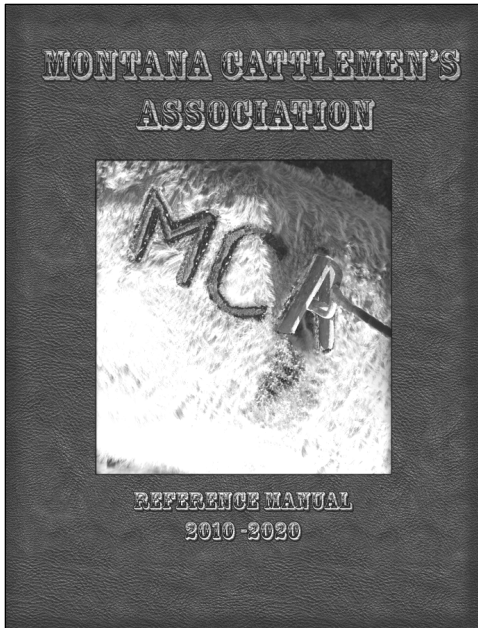
SUBMIT PAYMENT TO:

MONTANA CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 536 ~ Vaughn, MT 59487

Please make copies of this membership form for multiple memberships or to share with your friends and neighbors.

Your continued support of Montana Cattlemen's Association is very much appreciated!

GREAT GIFT IDEA!



The Montana Cattlemen's Association Brand Book and Reference Manual is a deluxe hard cover three-volume series which catalogs Montana's recorded livestock brands. It also includes some special "extras": ranch histories, western poetry, traditional cowboy recipes, and photos.

The three volumes of the brand book have been divided into the following counties:

WESTERN: Lincoln, Flathead, Lake, Sanders, Missoula, Ravalli, Granite, Powell, Glacier, Pondera, Teton, Lewis & Clark, Deer Lodge, Jefferson, Silverbow, Madison, Beaverhead, Gallatin, Broadwater, and Mineral.

CENTRAL: Toole, Liberty, Hill, Choteau, Judith Basin, Blaine, Fergus, Petroleum, Meagher, Wheatland, Sweet Grass, Park, Golden Valley, Musselshell, Yellowstone, Stillwater, Cascade and Carbon.

EASTERN: Phillips, Valley, Daniels, Roosevelt, Sheridan, Garfield, Rosebud, Treasure, Big Horn, McCone, Richland, Dawson, Prairie, Wibaux, Custer, Fallon, Powder River, and Carter.

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MONTANA CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION PO Box 536 ~ VAUGHN, MT 59487

Brand Book Order Form

Books can also be ordered online at www.montanacattlemen.org

SHIP TO:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ ST _____ Zip _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Eastern Volume (516 pages): \$65

(Quantity)

Central Volume (634 pages): \$75

(Quantity)

Western Volume (512 pages): \$65

(Quantity)

Three-volume set: \$185

(Quantity)

TOTAL AMOUNT SUBMITTED: \$ _____

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offer on reverse page!**