

President's Letter
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Global warming, Global warming, Global warming... Apparently if you say something enough times it begins to seem real. Now we've had two consecutive cooler than normal winters and the Arctic ice is apparently rebuilding by an amount equal to the size of Texas according to the National Climatic Data Center and the National Snow and Ice Data Center. The chant from the activist Hollywood types, the media, and those who would propose socioeconomic change as a way to "fix" the problem has now become Climate Change, Climate Change, Climate Change. I need to point out the fact that none of these people are scientists! Where's the science?!

In 1978, I had the opportunity to be the official veterinarian on a boat load of Holstein heifers being exported by the Holstein Association destined for the government-run collective farms of Hungary. During my three weeks at sea on the "El Corral" with 1300 Holstein heifers, a Bolivian sea captain and his wife and a group of Spanish Basque "Cowboys," I heard plenty of stories of previous escapades. The one that I think applies is one about sheep and portholes (windows). One Basque cowboy told us to be sure to keep the portholes closed even though the heifers couldn't fit out, and the clean sea air was certainly appreciated. He then recounted a story of sheep that were being hauled to the Middle East to be used as minefield clearing agents. Apparently the sheep realized their ultimate fate since they took advantage of an open porthole to begin jumping "out." (Look before you leap.) One after another they followed as they continued their escape plan. Unfortunately for them, they were leaping through the porthole directly into the sea and it took long enough to be discovered that hundreds of sheep were strewn for several miles in the wake of the ship.

We are all like sheep at one time or another. Remember last spring when corn, crude oil and gasoline were at dizzying new highs and economists were predicting \$8, \$10 and \$14 corn. We were all being told that suddenly everyone in China and India were buying cheeseburgers and new cars and that nothing in the world would ever be the same again. We were even told that \$25 milk was a distinct possibility. How I wish now that I had remembered the last time in 1995 that we surpassed \$5 corn and "nothing would ever be the same again because China and India were finally able to feed their billions of people." The era of cheap food and feed was over and the 200 year old Malthusian theory of population outrunning the food supply had finally come true! That time it only took 6 months to get back to \$2 corn. (Sound familiar?) Today many of us are paying the price for jumping through the same porthole.

We will get over it in time with the help of American agriculture. We American farmers can still over produce almost any product at any time if we can make a profit. Everyone in this country should be very thankful for the free enterprise economic system of American agriculture. Without it we either would not have an adequate food supply and thus pay exorbitant prices, or we would be importing a substantial portion of our food supply making national security an impossible challenge.

Another thing I learned on my cattle cruise to Yugoslavia was the value of the free enterprise system, which we often take for granted being in agriculture. I knew that in those days “Hay Buckers” in Chino could unload semi loads of hay in a flash working for themselves as private businessmen. As the federal vets were getting the cattle processed for export, I watched the union stevedores loading the ship with hay for the trip. It took days and days of dozens of men piddling around to do a job that two Chino hay haulers could do in hours! Now, what an eye opener! The next eye opener was in the socialist country of Yugoslavia. These people had the task of unloading the heifers and putting them on box cars destined for Hungarian State Farms. Once again, it took dozens of people several days to do a job two cowboys could easily do in a few hours.

I came home with a renewed respect for our free enterprise system and understood why much of socialist Eastern Europe was operating so inefficiently that it was difficult to feed their own people. In fact most the collective farms that “shared the wealth” were dismal unproductive failures. Look at Russia, Maoist China and Cuba. The current political leaders of our country need to refer to not so distant history to realize that socialist policies do not make a country strong. Strong leaders and strong businesses operating in a free enterprise system made this country strong. A strong agriculture not strangled by government interference, excess taxation and over regulation will help our country escape this current economic crisis. Greenhouse Gases and Animal Agriculture...I keep hearing of the planned assault on farm livestock operations and their gaseous emissions “to protect the environment.” At the same time in states other than arid New Mexico, developers find it to be politically necessary to maintain swamps or “wetlands” and to occasionally construct a wetlands for environmental reasons. Swamps generate the same gases daily by anaerobic fermentation that our cows are being held accountable for! Also buffalo, deer, elk, antelope and even the sacred “horse” emit the same gases. Consider that in Ohio there are 2-3 times as many deer as dairy cattle. In fact, last hunting season alone counted over 250,000 reported deer harvested, almost as much as the entire dairy cow population in this populous Midwestern state. The total herd of deer is reportedly over 700,000 in Ohio. I propose that many or most states have more deer than cattle. Maybe we should regulate deer, elk, buffalo, horses and swamps also!

We are going to Washington D.C. at the end of this month for the opportunity to meet with our delegation from New Mexico and hopefully the Secretary of Agriculture. I

know all of us have imminent financial concerns and the new administration is throwing money in every direction, but I really don't think that it would be in our best interest long term to go with outstretched palms. I believe our long term interests would best be served by reducing government intervention in agriculture. I would prefer sound science, basic economics and common sense be applied to all government policies such as Climate Change, Green Energy programs, Clean Air and Water programs and anything else they touch.

Let us not be like sheep, and let's not allow our legislators to act like sheep!