

Daniel P. Wolf

Daniel P. Wolf, Executive Secretary
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING AND
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT SCOPING MEETING**

Issued: October 11, 2018

In the Matter of the Applications of Dodge County Wind, LLC for a Certificate of Need, a Site Permit, and a Route Permit for the 170 MW Dodge County Wind Project and Associated 345 kV High-Voltage Transmission Line in Dodge, Olmsted, and Steele Counties

PUC Docket Numbers: IP-6981/CN-17-306 (Certificate of Need), IP-6981/WS-17-307 (LWECS Site Permit), and IP-6981/TL-17-308 (HVTL Route Permit)

Date: Thursday, October 25, 2018
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Location: Holiday Inn and Suites Owatonna
2365 43rd Street NW
Owatonna, MN 55060

Find out if a meeting is canceled due to bad weather or other: Call (toll-free) 1-855-731-6208 or 651-201-2213 or visit mn.gov/puc.

Project Description

The proposed project is a 170 megawatt (MW) wind facility consisting of up to 70 turbines to be located in Dodge and Steele counties. The project includes a 23-mile 345 kilovolt (kV) transmission line in Dodge and Olmsted counties. The project also includes underground electric collection lines, a new collector substation, an operation and maintenance building, permanent meteorological towers, and gravel access roads. The associated 345 kV transmission line would be constructed on single-circuit monopole structures within a 150-foot right-of-way and would connect the wind farm to the Byron Substation in Olmsted County. Dodge County Wind, LLC has entered into a Power Purchase Agreement with the Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (MMPA) whereby MMPA will purchase the full output of the Project for a 30-year term.

Meeting Information

The purpose of the meeting is to provide information about the proposed project and the state's review process, and to accept verbal or written comments on potential issues for the environmental impact statement (EIS) and the draft large wind energy conversion system (LWECS) site permit that will be prepared.

- The meeting starts on time.
- Arrive a few minutes early so you have time to sign in, pick up materials, and find a seat.
- State agency staff members run the meeting.
- Staff from the Public Utilities Commission, Department of Commerce, and Dodge County Wind, LLC will be available to answer questions about the permitting process and the project.
- You may add verbal comments, written comments, or both into the record.
- The Department of Commerce uses comments received at the meeting and during the comment period to develop the scope of the EIS and draft site permit for this project

Written Comment Period

Comment Period: Written comments will be accepted through **November 15, 2018**.
Please include the Commission's Docket Numbers (17-306, 17-307, 17-308) in all communications.

Please focus your comments on information that will help answer the following questions:

- *What potential human and environmental impacts of the proposed project should be considered in the EIS and the draft site permit?*
- *What are possible methods to minimize, mitigate, or avoid potential impacts of the proposed project that should be considered in the EIS and the draft site permit?*
- *Are there any alternative routes or route segments that should be considered to address potential impacts associated with the 345 kV transmission line?*
- *Are there any unique characteristics of the proposed site or the project that should be considered?*
- *Are there other ways to meet the stated need for the project, for example, a different size project or a different type of facility? If so, what alternatives to the project should be studied in the EIS?*
- *Are there any items missing or mischaracterized in any of the applications or issues that need further development?*

Comments may be submitted via:

Online <https://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities/#comment>
Email suzanne.steinbauer@state.mn.us
U.S. Mail Suzanne Steinhauer, Environmental Review Manager
 Minnesota Department of Commerce
 85 7th Place East, Suite 500
 St. Paul MN 55101
Fax 651-539-0109

Important: Comments will be made available to the public via the Public Utilities Commission's and the Department of Commerce's websites, except in limited circumstances consistent with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. Personally identifying information is not edited or deleted from submissions.

Process Information

The Commission must approve a certificate of need, a site permit, and a route permit before the project can be built. The certificate of need, site permit, and route permit applications are being processed jointly. This meeting satisfies the public meeting requirement for all three of those applications. After the close of the comment period associated with this meeting, the Department of Commerce Energy Environmental Review and Analysis unit (DOC EERA) will propose an EIS scoping decision and a draft site permit for Commission approval. The DOC EERA will then prepare the draft EIS. Once the draft EIS is completed the DOC EERA will hold a draft EIS/draft site permit information meeting to solicit comments on the draft EIS and the draft site permit. After close of the draft EIS/draft site permit comment period, a public hearing and a contested case hearing will be conducted by an administrative law judge (ALJ) from the Office of Administrative Hearings. The hearing will provide an opportunity for interested persons to ask questions and provide comments on all components of the proposed project. Upon receipt of a report from the ALJ, the Commission will make a decision on the certificate of need, site permit, and route permit applications.

For all process and rule information, see Minn. Stat. § 216B.243 and Minn. R. ch. 7849 (certificate of need); Minn. Stat. ch. 216F and Minn. R. ch. 7854 (site permit); Minn. Stat. ch. 216E and Minn. R. ch. 7850 (route permit): <https://www.revisor.mn.gov>

Additional Information

Project Mailing List: Sign up to receive notices about project milestones and opportunities to participate. Contact docketing.puc@state.mn.us or call Leesa Norton at 651-201-2246 with the docket number (17-306, 17-307, or 17-308), your name, mailing address, and email address.

Subscribe to the Docket: Receive email notification when new documents are filed in this matter at mn.gov/puc, select *Subscribe*, and follow the prompts.

Full Case Record: See all documents filed in this docket via the Commission's website: mn.gov/puc, select *Search eDockets*, and enter: year (17) and the docket number (306) for the certificate of need; or year (17) and docket number (307) for the site permit; or year (17) and the docket number (308) for the route permit, and select *Search*.

Department of Commerce Project Website: <https://mn.gov/eera/web/project/13333/>. An interactive map will be available on this website.

Community Locations: The certificate of need, site permit, and route permit applications are available for viewing at these locations:

- Blooming Prairie Branch Library, 138 Highway Avenue, Blooming Prairie, MN 55917
- Dodge Center Public Library, 13 1st Avenue NW, Dodge Center, MN 55927
- Kasson Public Library, 607 1st Street NW, Kasson, MN 55944
- Owatonna Public Library, 105 North Elm Street, Owatonna, MN 55060
- Rochester Public Library, 101 2nd Street SE, Rochester, MN 55904
- West Concord Public Library, 180 Main Street, West Concord, MN 55985

Project Contacts

Public Utilities Commission

Charley Bruce, Public Advisor: charley.bruce@state.mn.us or 651-201-2251

Scott Ek, Energy Facilities Planner: scott.ek@state.mn.us or 651-201-2255

Department of Commerce

Suzanne Steinhauer, Environmental Review Manager: suzanne.steinhauer@state.mn.us or 651-539-1843

Dodge County Wind, LLC

Mike Weich: mike.weich@nexteraenergy.com or 561-694-3987

First gene-edited crop harvested for food

By Lydia Mulvany
Bloomberg News

For Pete Zimmerman, a Minnesota farmer, the age of gene-edited foods has arrived.

Zimmerman is among farmers in three states now harvesting 16,000 acres of DNA-altered soybeans destined to be used in salad dressings, granola bars and fry oil and sold to consumers early next year. It's the first commercialized crop created with a technique some say could revolutionize agriculture, and others fear could carry as-yet-unknown peril.

In March, the top U.S. regulator said no new rules or labeling are needed for gene-edited plants since foreign DNA isn't being inserted, the way traditional genetically modified organisms, or GMOs, are made. Instead, enzymes that act like scissors are used to tweak a plant's genetic operating system to stop it from producing bad stuff — in this case, polyunsaturated fats — or enhance good stuff that's already there.

While that seems a win-win, "You don't know what those mutations or rearrange-

ments might do in a plant," said Michael Hansen, a senior scientist at the Consumers Union. He wants the plants tested for safety before they're marketed and clearly labeled once they're sold.

The Trump administration, however, disagrees. In a March 28 statement, Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue said his department has no plans to regulate new plant varieties developed with gene editing, countering a European Union decision to designate the technique as producing GMO crops.

In his statement, Perdue called gene editing an "innovative" technique that's "indistinguishable from those developed through traditional breeding methods."

The end result: Gene-edited plants can be developed and marketed in the U.S. much more quickly and at less cost than GMOs that blend DNA from different plant varieties, a highly regulated technique with mandated field trials that can take a decade or more to develop.

That's allowed the Minnesota-based biotech firm Calyxt Inc. to get its soybeans into the market within five years from the time Dan Voytas, the company's science

chief and co-founder, altered the DNA in a single soybean cell in 2012 using an enzyme called TALEN he helped develop at the University of Minnesota.

Calyxt is now in discussions with about 20 companies that are potential buyers, Sahood said, adding that the company expects to sell its first harvest on an as-needed basis to anywhere from two to five of those companies.

Zach Luttrell, a principal at industry consultant StraightRow LLC, sees gene-editing as a way for the industry to continue lowering costs. A product developed using the new technique could be brought to market within three years, costing about \$10 million to \$20 million, he said, comparing it with a GMO product that could cost \$100 million over a decade.

"Agriculture has historically been dominated by a few huge players, but now much smaller companies will be able to pop up and develop these new crops," Luttrell said. "In the future we will truly have designer crops."

Zimmerman's decision to plant a few hundred acres of the altered soybeans

on his 3,000-acre farm was primarily economic, he said. Farmers growing the crops will gain anywhere from 40 to 90 cents a bushel over standard futures prices, said Charles Baron, co-founder of Farmer's Business Network Inc. The company, whose member farms represent 26 million acres in the U.S. and Canada, helped Calyxt recruit growers and financed farmers purchasing the seeds.

However, there is some extra work involved, he said. The crop requires different pesticides and has to be stored separately. He also had to thoroughly clean out his harvesting equipment, semi-trucks and storage bins to ensure no contamination from existing crops.

Still, the 55-year-old farmer said he's happy he made the effort.

"They've been our best-looking beans all year, they really have," Zimmerman said.

Calyxt isn't alone in the field. Swiss-based Syngenta AG is looking to bring its first gene-edited products to the market early next decade, and is applying the technique to crops like tomatoes, rice and sunflowers.

Hurricane Florence: Flood waters recede but hazards persist

By HARWOOD D. SCHAFFER and
DARYLL E. RAY

*Originally published in MidAmerica Farmer
Grower, Vol. 37, No. 189, Sept. 28, 2018.*

Beginning on Sept. 14, 2018, slow-moving Hurricane Florence dumped nearly 40 inches of rain on portions of North Carolina with lesser amounts spread over an area from Washington, D.C. to Georgia. Because of the physical size of the hurricane and its slow movement, governors of South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia issued mandatory evacuations for some coastal areas days in advance of the storm's expected landfall.

Because Florence had been downgraded to a category 1 hurricane before it hit the coast and its slow movement, a large portion of its damage was caused by flooding. With much of the rain falling inland, many area rivers crested above previous flood-stage highs, spreading out over rural landscapes and urban areas alike. The death toll from Florence is currently 45 with North Carolina accounting for 32.

For farmers, Florence could not have come at a worse time; crops were maturing, and harvest had only begun. Depending on their production patterns, many farmers have seen several years of financial losses due to low crop prices. This leaves farmers, many of whom have not fully recovered from Hurricane Matthew two years ago, in a weakened financial condition even before the hurricane hit.

As we write this column, estimates of preliminary losses to agriculture in the affected states range from hundreds of million to billions of dollars. Storm water will need to recede and even then, it will take weeks or more to assess the extent of the damage. What is clear at this point is the nature of the damage.

The rain and inundation from nearby streams have combined to cause significant crop losses across the Carolinas. Cotton fields with bolls that were open when the rain started have been rendered valueless while many other fields that were nearing maturity have been damaged by rushing floodwaters.

North Carolina, responsible for 50 percent of the national production of tobacco, stands to incur significant losses as the rain and floodwater came during the middle of harvest for many farmers.

Peanuts and sweet potatoes, where the harvest product grows beneath the soil, will see significant damage from rot in areas where the waters do not recede quickly. North Carolina is the largest producer of sweet potatoes in the U.S. This will have an impact on grocery store prices during the prime Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons, depending on the extent of the damage.

Corn and soybeans have also shown damage from the rains and flooding, though the price impact at the national level will be minimal.

In North Carolina it is estimated that, ac-

cording to industry sources, at least 3.4 million chickens died as the result of flooding. The North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services estimates that 5,500 hogs perished in the floodwaters. North Carolina is second in the nation in pork production. As the floodwaters recede farmers will be left with the cost of the disposal of these animals.

The loss of electricity has negatively affected farm operations well beyond the flooded areas. In addition, there has been damage to farm homes and buildings and it will take some time to repair the damaged roads that farmers depend upon.

The combination of rain and flood levels has resulted in raising the liquid level in the lagoons that are an essential part of contemporary hog production practices. In some instances, the lagoons have overflowed or been breached, resulting in the spilling of hog manure into the surrounding environment.

In addition to farm lagoons, containment systems at coal-fired power plants have been penetrated, resulting in the release of wet fly ash into the surrounding water. The fly ash contains heavy metals that should not be released into the environment.

Whether it is hog manure or fly ash, the release of material from these containment systems can have a negative impact on members of the general population.

If the recent past is any indication, we are likely to see more of these weather events. With

that in mind, we need to revisit containment regulations for hog and electrical production that were designed taking a 50- or 100-year weather event into consideration. We know many farmers react negatively to the idea of increased regulation, but the kinds of regulations that protect them from heavy metal deposits on their land are similar to the ones that are needed to protect the general public from the impact of the release of animal waste.

Our second policy point concerns compensating farmers for crop losses. Most farmers take out crop insurance that will pay in events like the one caused by Hurricane Florence. The problem is the reimbursement that farmers receive is based on crop prices and when prices are low, and farmers need the protection the most, they receive the lowest insurance payments. If Congress were to adopt a supply management program with loan rates near the full cost of production, and if the price component of crop insurance were based on the loan rate, farmers would be better protected than they are under current policies. *

Harwood D. Schaffer, Adjunct Research Assistant Professor, Sociology Department, University of Tennessee and Director, Agricultural Policy Analysis Center. Daryll E. Ray: Emeritus Professor, Institute of Agriculture, University of Tennessee and Retired Director, Agricultural Policy Analysis Center. Email: hdschaffer@utk.edu and dray@utk.edu; http://www.agpolicy.org.

Iowa pig population reaches record 23.6M

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Iowa has reached a record number of pigs on farms as the pork industry continues to expand production amid questionable export demand due to tariff battles with China.

The USDA said Iowa has 23.6 million pigs on farms as of Sept. 1, an increase of 4 percent from the previous year and the highest number recorded. That makes Iowa the leading pork producer by far. North Carolina is second with 9.4 million pigs and Minnesota third with 8.6 million.

The total for the United States has reached 75.5 million pigs, a 3 percent increase from a year ago.

News

Meatpacker recalls beef after E. coli death

Associated Press

FORT MORGAN, Colo. — A Colorado meatpacker is recalling more than 132,000 pounds of ground beef after a suspected E. coli outbreak killed one person and sickened 17, officials said.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture said last week that the beef was produced and packaged at Cargill Meat Solutions in Fort Morgan on June 21 and shipped to retailers nationwide.

The products include 3-, 10- and 20-pound packages of ground beef under the Our Certified, Excel, Sterling Silver, Certified and Fire River Farms brands with July 11 use or freeze by dates.

Regulators warned that people should also check for the products in their freezers. They advise throwing the products away or returning them to the location of pur-

chase.

In a statement, Cargill said all of the affected products have been removed from supermarkets. Food safety teams are reviewing the Fort Morgan facility and others "to ensure we continue to deliver safe food," the statement said.

"We were distressed to learn a fatality may be related to an E.coli contamination of one of our products," it said. "Our hearts go out to the families and individuals affected by this issue."

The USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service did not release information about the people who died or became ill, including locations.

Most people infected with E. coli develop diarrhea and vomiting. More severe infections can lead to kidney failure.

A migration back to the farm could work

Three men in work clothes ordered their meals from the West Concord drive-in and sat one picnic table over from me. Their conversation was in a language that I didn't understand.

When our eyes connected, I asked if their words were in Russian or Polish.

"We are from South Africa," said one, who spoke near-perfect English.

Afrikaans — a mixture of English, French and Portuguese along with other influences — is considered a second language in South Africa. English is the nation's official language, but Afrikaans is still taught in most schools.

The three laborers are among others who are spending the growing season working on a large southeastern Minnesota farming operation. They are hired in South Africa and flown stateside. Their incentive for coming to the United States is predominately grounded in economics.

South Africa is struggling with high unemployment and social upheaval caused in large part by landownership issues. Radical members of South African society want redistribution so that blacks own more land. Emotions are high, with white farmers attacked by angry mobs.

Land distribution and control issues has led to sometimes violent protests in struggling African and South American nations.

The United States has always been a beacon for those seeking freedom and land on which to raise families and prosper. Germans, Poles, Dutch, Swiss and Northern Europeans used John Deere's self-scouring moldboard plow to turn prairie into farmland.

The U.S. government helped by creating the Homestead Act of 1862. The act allowed whites and newly freed slaves to claim up to 160 acres of free federal land in return for working it. Other homestead acts followed before the end of the 19th century and the independent family farm tradition was established.

The various homestead acts are credited with awarding 270



MYCHAL WILMES

wilmes@agrinews.com

million acres of land, about 10 percent of the total land area in the United States, to 1.6 million homesteaders. It can be argued that the program was the most successful land distribution effort in world history.

Other governments have reorganized land ownership. When Joseph Stalin took complete control of the communist apparatus in the Soviet Union, he launched a determined effort to rid the nation of independent farmers, which he considered poisonous to communist philosophy.

Farms were to be run by employees of the state. As could have been expected, families who worked the land for centuries before Stalin balked. Stalin responded by stealing their crops and livestock and locking their grain in bins guarded by armed troops. It's estimated more than 1 million farmers and their families starved or were murdered in the collectivized farm effort.

When rumors reached the United States about the Stalin-caused disaster, Stalin launched a successful public

relations campaign to cover up what he had done.

Collectivized farming in the Soviet Union model was an utter disaster. The employees who worked the land were mostly disinterested. The farm managers were often bureaucrats who put their own financial interests above their farms. The collapse of collectivized agriculture and resulting thinly stocked grocery store shelves is credited as a major factor in the fall of the Soviet Union empire.

Other leaders followed in Stalin's footsteps. In the 1970s, Cambodia's Pol Pot led a communist government that sought to turn intellectuals and city workers into farmers through forced migration. More than 1 million died in the effort.

The 20th century marked the greatest migration of people from rural areas to urban centers. Much of the movement occurred because people sought greater economic opportunities and better standards of living. The slums that continue to grow in many of the world's greatest metropolitan areas is proof that mass migration comes at a great cost.

Is it possible the 21st century will bring a movement back to farms — if not in the United States than at least in the struggling developing nations?

Wilmes is the retired managing editor of Agri News. He lives in rural West Concord with his wife Kathy.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Milk supply management works for Canada

We are truly saddened and yes, angry, when we see how our USDA, our milk boards, our secretary of agriculture, our dairy co-ops, our professional dairy organizations, our Farm Bureau and our President Trump would solve this oversupply of milk. What is the solution? Free trade! Get bigger! Tighten your belt! Maintain a positive attitude or get out!

And this isn't the worst. They are trying their best to bust the Canadian system of dairy — a supply management dairy system in which each farmer follows a quota on their farm, thus supplying the needed milk for the consumer at a reasonable price and maintaining a fair, sustainable price for the farmer. Makes good sense to us, and no subsidy needs to be paid by the government.

We did see a glimmer of hope by reading that a group of Wisconsin Farmers Union farmers and leaders were traveling to Washington, D.C., to meet with a Canadian group to discuss such a plan. Wouldn't it be wonderful if all of these groups could work together with the Farmers Union, instead of trying to tear down a Canadian system that seems to be working?

We are losing too many family dairy farms — something like 500 each year in Wisconsin.

How many more dairy farmers must either quit, go bankrupt or commit suicide before our people who have political power use it wisely to help the family dairy farmer — working with the Farmers Union and other such groups to have a truly sustainable system.

Donald and Anita Nelson, Wisconsin Dells, Wis.

Send us your letters

We encourage letters to the editor from readers on topics related to farming and agriculture, and we reserve the right to select which letters we publish. Letters submitted for publication must include the writer's full name, current mailing address and telephone number. Letters are published in the newspaper and online. On published letters, we include the writer's name, hometown and state. The length limit for letters is 250 words, and we reserve the right to edit for length and clarity.

- Email: news@iowafarmertoday.com (with "letter to the editor" subject line)
- Mail: Letter to the Editor, Iowa Farmer Today, 1065 Sierra Ct. NE, Ste. B, Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402

What's Going on in North Carolina?

More than two dozen nuisance cases have been filed by residents in North Carolina against Murphy-Brown, the live growout subsidiary of Smithfield Foods. So far, the juries have returned three cases to the tune of \$50 million, \$25 million and \$473.5 million. Twenty-three more cases are scheduled, drawing international attention to the southwest portion of the state.

In addition to the immediate impact of the cases and what they might mean for North Carolina hog producers, it raises understandable concerns over whether similar cases could be filed in other states. Here's a brief breakdown of the major issues in the cases:

What are the cases about? Plaintiffs' attorneys have recruited more than 500 plaintiffs to file lawsuits against Murphy-Brown. The lawsuits allege Murphy-Brown's pigs are raised on operations that negatively impact the plaintiffs' enjoyment and use of their property due to odors and flies from the barns, lagoons and manure application. The plaintiffs also allege the operations are negligent because they use open-air lagoons and apply manure through spraying, both of which are common agricultural practices in the Southeast.

The judge has divided the plaintiffs into 26 trial groups and set a goal of trying one case per month. The next trial is slated for November.

What about the Right to Farm Act? Each state has a different Right to Farm law, and courts interpret them differently, but these odor nuisance cases are exactly what Right to Farm laws were intended to prevent. The thinking behind Right to

Farm laws is dust and odors are a fact of life on agricultural operations and neighbors who move into agricultural areas should not be able to sue them over the sounds, smells and traffic that typically accompany farming.

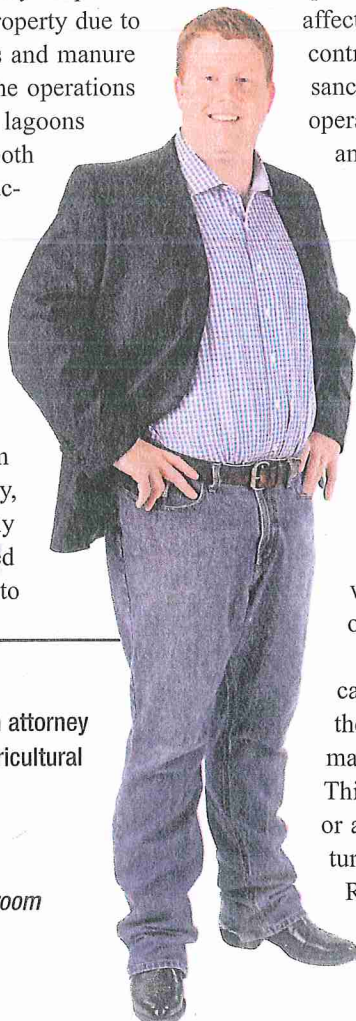
In these cases, the judge held North Carolina's Right to Farm Act did not bar the plaintiff's lawsuits. The judge's decision is especially perplexing because North Carolina's act is particularly strong and intended to protect operations that make significant changes, such as moving from crops to livestock or adding confinement houses.

What about the farmers? The operations targeted in the lawsuit are operated by family farms under contract with Murphy-Brown. However, the plaintiffs have not named any of the farmers in their cases. This strategy allows the plaintiffs' attorneys to pit the jury solely against a large corporation. This does not mean farmers will not be affected, though. Smithfield is likely to end their contracts on operations where the jury finds a nuisance exists—a devastating result for these family operations that have so much of their lives, assets and futures tied into hog farming.

Could this happen in my state? It depends. Even though North Carolina's punitive damage law will significantly reduce the amount of damages owed, these eye-popping verdicts are likely to motivate plaintiffs' attorneys to try similar cases in other states. However, the judge in these cases has made several decisions that could be overturned on appeal and might result in the plaintiffs walking away with nothing.

Nuisance cases are decided under state law, which means outcomes would likely vary based on the state where the case is tried.

After an initial refusal, the judge overseeing the cases recently paused the trial schedule to allow the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals to examine matters raised by Murphy-Brown in an appeal. This could result in tossing out the plaintiffs cases or a retrial. In the meantime, I expect state legislatures will be taking a close look at updating their Right to Farm laws. **FJ**



JOHN DILLARD

No stranger to dirty boots, John Dillard, an attorney with OFW Law, focuses his practice on agricultural and environmental litigation.

@ jdillard@farmjournal.com

 agweb.com/ag_in_the_courtroom

 @DCAgLawyer

This column is not a substitute for legal advice.



**LAND
STEWARDSHIP
PROJECT**

LEWISTON OFFICE
180 East Main St, Box 130
Lewiston, MN 55952
507-523-3366

MINNEAPOLIS OFFICE
821 East 35th St, #200
Minneapolis, MN 55407
612-722-6377

MONTEVIDEO OFFICE
117 South 1st St
Montevideo, MN 56265
320-269-2105

It Is Time to Demand Bold Action on the Rural Healthcare Crisis

Petition enclosed calls for bold action from Minnesota's next Governor

We want thousands of Minnesotans to call on our next Governor to make addressing the rural healthcare crisis a top priority. As Minnesotans, we value looking out for each other and communities where everyone can live a good life. But in our rural communities, we are experiencing unaffordable and ever-increasing health insurance premiums and deductibles, while hospitals and clinics are closed, and services cut. At the same time, we see major hospital systems and insurance companies posting large profits. Our current healthcare system is not making sure everyone can get the care they need.

On the enclosed petition, we call on the newly-elected Governor to join us in working for bold, real solutions that include:

- **A moratorium on the closing of rural hospitals or clinics.** When hospitals and clinics close, rural communities suffer.
- **Establish a people-centered Rural Healthcare Access Taskforce.** The Governor must appoint a taskforce of rural Minnesotans to create a plan for action to ensure that rural communities have meaningful healthcare.
- **Make MinnesotaCare available as an option for all Minnesotans so that everyone can have a healthcare plan available to them that provides meaningful care.**

Here is how you can be a part of this movement:

- **Sign, share, & return the enclosed petition to LSP by November 10.** Gather signatures from your friends and neighbors. If you want more copies, we can get them to you. Your signature and two or three others on the enclosed petition will help raise our collective voices for bold solutions to this rural healthcare crisis now.
- **Join us on November 13 to deliver the petition to the Governor-elect at the State Capitol in St. Paul.** Our new Governor will be in the process of setting his priorities. We need to let him know this must be one of them.
- **Contact LSP organizers Johanna (507-523-3366) or Paul (507-342-2323) if you plan to join us on November 13 and/or you want to get more involved with the petition drive!**

(OVER: see more on why taking action now matters)



Why taking action now matters

The Land Stewardship Project wants more farmers stewarding the land; strong, vibrant, healthy communities; and a democracy where directly affected people have a say over decisions that impact our lives. We believe we're each stronger when we all have the chance to prosper, and that the well-being of people and the land are connected.

But one way we see this vision being blocked, these values violated, is in the excessive power and control major corporations have over our economy and democracy. *There is no clearer example of this than our healthcare system.*

For many, insurance companies provide no plans with meaningful, affordable coverage. Rural hospitals and clinics run by major hospital systems are being closed or seeing essential services taken away. Too many decisions are made based solely on what can make these corporations the most money, not on what communities need. People can't fully contribute to our communities, because choices about what kind of work we do must be based on the need to acquire healthcare coverage. Care of the land suffers because farmers must work off-farm jobs or pay exorbitant amounts for healthcare, leaving them without time, energy, and resources to invest in stewardship.

Solving a crisis like this requires people coming together, uniting around clear demands for real change, and building power to achieve them. **That's why we're launching this petition drive calling on Minnesota's next Governor to take concrete steps to address the rural healthcare crisis.** Instead of the dominant story we too often hear about healthcare – that we're each on our own and not having affordable, accessible care is a personal failure – we will lift up the truth that this is a problem we can only solve together.

Want to get more involved?

- Take copies of the petition with you to gather signatures at any **meetings or events** you're attending this fall. Try to secure a few minutes on the agenda to speak about the petition to the whole group, *and pass it around on a clipboard so everyone in the room has a chance to sign.*
- Amplify the message of the petition by writing a **letter to the editor** or posting on your **social media** about the rural healthcare crisis and the actions we need our next Governor to take. Personalize it by sharing your own healthcare story or why this issue matters to you.
- We need volunteers to help with **data entry** of petition signatures, **making phone calls** to other LSP members and supporters about the petition drive, and more. Call Johanna or Paul to find out how you can help!

Questions? Ideas? Need more petition copies? Contact LSP organizers **Paul Sobocinski**, 507-342-2323, sobopaul@landstewardshipproject.org, or **Johanna Rupprecht**, 507-523-3366, jrupprecht@landstewardshipproject.org.

Save the date and join us at the State Capitol on November 13!

Call for Action on the Rural Healthcare Crisis

*To be delivered on November 13, 2018
to the newly-elected
Governor of Minnesota.*



We call on the next Governor of Minnesota to address the rural healthcare crisis as a top priority. As Minnesotans, we value looking out for each other and communities where everyone can live a good life. But in our rural communities, we are experiencing unaffordable and ever-increasing health insurance premiums and deductibles, while hospitals and clinics are closed and services cut. At the same time, we see major hospital systems and insurance companies posting large profits. We know this isn't right and is, in fact, a matter of life and death. We believe people's lives should have a higher value than corporate profits. There is enough money in the healthcare system, but it's not being used to make sure people have the care they need. We call on you as the newly-elected Governor to join us in working for bold, real solutions. We now call for these initial steps:

- **A moratorium on the closing of rural hospitals or clinics.** When hospitals and clinics close, rural communities suffer. Healthcare companies must understand that they have an obligation to serve rural communities if they want to do business in our state.
- **Establish a people-centered Rural Healthcare Access Taskforce.** The Governor must appoint a taskforce of rural Minnesotans to create a plan for action – both executive and legislative – to ensure that rural communities have meaningful healthcare. Healthcare companies cannot continue to be allowed to profit at the expense of rural communities. This group must be made up of people experiencing this crisis, not the major hospital systems, insurance companies, or other interests causing it.
- **Make MinnesotaCare available as an option for all Minnesotans so that everyone can have a healthcare plan available to them that provides meaningful care.** Everyone, especially rural people who have no access to affordable insurance or whose insurance plan doesn't allow access to the nearest healthcare providers, must be allowed to buy in to MinnesotaCare to receive the high-quality healthcare coverage this program currently provides, paid for based on their income.

PRINTED NAME _____

SIGNATURE _____

ADDRESS / CITY / MN ZIP _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

☐ **YES, I WANT TO COME TO THE STATE CAPITOL ON NOVEMBER 13 TO DELIVER THESE PETITIONS TO OUR NEXT GOVERNOR.**

Please return signed petitions by **November 10** to:

Land Stewardship Project, Attn: Healthcare • 180 E Main St. PO Box 130, Lewiston, MN 55952



LAND
STEWARDSHIP
PROJECT

Questions?

PAUL SOBOCINSKI: 507-342-2323 • sobopaul@landstewardshipproject.org

JOHANNA RUPPRECHT: 507-523-3366 • jrupprecht@landstewardshipproject.org



OVER >

PRINTED NAME

SIGNATURE

ADDRESS / CITY / MN ZIP

PHONE

EMAIL

☐ **YES, I WANT TO COME TO THE STATE CAPITOL ON NOVEMBER 13 TO DELIVER THESE PETITIONS TO OUR NEXT GOVERNOR.**

PRINTED NAME

SIGNATURE

ADDRESS / CITY / MN ZIP

PHONE

EMAIL

☐ **YES, I WANT TO COME TO THE STATE CAPITOL ON NOVEMBER 13 TO DELIVER THESE PETITIONS TO OUR NEXT GOVERNOR.**

PRINTED NAME

SIGNATURE

ADDRESS / CITY / MN ZIP

PHONE

EMAIL

☐ **YES, I WANT TO COME TO THE STATE CAPITOL ON NOVEMBER 13 TO DELIVER THESE PETITIONS TO OUR NEXT GOVERNOR.**

PRINTED NAME

SIGNATURE

ADDRESS / CITY / MN ZIP

PHONE

EMAIL

☐ **YES, I WANT TO COME TO THE STATE CAPITOL ON NOVEMBER 13 TO DELIVER THESE PETITIONS TO OUR NEXT GOVERNOR.**

PRINTED NAME

SIGNATURE

ADDRESS / CITY / MN ZIP

PHONE

EMAIL

☐ **YES, I WANT TO COME TO THE STATE CAPITOL ON NOVEMBER 13 TO DELIVER THESE PETITIONS TO OUR NEXT GOVERNOR.**

LANDSTEWARDSHIPPROJECT.ORG



LAND
STEWARDSHIP
PROJECT



LAND STEWARDSHIP PROJECT

Land Stewardship Project
821 East 35th St., Suite 200
Minneapolis, MN 55407



Nonprofit Org
U. S. Postage
PAID
Twin Cities, MN
Permit No. 32580

Demand Bold Action on Healthcare!

Sign the Petition to Our Next Governor



Land Stewardship Project
Attn: Healthcare
180 East Main Street
PO Box 130
Lewiston, Minnesota 55952

Thank
you for
your
stamp!

CONSERVATIONISTS

Troms honored as conservationist of year for Mower County

Couple boosts wildlife habitat along Cedar River

About a dozen wild turkeys made their way through former cropland this summer along the Cedar River while Ken Trom walked a portion of his newly seeded conservation land.

After renting land to area farmers for more than 50 years, Trom was seeing the green of oats and more than two dozen other plant species starting to sprout from the earth. Last year, Trom and his wife, Gloria, enrolled the last 96 acres of their cropland in Udolpho Township into the federal Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) to convert it back into prairie earlier this summer, providing a large area of new habitat for numerous types of animals, birds and insects.

"I always had a vision for this land," said Trom, who bought it in 1961 as part of 120 acres overall and saw the benefits of prairie a few decades ago when about 60 acres was enrolled for a time in a state conservation program.

For their history of conservation efforts, the Troms are being honored as the 2018 Outstanding Wildlife Conservationist for Mower County as given annually by Mower Soil & Water Conservation District's Board of Supervisors. The award was given Aug. 7 at the Mower County Fair's opening event.

Located northeast of the village of Lansing, the Troms' property consists of 152 acres overall, including former crop and pasture land; their home property; and about 45 acres of woods along the Cedar River that attracts lots of wildlife.

"We see deer every day," Trom said, with a laugh.

Ken Trom grew up on a farm in Dodge County in the upper end of the Cedar River Watershed before going into agricultural banking in which he worked for 42 years.

In the early 1960s, Trom was keeping office hours each week in Blooming Prairie, Austin and Grand Meadow. That made him seek a more centralized location for a home, which led him to where he and Gloria live today.

Upon purchasing the initial 120 acres, Trom planted five rows of trees on about 3 acres of uphill farmland once a conservation contract for that land ran out. That area now boasts a thick strip of mature trees and bushes, including white pines towering more than 100 feet tall.

While he intended to farm his land, Trom said he always rented it to farmers. He was busy with agri-banking and, in 1967, the Troms also started a landscaping and tree nursery business at their home that ran until 2001. That business, he said, established many windbreaks in rural areas in Mower, Freeborn, Dodge, Steele and Mitchell (Iowa) counties.

In the mid-1990s, the Troms planted prairie grasses on a former pasture outside their home. That section now attracts numerous monarch butterflies and other species. They also have about a dozen bluebird houses scattered on their property; the Troms counted about 35 baby bluebirds last year.

Trom worked several years ago with the Cedar River Watershed District to construct two stormwater-water retention ponds built along the Cedar River to stabilize deep ravines and treat runoff water. A long-time member of the Austin chapter of the Izaak Walton League, Trom also has advocated at the state Legislature for agricultural conservation.



Submitted photo

Ken and Gloria Trom of rural Austin have been named the 2018 Outstanding Wildlife Conservationist for Mower County. They were presented with the honor at the opening night of the Mower County Fair in Austin.



Submitted photo

OF THE YEAR



Waltham family honored for farm conservation

Rod Moe realized he would be losing rented acres for his farming operation when the landowner unveiled his plans to convert cropland into prairie.

When the landowner asked for his thoughts, however, Moe told him, "I'd be more disappointed if you didn't put that land into the conservation program. That's what you should do with that land."

That conservation-minded perspective has guided Moe in his farming for years no matter whether it involved his own land or acres he rented for growing corn and soybeans in northern Mower County's Waltham Township. This has involved Moe making changes to his farm that stand differently than other area farms and the way his late father, Richard, approached farming.

"Rod is a little bit of a different cooperator in that he has been quietly adopting conservation practices and transforming his farms into a sustainable model for what he thinks is the right thing to do," said Justin Hanson, district manager for Mower Soil & Water Conservation District. "He embraces the challenge of figuring things out for himself and trying innovative ways to farm."

For these efforts, the Rod Moe Family is the 2018 Conservationist of the

Year for Mower County as chosen by Mower SWCD's Board of Supervisors. Moe along with his wife, Colleen, and daughter, Rachel – who all help with farm work in spring and fall – were honored Aug. 7 by Mower SWCD at the Mower County Fair's opening ceremonies.

Local SWCDs annually nominate farmers, individuals, conservation organizations and other groups for implementing conservation practices and improving the natural resources. The Moe family will be honored with other SWCD honorees in December at the 82nd annual convention of the Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts.

Moe started farming with his father in 1985 – the same year he graduated from high school. His family then built a house and started life on the farm in 1987.

His father played a big role in Moe's life and career as a mentor although he doesn't believe his dad would think much about the innovative conservation practices he uses today on the land.

Today, Moe and his family farm about 800 acres even though he works a full-time job during the day and helps with custom farming work in the area.

Especially since 2011, Moe has been significantly involved with conservation programs and practices, including nutrient-management planning; cover crops; strip tillage; and native grass buffers.

While growing up as a conventional farmer, Moe started making conservation-minded decisions as he took over his family's farming operation.

"I like the trial-and-error part of working with the land," Rod Moe said. "Figuring out other ways to make things work."

Over the years, Moe voluntarily established vegetative buffer strips on his land, including along ditches that aren't under the new state buffer law. Earlier this year, Moe enrolled about 6 acres into pollinator prairie through the federal Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

Moe also is part of the voluntary Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) offered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture that encourages ag producers to enhance conservation systems by improving, maintaining and managing existing conservation activities as well as undertaking new conservation activities.

Hanson considers himself fortunate to have learned a great deal from working with Moe, whom he called a "humble leader."

"He is the reason that we get into this line of work – to have the chance to work with people who operate with a high level of integrity and adopt conservation practices because they believe in their value," Hanson said.

Moe's legacy also is continuing through his daughter, Rachel, who works as an agricultural teacher in Osakis, Minn., but enjoys coming back home to stay connected in a big way to the family farm. In her teaching, Rachel Moe incorporates a lot of the knowledge she has gained from her father on the farm.

She enjoys the quote: "Once in your life, you'll need a doctor or lawyer. But, every day, three times a day, you need a farmer."

GREENSPACE

It's a whole new way to plant native prairie

No-till drill drops seeds leave soil undisturbed

BY JOHN MOLSEED

jmolseed@postbulletin.com

Before Ken and Gloria Trom finally decided to convert the last of their Udolpho Township cropland into native prairie, they got a bit of help from Mower County — a drill bit, that is.

The couple already had noticed dozens of native species taking hold on the land.

When they decided last year to make the conversion of cropland to prairie land, through the federal Conservation Reserve Program, they used a no-till drill planter purchased this year by Mower Soil and Water Conservation District. They used the drill to convert nearly 100 acres to native plants. They planted butterfly milkweed, prairie

blazingstar, stiff goldenrod, sneezeweed, black-eyed Susan and partridge pea, all without tilling the land.

No-tillage planters leave soil undisturbed while depositing new seeds. Soil and surrounding plants can stay intact during planting. Land owners wanting to plant buffer zones, prairie plants, cover crops, wildflowers and pasture can rent the drill from the conservation district.

"It makes it more feasible and convenient for Mower County landowners," said Tim Ruzek, water plan and outreach coordinator.

More than a dozen landowners rented the drill for projects around Mower County this year. Having it available actually spurred some landowners to undertake conservation projects when they otherwise wouldn't.

The demand and a late start on planting season this year meant the some landowners will have to wait until next year to use it.

"We had more interest than

we could accommodate," Ruzek said.

The planter was purchased with donations and funding from Friends of the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center, Pheasants Forever of Mower County, the Austin chapter of the Audubon Society and the Austin chapter of the Izaak Walton League.

"Without the local groups' support, we could not have acquired this much-needed equipment," said Justin Hanson, Mower Soil and Water Conservation District manager.

No-till planters have residue managers, finger coulters and double-disk openers that move some residue soil from the row to improve seed-to-soil contact.

The new equipment has improved what has already been strong conservation efforts in Mower County, conservation officials said.

Last month, Mower Soil and Water Conservation District's Board of Supervisors honored the Troms as the county's 2018 Outstanding Wildlife Conser-



Katie Lauer / klauer@postbulletin.com/

Ken and Gloria Trom have planted native prairie grasses on 100 acres they own near Austin. "You don't get this mix of stuff and wildlife anymore," Ken said. "But it's part of the natural order."

vationists.

The couple had been undertaking conservation and

native vegetation restoration for decades since buying the land. The support from the

county and the no-till drill helped them with their latest project, they said.

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES



“Dear Lord, please show me everything I need to understand about forgiveness and surrender.”

ELIZABETH GILBERT

Forgiveness is the fragrance that the violet sheds on the heel that has crushed it.

MARK TWAIN

To err is human, to forgive, divine.

ALEXANDER POPE

For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

MATTHEW 6:14 (KJV)

The willingness to forgive is a sign of spiritual and emotional maturity. It is one of the great virtues to which we all should aspire.

GORDON B. HINCKLEY

The practice of forgiveness is our most important contribution to the healing of the world.

MARIANNE WILLIAMSON

Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart.

CORRIE TEN BOOM

To love means loving the unlovable. To forgive means pardoning the unpardonable. Faith means believing the unbelievable. Hope means hoping when everything seems hopeless.

G.K. CHESTERTON

Resentment is like drinking poison and then hoping it will kill your enemies.

NELSON MANDELA

We must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love. There is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us. When we discover this, we are less prone to hate our enemies.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

When you forgive, you love. And when you love, God's light shines upon you.

JON KRAKAUER

Life is grace. Sleep is forgiveness. The night absolves. Darkness wipes the slate clean, not spotless to be sure, but clean enough for another day's chalking.

FREDERICK BUECHNER

The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.

MAHATMA GANDHI

Before we can forgive one another, we have to understand one another.

EMMA GOLDMAN

We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark; the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light.

PLATO

Always forgive your enemies; nothing annoys them so much.

OSCAR WILDE

Thank you, dear God, for this good life and forgive us if we do not love it enough. Thank you for the rain. And for the chance to wake up in three hours and go fishing: I thank you for that now, because I won't feel so thankful then.

GARRISON KEILLOR

I have always found that mercy bears richer fruits than strict justice.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Listen. Slide the weight from your shoulders and move forward. You are afraid you might forget, but you never will. You will forgive and remember.

BARBARA KINGSOLVER

Forgiveness is not about forgetting. It is about letting go of another person's throat.

WILLIAM PAUL YOUNG

Forgiveness is the name of love practiced among people who love poorly. The hard truth is that all people love poorly. We need to forgive and be forgiven every day, every hour increasingly. That is the great work of love among the fellowship of the weak that is the human family.

HENRI J.M. NOUWEN

Inner peace can be reached only when we practice forgiveness. Forgiveness is letting go of the past, and is therefore the means for correcting our misperceptions.

GERALD G. JAMPOLSKY

Defender

The Newsletter of the Family Farm Defenders

Fall 2018

\$1.00 Donation - Helps support the FFD Newsletter

MAIN ARTICLES

FFD President
On the Flooding In
Wisconsin

pg 2 & pg 3

Last Days for
Monsanto's Snake Oil
Round-Up Gets its
Comeuppance

pg 4 & pg 5

Trump's 12 Billion
PR Stunt

pg 6 & pg 7

Monsanto Bayer
Merger & Book
Review *pg 8 & 9*

Trump Administration
Undermines Key
Environmental Laws

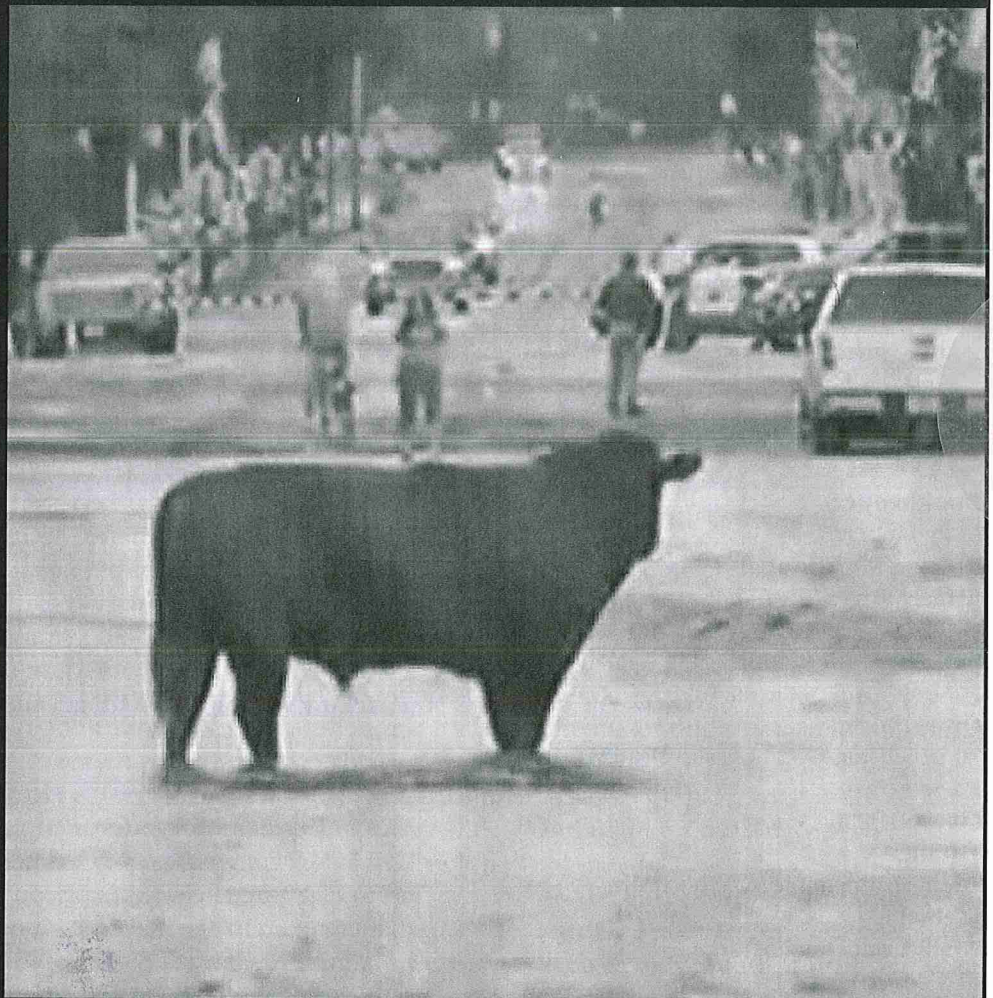
pg 10 & pg 11

Project Tractor
10 Years Later

pg. 12 & pg 13

America Bountiful
Tour

pg. 14 & pg 15



Massive Flooding Spreads Out in Wisconsin

*Cow stranded in the Middle of Flood Waters
in Coon Valley, Wisconsin*

Family Farm Defenders

President

Joel Greeno

Vice Presidents

Anthony Pahnke & Marlene Rojas

Secretary

Patty Lovera

Treasurer

Rebecca Goodman

Farmer Directors

Bernard Barnaud

Ben Burkett

Jim & Rebecca Goodman

Joel Greeno

Peter Kinsman

George & Patti Naylor

Consumer Directors

Frances Bartelt

Stephen Bartlett

Lisa Griffith

Patty Lovera

Anthony Pahnke

Marlene Rojas

Ernesto Velez-Bustos

Executive Director

John E. Peck

Bookkeeper

Mary Lippert

Newsletter Editor

Frances Bartelt

Mailing Address

PO Box 1772 Madison, WI 53701

Office Address:

30 W. Mifflin #702 Madison, WI 53703

Phone/fax

608-260-0900

email:

familyfarmdefenders@yahoo.com

Website:

familyfarmdefenders.org

List serve

familyfarmdefenders@yahoogroups.com

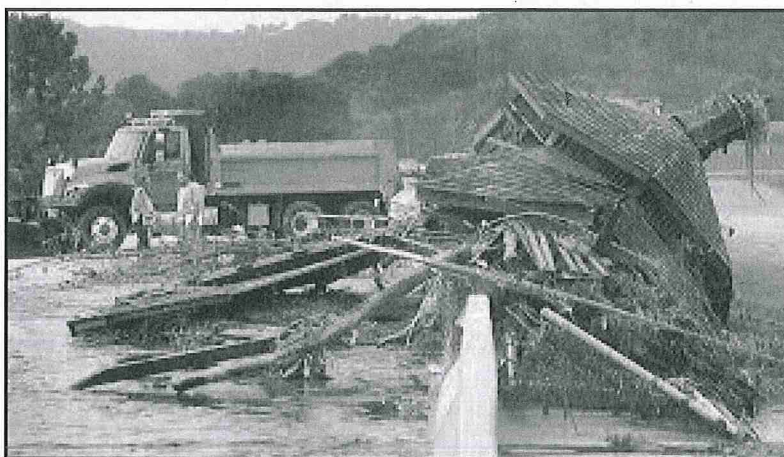
FFD Mission

Family Farm Defenders is a tax-deductible non-profit activist organization made up of farmers and concerned consumers. We are seeking ways to bring fair prices back to farmers and to insure a safe and sustainably produced food for consumers.

FFD President's Message

By: Joel Greeno, Kendall, WI

President of Family Farm Defenders (Madison, WI)



A gazebo comes down from nearby Veterans Memorial Park

As many of you know Wisconsin has been hard hit by multiple floods, high winds and tornadoes. There is a path of destruction that crosses the entire state. Some people have lost everything.

In comparison my own loss was small, yet it weighs on your confidence and self esteem. My pasture fences are all gone. The storms led to the deaths of some of my animals. My house suffered roof damage that then let torrents of rain pour in. Fertilizer, tools, and equipment washed away. It took me over two hours to make a normal 25 minute trip to work. One of my co-workers said it took them over six hours to get home. The photos of homes, businesses, and communities completely under water are shocking. A small family run restaurant in Ontario, WI where I, my dad, and my two daughters recently ate had water up to the ceilings during the flooding. Infrastructure everywhere is horribly damaged. The road to my own house is caving in now two weeks later - the gravel underneath is no longer there. Heavy farm equipment would have surely caved it in.

And, now with Hurricane Florence hitting the Carolinas, Wisconsin seems forgotten. People feel helpless - where do they turn? Will FEMA come? Mostly it has been every day folks that have stepped up to clean up and get people on track. Will politicians finally realize that climate change makes such disasters worse? Answers are few and broken hearts are many. Keep Wisconsin in your thoughts and prayers as we struggle to recover and be ready to offer solidarity to those hurt in the Carolinas, too.

We as Family Farm Defenders are at a crossroads with many paths to choose. On one path some of our founders and longtime leaders are drifting away for many reasons. We dearly miss their presence and love and respect their many years of service. Yet people continue to step up. Some veteran activists and many new faces continue to appear, taking on the challenges that lie before us.

Continued on pg. 3



Neighbors Sandbagging

To protect homes from the flooding storm water



Albany EMS

Helps a Cow Flood Survivor

We also rely on our members to bring issues to the table and often these issues they have had to address themselves. The personal can be quite political. At this crossroad we are continually challenged with taking the course of "business as usual" or opting for a new path to bring about real social change. This becomes tricky when dealing with issues that have been around for decades and tackling issues that are brand new - issues like the price of milk or the corporate take over of organics or the impact of dicamba.

I believe our shining star at Family Farm Defenders is our sense of what is Good, Right and Just - guided by The Seven Principles of Food Sovereignty. This includes such

ideas as access to land, fair wages, being able to be GMO free, and participatory democracy. FFD founder, John Kinsman, would often remark that elections could be corrupt even down to the level of school boards. People seem to crave the power of being in control - even when it not in their best interest.

So we as Family Farm Defenders have our work cut out for us.

How do we effectively create meaningful change? How do we accomplish the work that leads to improvement in the condition of our world? The answer lies at the crossroad where people and issues merge to build relationships. The paths we choose leading us out of our current situation will depend upon the suc-

cess of our fellow peoples.

As a small grassroots group with seemingly few victories in the grand scheme of things, we still maintain our optimism. This is possible because we have what is Good, Just and Right on our side.

As we gather under the banner of Family Farm Defenders one path is clear - we must protect our farmers, ranchers, farm workers, fisher people, and consumers! Can we count on you to help us in this task, to defend and protect the land that feeds us and nourishes us each and every day? If you believe in what is Good, Just and Right, you will! Let's join at this crossroad and march on to victory over those that have taken so much away from us.

Last Days for Monsanto's Snake Oil?

Round-Up Gets its Comeuppance

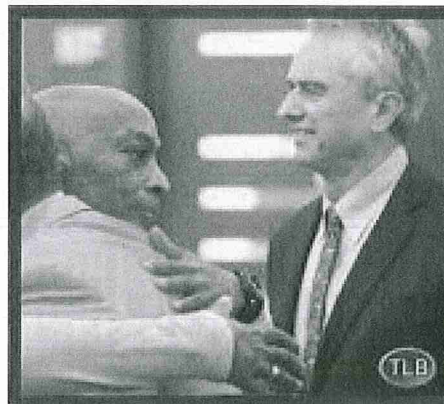
By: John E. Peck, executive director, Family Farm Defenders

Martin Luther King Jr. once famously said: "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice." Once could perhaps say the same about truth in the battle for scientific knowledge.

On Fri. Aug. 10th a San Francisco, CA jury awarded DeWayne Johnson \$289 million in a criminal complaint against Monsanto, affirming widespread evidence that its flagship herbicide, Round-Up, causes cancer. Johnson's lawyers successfully argued that Monsanto was liable for its product that led him to contract non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. His case was expedited since Johnson - age 46 - is not expected to live much longer. For years he was directed to spray Round-Up from a 50 gallon tank on school grounds, often with the wind blowing it directly into his face - once the hose broke dousing his entire body. He had read the label many times - which includes no cancer warning - and had even contacted Monsanto directly when he developed a skin rash but was told everything was fine.

The company has vowed to appeal - except now it's Bayer that will have to do so, as it recently received the green light from the U.S. Dept. of Justice to buy up Monsanto and create one of the largest biotech/agrochemical giants in the world. The merger might not be as good for Bayer as it had hoped: its stock plummeted 14 percent in response to the verdict, and with 4,000+ similar court cases pending, this verdict sets a costly precedent - not just in the U.S. but around the world.

Last fall veteran investigative reporter, Carey Gillam, published her long awaited expose: *Whitewash: The*



**Cancer claims against
Monsanto finally
vindicated**

*Thousands more US legal
cases are pending*

On Fri. Aug. 10th 2018 a San Francisco, CA jury awarded DeWayne Johnson \$289 million in a criminal complaint against Monsanto.

Story of a Weed Killer, Cancer, and the Corruption of Science", that carefully lays out the scientific evidence of adverse human health and broader environmental impacts stemming from use of Monsanto's Round-Up. More importantly perhaps, her books also reveals the corporation's ruthless campaign to target, discredit, and silence any critics of its most popular (and profitable) herbicide. Gillam was attacked herself by Monsanto over the course of her 20+ years of reporting on the subject while at Reuters, and is now research director at U.S. Right to Know.

In testimony before the European Parliament on Oct 11th, 2017

(<https://usrtk.org/pesticides/carey-gillams-presentation-to-european-parliament-hearing-on-the-monsanto-papers-glyphosate/>) Gillam outlined many of the insidious tactics deployed by Monsanto: ghostwriting research papers to support Round-Up; launching campaigns to punish scientists who did not support the herbicide as "safe"; strong arming officials to limit regulation while sacking others that raised concerns; creating "astro turf" organizations to promote Round-Up and related GMO crops; and even providing the EPA with "Talking Points" to use against other

regulatory agencies. The clear message is that given such systematic corruption of science, media, and government it is not surprising that we get the "best" rules for an obvious poison that private interests can buy. Public good does not figure into the equation.

The EPA has argued since the 1970s that glyphosate - the main ingredient in Round-Up - is perfectly "safe" if used as directed - this finding relying heavily on Monsanto's own sponsored research that can not be verified due to various "proprietary restrictions." But the EPA's benign assessment is not widely shared among other regulatory authorities - for instance, in March 2015 the International Agency for Research on Cancer at the World Health Organization ruled that glyphosate is "a probable human carcinogen" based on its own review of independent studies.

And, at UW-Madison, Prof. Warren Porter's extensive toxicology research has long pointed to serious sublethal synergistic impacts of glyphosate in combination with other agrochemicals like atrazine in drinking water on fetal development, childhood learning, and adult reproduction.

(Continued on pg. 5)

FALL 2018

Of course, the harm done by Round-Up is not limited to humans. According to the National Pesticide Information Center, the toxic half life of glyphosate in the environment can be up to 197 days. Field runoff tainted with Round-Up has been shown to have a lethal impact on freshwater invertebrates, amphibians, and fish. Studies in Argentina have even shown birth defects in chickens exposed to glyphosate. Back in 2011, Purdue Univ. plant pathologist, Don Huber, sent a private letter to USDA Sec. Tom Vilsack, later leaked to the public, warning that Round-Up use was leading to new pathogens that could be responsible for miscarriages in livestock among other deleterious consequences. (https://www.organic-consumers.org/sites/default/files/art-man2/uploads/1/May2011_Huber.pdf)

Other scientists have noted increased fungal disease as well as nutrient deficiencies in fields with GMO crops resistant to Round-Up - notably soybeans that can suffer from Sudden Death Syndrome (SDS). And, as many predicted, ubiquitous spraying has now led to the emergence of "superweeds" resistant to Round-Up across 70+ million acres of U.S. cropland, forcing the biotech giants to develop new GMO crops that are resistant to both glyphosate and other even more toxic herbicides like dicamba and 2,4-D (a major component of Agent Orange which so many soldiers and civilians were exposed to with lethal effect during the Vietnam War).

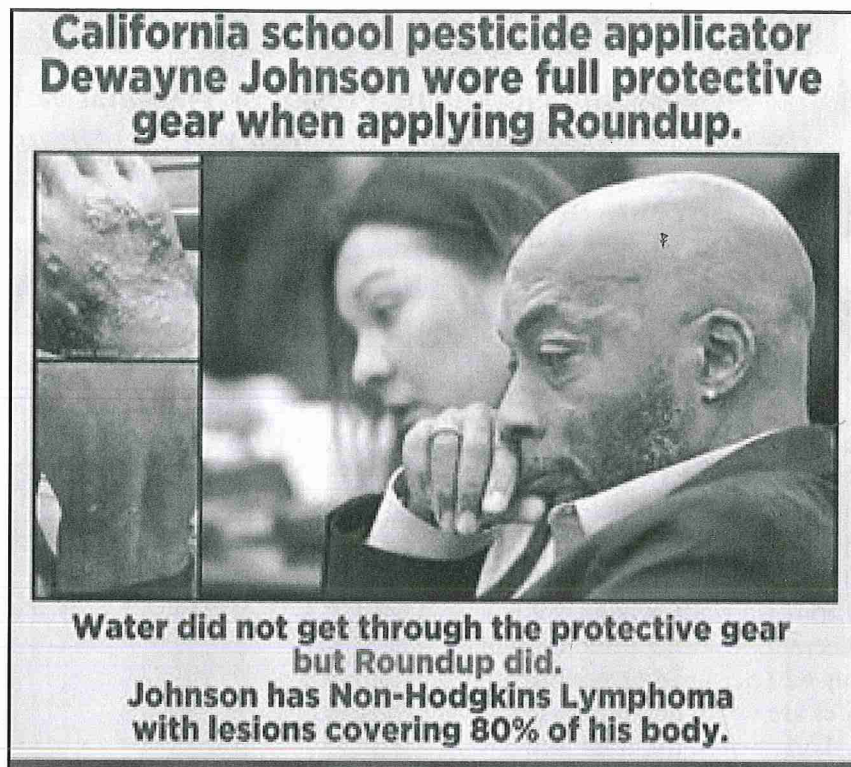
The Center for Food is currently challenging EPA approval of this next generation of GMO crops - specifically, Dow's Enlist Duo varieties (resistant to glyphosate and 2,4-D) and Monsanto's Xtendimix varieties (resistant to glyphosate and dicamba), with Family Farm Defenders and the National Family Farm Coalition among the plaintiffs. Both herbicides are notorious for their propensity to form vapor clouds that can drift widely and

damage neighboring crops. Millions of acres of soybeans, as well as vegetable and fruit crops, trees, and shrubs were damaged by such drift across the country last year. Jim Goodman, longtime organic dairy/beef farmer, NFFC president, and board member of FFD, noted that "The combination of 2,4-D and glyphosate in Enlist Duo is a recipe for disaster. It may control Roundup-resistant weeds, but only for a while, and at what cost to the health of farm workers, consumers and the environment?" As these cases wend their way through the courts, some states are taking action on their own - both Missouri and Arkansas banned the use of dicamba in July 2017 after hundreds of soybean farmers reported crop losses of 30-50% from toxic drift.

And in other good news, on Aug. 29th Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ) introduced a bill to limit mergers - such as that between Bayer and Monsanto (https://www.booker.senate.gov/?p=press_release&id=844). Rep. Mark Pocan (WI) - a longtime friend of

Family Farm Defenders - will be introducing a companion bill in the House. The bill would put an 18-month moratorium on large agribusiness, food and beverage manufacturing, and grocery retail consolidation, and study the impact of such mergers. In the past two years, mega mergers and corporate takeovers have enabled just three conglomerates to control 66% of the crop seed and 70% of the agrochemical market.

Meanwhile, net farm income for US farmers has fallen by more than half in just the last five years. Over 80 family farm, consumer, and environmental groups have expressed their support for the legislation. This bill is modeled on a similar measure introduced back in 1999 by Sen. Paul Wellstone (D-MN), another great champion of family farmers before his untimely death in a plane crash in 2002. While the full toll from decades of Monsanto's carefree toxic peddling has yet to be determined, we may finally see the last nails being hammered into the coffin for Round-Up.



Trump's \$12 Billion PR Stunt

By: Jim Goodman, President, National Family Farm Coalition

Published by Daily Yonder, August 2nd 2018

Despite strong continued support for President Trump in rural America, farmers fear they will bear the brunt of retaliatory tariffs from the president's trade war.

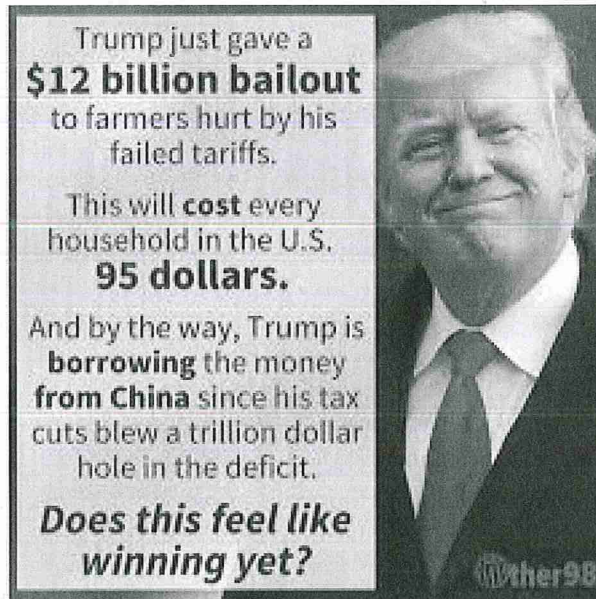
Farm Country can ill afford it.

In February, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) predicted 2018 crop profits would hit a 12 year low. Dairy farmers' prices have fallen 30% in two years, while pork producers have seen a price drop of roughly \$20 per head. Overall farm incomes are down nearly 50% from 2013. Long before the trade war began, I and other farmers feared we were in a farm crisis as bad as of the 1980s. Now we know it will be even worse. While the president has said he could "stand in the middle of Fifth Avenue and shoot somebody" and not lose support, he also knows who butters his bread. And so, we have a new \$12 billion emergency aid package for farmers to ease the sting of tariffs, clearly designed to keep his rural base firmly behind him. But will it actually solve farmers' problems? I doubt it.

Twelve billion dollars is a lot of money, but spread across all the major agricultural commodities, it will be a drop in the bucket.

Details on how the money will be dispersed are still hazy, but I suspect most of it will not find its way into the pockets of struggling farmers. The proposed scheme divides the funds into three pots. One will be used for direct incremental payments to producers of soybeans, sorghum, corn, wheat, cotton, dairy and hogs, for losses sustained from the tariffs. A second will use USDA Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) authority to purchase commodities of fruits, nuts,

Instead of posturing to look like he supports farmers, the President should be pushing for reforms in agricultural programs that would actually help the little guy.



Trump just gave a
\$12 billion bailout
to farmers hurt by his
failed tariffs.

This will **cost** every
household in the U.S.
95 dollars.

And by the way, Trump is
borrowing the money
from China since his tax
cuts blew a trillion dollar
hole in the deficit.

**Does this feel like
winning yet?**

rice, legumes, beef, pork and milk and distribute them to food banks. The third will use CCC funds to partner with the private sector to develop new export markets for agricultural commodities.

So what's wrong with that? Well, plenty. First, direct payments will supposedly replace projected income lost due to the tariffs - as if everything was going along fine in farm country before the president's little trade war. The whole plan ignores the full-blown farm crisis - complete with farmers struggling to pay their electric bills and buy food, forced to sell their farms, and in some cases taking their own lives - that has been quietly growing in the country side for years,

with virtually no recognition or corrective action from Washington. But now they're playing politics. Second, after the bailout gives an unknown share of \$12 billion to make up for farmers' low prices and feed the working poor through a donation program, it hands the rest to big agribusiness for export market development. Farmers are already forced to pay a tax on every animal or bushel of grain we sell. This checkoff goes to agribusiness trade groups for product promotion and market development. But apparently that's not enough, so this deal gives them another pound of flesh - this time from the taxpayers.

The real problem facing farm country is not international tariffs. It is that we produce too much.

Farmers are told that to survive, we must produce every possible bushel, every gallon of milk or pound of meat, no

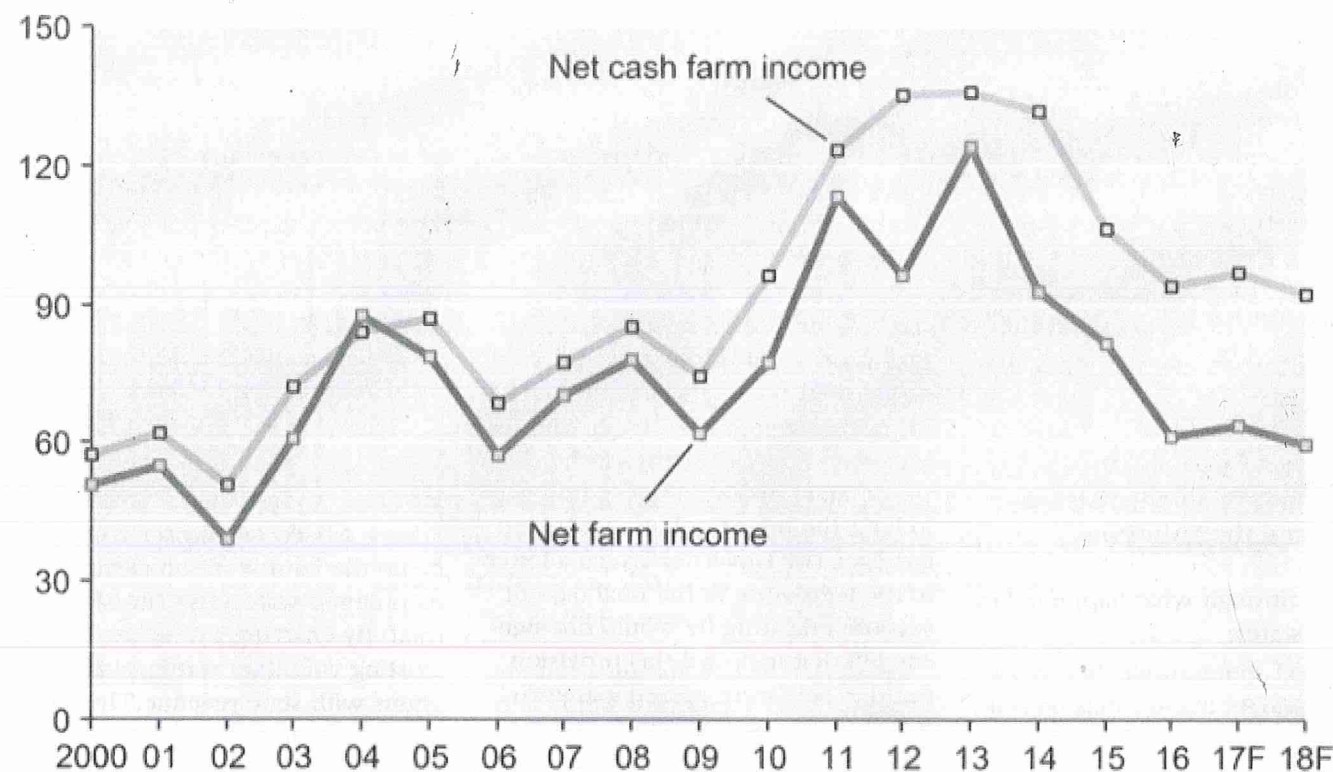
matter what it costs to buy the inputs, no matter the toll on the environment. When prices are low, we must produce more - and of course that means even lower prices and a never-ending death spiral.

The small farms go first in hard times; the land merged into bigger operations, and the small dairy herds, like mine, sold off. My state of Wisconsin is losing 1.5 dairy farms every day - that's 1.5 farmers out of a job. We can only guess at the economic impact the loss of these small farms will have on the businesses in their rural communities.

(continued on pg. 7)

Net farm income and net cash farm income, 2000-18F

\$ billion, nominal



Note: F = forecast.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service, Farm Income and Wealth Statistics.

Data as of July 17, 2018. Values for net farm income and net cash farm income (2015-16) were corrected, see errata for details.

There is another way: not a bailout, but a minimum wage. For many years, federal farm policy included a grain reserve. The government bought grain in times of low prices, sold it back into the market when supplies were low, and ensured farmers a floor price to keep them farming at a profit rather than producing below their cost of production. This stabilized the food supply and food prices, and farmers were required to maintain good environmental practices – no fence-row to fence-row planting.

We could do the same for livestock producers. Rather than forever chasing new export markets, we could, like Canada, simply keep our production in line with domes-

tic consumption. Canada's supply management program guarantees farmers a fair price and guarantees

The small farms go first in hard times; the land merged into bigger operations, and the small dairy herds, like mine, sold off. My state of Wisconsin is losing 1.5 dairy farms every day – that's 1.5 farmers out of a job. We can only guess at the economic impact the loss of these small farms will have on the businesses in their rural communities.

consumers adequate food supplies grown locally – with no taxpayer subsidies required. We could still export excess production where there was demand, but US farmers would no longer compete with every farmer in the world over who can produce the cheapest product. Farmers, like everyone else, do better with a fair price for their work rather than emergency handouts.

Trump's trade war will cause irreparable damage to the farm sector, but we were bleeding long before he took to Twitter. If the president really wants to help farmers – and consumers, the environment, and taxpayers – he would lobby for a U.S. supply management program, not a \$12 billion PR stunt.

Trump Administration Undermine Key Environmental Laws

By: Krissy Kasserman, Food and Water Watch

The Trump Administration has worked to undermine our key environmental laws and Congress is attempting to pass a deeply flawed farm bill, but at the state level we've actually seen some BIG WINS on issues related to factory farms in 2018! Legislators spent the first months of the year working on a number of issues –

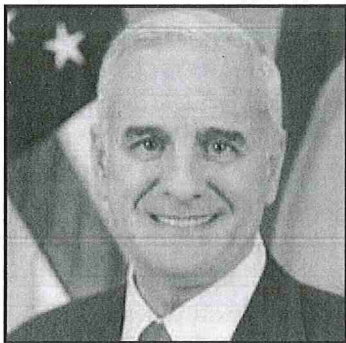
Here's our Round Up of 2018: The Good, The Bad, The Ugly, and the Solutions

Let's walk through what happened in some key states:

Minnesota

GOOD

Democracy wins in Minnesota!



Thanks to Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton

Legislators introduced a bill that could have allowed organizations and people to be charged with a crime simply for promoting or supporting an event where a trespass or damage happened... guilt by association. The bill had the American Legislative Exchange Council's (ALEC) fingerprints all over it. Minnesota has a long history of citizen and farmer-led protests, including those that swept across the state during the 1980's farm crisis, and as a result family farm advocates were outraged. The bill

passed the legislature but after enormous citizen outcry, Gov. Dayton vetoed it— an big win for democracy! (Note: ALEC is currently shopping this bill to states around the country.)

- **In Minnesota, 40% of lakes and streams are contaminated with pollution from fertilizer and is present in more than 8,000 drinking water wells.** It's terrible, and yet legislators sought to remove the Department of Agriculture's authority to limit the use of polluting nitrogen fertilizer. The Governor issued a letter to the legislature in the final days of session indicating he would not sign any bill that included this provision, but the legislature passed it anyway! But, then, in a strong win for science, clean water and democracy, Governor Dayton vetoed it immediately!

Missouri

GOOD



In Missouri, two bills proposing to strip local communities of their right to have a say in permitting factory farms were introduced. One sought to limit the authority of local county commissions to impose setbacks on factory farms sprayfields. The bill had strong industry support, but in part due to strong opposition from groups like Missouri Rural Crisis Center, it stalled out at the end of session!

BAD

The second bill proposed stripping local communities of their right to enact ordinances to address the labeling, cultivation, or use of seeds or fer-

tilizer. This is another bill that reeks of ALEC influence, and in fact, Texas passed a very similar measure last year. This kind of bill would limit local governments from enacting bans or restrictions on the cultivation of GMO seeds or regulate practices like manure spreading. This bill ultimately passed, likely also due to deep involvement from industry.

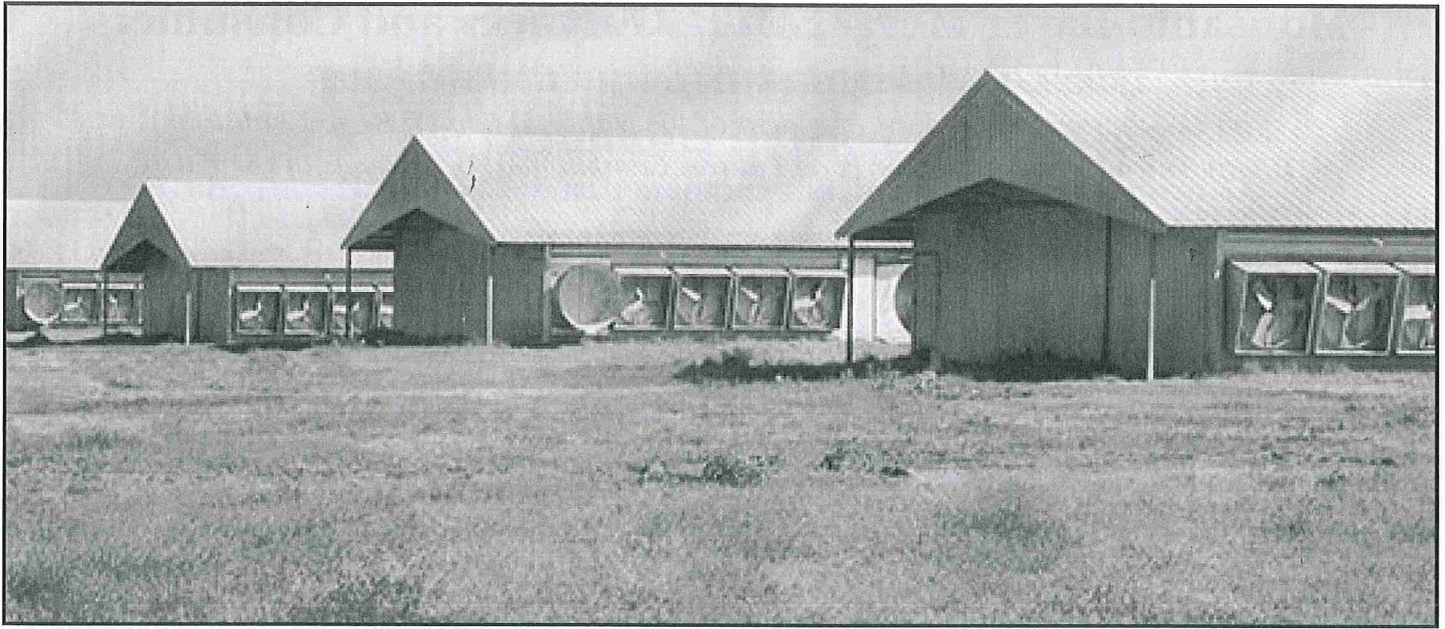
Iowa

BAD

- Iowa passed on an opportunity to begin the hard work on cleaning up its polluted waterways (nearly 800 in total) by enacting a new law funding existing voluntary water quality programs with state revenue. The bill didn't include measures like Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement had been lobbying for: a comprehensive statewide monitoring strategy, goals for improving water quality, or even a provision to make polluter pay for these initiatives. It was essentially a talking point that legislators can use in stump speeches, and it won't result in any meaningful measures to address water pollution in Iowa. Unfortunately, Governor Kim Reynolds signed it into law.



- Legislation proposing a moratorium on new and expanded factory farms was introduced in both the Iowa Senate and House. Both bills died in subcommittee— the Senate version after the chair of the subcommittee, **Ken Rozenboom, allegedly refused to even bring it to debate.** (This is the same Rozenboom who describes himself as a life long farmer and agri-businessman.)



Maryland Community Healthy Air Act Legislation to Study Air Emissions from Industrial Animal Farms FAILED to Pass

photo source: Fairfarms.org

Maryland BAD

• **Maryland Senator Richard Madaleno reintroduced the Community Healthy Air Act (CHAA) in that state's 2018 session.** This critically important piece of legislation would have required the Maryland Dept. of Environment (MDE) to monitor air emissions from industrial factory farms in Maryland and to assess their impact on public health. While hearings were held in both Senate and House, the bill ultimately failed to pass.

North Carolina UGLY

• Last year, North Carolina enacted a law restricting the rights of citizens to bring nuisance lawsuits against factory farms (despite massive citizen outcry, the legislature overrode the Governor's veto to enact this legislation.) And it's no surprise that the NC General Assembly went a step further this year. In response to recent ground breaking victories for plaintiffs suing factory farms for nuisance in the courtroom, legislators introduced a bill declaring factory farms

are not a nuisance at all – a change that could completely eliminate people's right to sue the factory farm next door for lost property values or other harms.

• This is an egregious attack on private property rights and North Carolina's most vulnerable communities in order to shield a single corporation - Smithfield Foods, - from being held responsible for its filth. The bill passed easily in the General Assembly where Republicans hold a supermajority in both chambers. The Governor vetoed the bill but the General Assembly, in pledging allegiance to Smithfield, overrode his veto. Until these terrible laws are repealed, the type of ground breaking lawsuits holding Smithfield accountable for destroying its neighbors's lives will not be possible in the future in North Carolina.

LOOKING FORWARD

In this legislative session there were some important victories but also some hard fought losses. Corporate influence in our political system is one of the biggest threats to our food

water and environment. Legislators in several states heard that loud and clear from their constituents this past session. Dozens of powerful grassroots groups and thousands of citizens mobilized against corporate influence and for the basic tenants of our democracy. Some good bills died in committee, but had exciting grassroots support and momentum behind their introductions – setting us up for more wins next year. These victories showed that when we stand together we can win.

We will continue to work with our state and local partners over the coming months to prepare for 2019.

- We will hold public officials accountable and expose them when they pander to Big Ag.
- We'll run bold campaigns to overhaul our food system, starting with getting rid of factory farms.
- As we fight to build a democracy that works for everyone.

Monsanto-Bayer Merger Hurts Farmers and Consumers

Jim Goodman and Tiffany Finck-Haynes

Jim Goodman is the Board President of the National Family Farm Coalition.

Tiffany Finck-Haynes is Senior Food Futures Campaigner for Friends of the Earth.

The U.S. Department of Justice issued a stern warning in its lawsuit against the conditionally-approved mega-merger between Bayer and Monsanto in June.

The anti-competitive price effects of the merger would, according to the DOJ, “likely result in hundreds of millions of dollars per year in harm, raising costs to farmers and consumers.” The Justice Department warned that the combining of Bayer and Monsanto would reduce competition for vegetable seeds, likely driving up prices. Further, farmers might see prices for GMO cotton, canola, corn and soybean seeds increase, as well as price increases for herbicide and seed treatments.

After imposing some limited divestments on Monsanto, the DOJ approved this merger, enabling Monsanto to hide its controversial name brand while giving Bayer anti-competitive control over seeds, pesticides, farmers and consumers worldwide.

But the harm to consumers and farmers will still exist.

The DOJ is on the brink of essentially authorizing a monopoly. This is bad news for nearly everyone on the planet except Bayer and Monsanto executives and shareholders. Aside from a combined Bayer-Monsanto, only three other seed companies will be in the market manufacture and sell these products.

Farmers overwhelmingly object to the merger. Ninety-three percent of farmers expressed concern that the merger will harm independent farmers and farming communities.



Farmers' top three concerns were that Bayer/Monsanto “would use its dominance in one product to push sales of other products;” “control data about farm practices;” and that the merger will create “increased pressure for chemically dependent farming.”

Aside from the overwhelming number of farmers that have already voiced opposition to the merger, the DOJ has received petitions from over 1 million Americans urging the agency to block the merger. This month, thousands of farmers and Americans resubmitted comments urging the agency to reverse its harmful conditional approval. Iowa Attorney General Tom Miller joined a letter with the state attorneys general from California, Massachusetts, Mississippi and Oregon submitted a letter opposing the merger.

Bayer and Monsanto's merger comes at a moment when powerful companies push farmers into dependence on their products, locking farmers into long-term contracts. A consolidating food system means less choice for consumers. “This mega-merger will give the company a stranglehold on the vegetable seed, cottonseed, corn and soy seed markets, which will only increase prices and put farmers' livelihoods at risk,” noted Ben Burkett, a Mississippi vegetable farmer and past board president of National Family Farm Coalition.

For farmers, the merger will likely push up production costs. Farmers' concerns are backed up by history, in which mega-mergers have diminished competition and options for both farmers and consumers while promoting more chemical-based farming — in turn harming our environment and health.

As seed and GMO companies have consolidated over the past 20 years. Much of that price increase comes from companies increasing fees for seeds as they genetically modify new traits into our food. The cost of these new technologies has exploded the price of seeds; between 32 and 74 percent of the price of seed for corn, soybeans, cotton and sugar beets in the United States and the European Union was estimated to reflect technology costs or the cost of seed treatments.

Farmers' net profits continues to shrink. Reduced earnings have forced most farmers to take on second jobs; 82 percent of U.S. farm household income is expected to come from off-farm work this year, up from 53 percent in 1960. As the Trump administration moves to give another handout to corporate agriculture, family farmers will pay the price.

Farmers aren't fooled by claims that Monsanto divestments will make this merger beneficial and non-monopolistic. Consumers and policymakers shouldn't be fooled, either. On our farms, in our soil and on our supermarket shelves, the merger of Bayer and Monsanto means fewer options for a cleaner, healthier and more farmer-friendly food system. As the Department of Justice moves to make a final decision, they should stop this merger and save farmers and consumers from this new monopoly.

BOOK REVIEW

Land Justice: Re-imagining Land, Food and the Commons in the United States

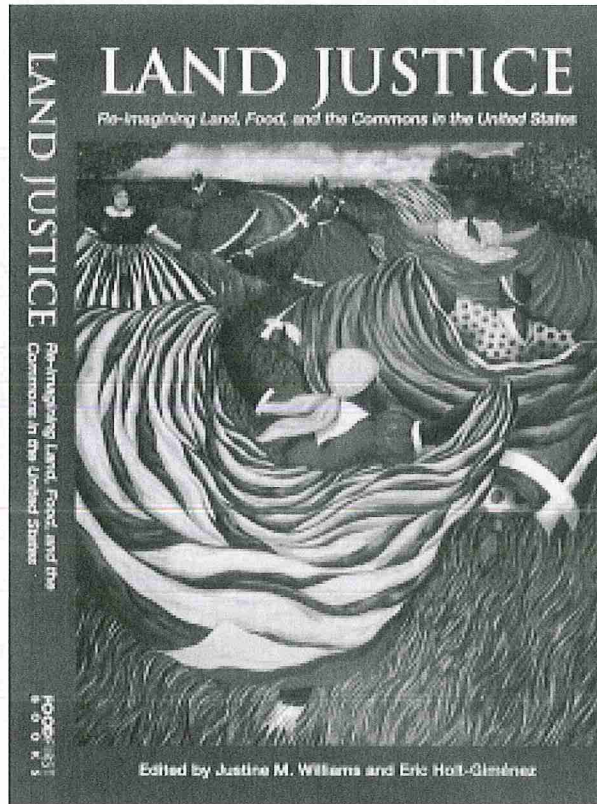
by Patti Naylor, FFD board member and family farmer, Churdan, IA

During the few quiet spells that punctuated the weeks of exhilarating but exhausting summer work on our farm, I eagerly sought out space to indulge in a powerful new book by Food First. *Land Justice: Re-imagining Land, Food, and the Commons in the United States* was released in June 2017. Each writer in this anthology rewarded my time with deep thought-provoking narratives.

Land justice is both a new concept and an ancient understanding. This book entices us to think about land justice as a means of social change. My own connection to land is based on my life journey from childhood where I grew up on a medium-sized family farm in Iowa to explorations of cultures and traditions in other countries and back to life on an Iowa farm.

This Iowa farmland that I now call home keeps me grounded to Mother Earth, to her wonderful diversity and her natural beauty. Others have a very different relationship to land, all valid and necessary, as the writers in *Land Justice* makes clear. Readers of this book will find connections in each of the six sections as well as the three prefaces and conclusion.

Each preface, with a focus on decolonizing our food, agricultural parity, and, by the Women Food and Agriculture Network (WFAN)'s 2017 keynote speaker LaDonna Redmond, the history of contested land, pulls together the multiple aspects of this book just as the food movement itself is composed of pieces of a puzzle working toward the common goal of food sovereignty. The first section, *Black Agrarianism*, begins with poetry and a quote from Bell Hooks that pays tribute to African ancestors and their place as farmers and people of the land. Ancestral knowledge, resistance, solidarity, and power are themes of this section.



**The reader is left with a note of hope:
“What is the role of land justice
in social change?”**

WFAN member, Angie Carter, begins the next section, Gender and Land. She relates how women landowners have a strong desire to care for the land in a way that will benefit future generations. Feminism and healing highlights another chapter with a focus on spirituality, artistry, and community self-determination as black women hold tight to the land. Section three, *Land Access, Social Privilege, and the Rise of Indigenous Leadership*, looks at alternative ways for small-scale producers and native peoples to find land on which to grow food.

The next section, Cross-Border Implications, dives into the farmworkers and farmers of Latin America, too often exploited and discriminated against. The impacts of commodity crop production and trade agreements have been enormous.

Rebuilding the Urban Commons takes us to Oakland, California and Detroit, Michigan to understand the struggles of to overcome poverty and lack of healthy foods in the context of land-grabbing and public properties. *Lessons From and For Land Activism*, the final section, envision a world where land justice is a reality and recounts the work toward that goal.

Left with a Note of Hope

Editors Eric Holt-Gimenez and Justine M. Williams leave each of us in the food movement with a call for agrarian reform, food sovereignty, and a more just and equitable agriculture system. The reader is left with a note of hope: “What is the role of land justice in social change? Ultimately, it may be to bring us together on that irreducible terrain of hope from which all other struggles for food, livelihoods, water, and environment emerge: the land.”

Project Tractor

By: Anthony Pahnke, FFD Vice President

Ten years have passed since Project Tractor was launched. It would be an injustice to the effort to describe it merely as a shipment of tractors, farm equipment, food, and medical supplies from Wisconsin to Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Gustav. Project Tractor was more than just moving stuff from one place to another. The initiative, at its core, was about connecting communities, building solidarity, and creating hope, particularly at a time when many were suffering in the aftermath of one this country's worst natural disasters.

I became active in the Family Farm Defenders a few years after Project Tractor began. Where I actually first heard of the effort was from farmers in Mississippi, when I was visiting folks there in 2012. At that time, a friend of mine and I went on a road trip, meeting different farm groups. We ended up at Ben Burkett's farm outside of Petal, Mississippi, where we met a few members of the Indian Springs Cooperative. When they asked where I was from, and I told them that I was from Wisconsin, one farmer said, "Well, thank you."

Folks from Wisconsin are welcome here any time. I was pleasantly surprised by that simple act of kindness, later finding out that the reason for the gratitude was the tireless actions of dozens, if not hundreds of volunteers who made Project Tractor a reality.

I returned to Mississippi a few years later in 2016 to talk more with Ben Burkett and others about farming and cooperatives. The event was the Mississippi Association of Cooperatives' agricultural symposium, which is the group's mid-year mem-



The Original "Project Tractor" Tractor

bership meeting. Of course, after some members of the Association found out that I was from Wisconsin, Project Tractor came up in the conversation.

As Ben told me, "it was right after Katrina when John Kinsman called me and asked what he could do to help." When I asked about what happened to the tractors, Ben said, "those tractors, they are still on the job. And when farmers in Louisiana heard that we got some, they wanted some too." At the time, I didn't know that Project Tractor had two moments - one in 2006, and the second, in 2009, when a second shipment of tractors went to farmers in Louisiana who were reeling from the destruction caused by Hurricane Gustav.

Ben added that "without them tractors, the recovery would have been way harder," but with the most important result of the effort being "the farmer to farmer relationships." And that relationship runs deep for Ben, as he said, "Family Farm

Defenders is part of me, always will be." After the event, I again went to Ben's farm, where he showed me one of the original Project Tractor tractors.

The news coverage and some of the testimonies from the volunteers who were involved at the time add another layer to Project Tractor. For instance, nearly every picture that appeared in newspapers that covered the shipment features people smiling - both the folks receiving and giving the tractors, equipment, and supplies. One picture that appeared in the Hattiesburg American shows John Peck and John Kinsman laughing and hugging Ben Burkett's daughter, Darnella, with the flatbed trailer used to deliver the tractors in the background. Another photo, in the Spring 2006 edition of The Defender Newsletter, shows Randy Jasper smiling while delivering supplies to farmers in New Orleans. (Randy, it is worth-noting, drove the tractor shipments for Project Tractor, not for one trip, but for both!)

Continued on pg. 11



Ben Burkett - 4th Generation Farmer - His Family Farm has been in Petal, Mississippi since 1886

Seeing the joy in these photos speaks to the hope that Project Tractor inspired. And hope was in short supply those days, especially after the federal government's extraordinarily slow response. Some of the testimonies of Wisconsin volunteers note that in some places it took the government weeks to send officials. Ben Burkett said that the first government aid worker that he saw arrived 35 days after Hurricane Katrina had ravaged his area. Another account about the government response documented how a sheriff from around Hattiesburg, Mississippi, after receiving no help for close to two weeks, had to break into a military base to get water for people who were in need.

Project Tractor was key for rebuilding communities. Where the federal government waived in providing support, farmers and community members went headlong into dedicating their time and resources. One volunteer, in another testimony, noted how his group passed through highway patrol officer checkpoints to arrive to Gulfport. In what was described as a 'war zone,' this area of southern Mississippi had seen just a

few visits from the Red Cross and the federal government. The group, noting that the people in the area needed serious support, created what became known as the New Waveland Café and Market, an initiative made up of community people, activists, and farmers. This experiment in community building provided both meals and medical attention to hurricane survivors for months.

Such community building efforts were remarkable for their diversity. Many of the people who made Project Tractor happen were Wisconsin farmers, young and old, who sent tractors and equipment to African-American farmers and Indigenous communities. Critics of the government's response, or lack thereof at the time, called attention to how people of color were disproportionately negatively affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Gustav. Similar allegations of racism surround the Trump administration's bungled attempt to address the aftermath of Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico.

In a perfect world, natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina would never happen. Our world is far from perfect, with climate change making

extreme weather a constant. Every year, the question is not if a hurricane, tornado, or flood will ravage some community, but how many catastrophes will we have to endure.

In fact, as I am writing this, people from around Wisconsin are dealing with the latest string of tornadoes and floods that have destroyed their barns, homes, and roads. From Florida to California, and Wisconsin to Mississippi, natural disasters are becoming regular occurrences. As the government's response to Hurricane Maria indicates, it is most likely that community-to-community efforts like Project Tractor will have to be repeated, not just in the south, but nationally.

This is why it's best to say that Project Tractor began ten years ago, and really, did not end. Or rather, the kind of solidary and community-to-community efforts that folks created in Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana is part of an ongoing struggle to keep rural people on the land and bring diverse groups together to create hope in the face of adversity.

America the Bountiful Tour

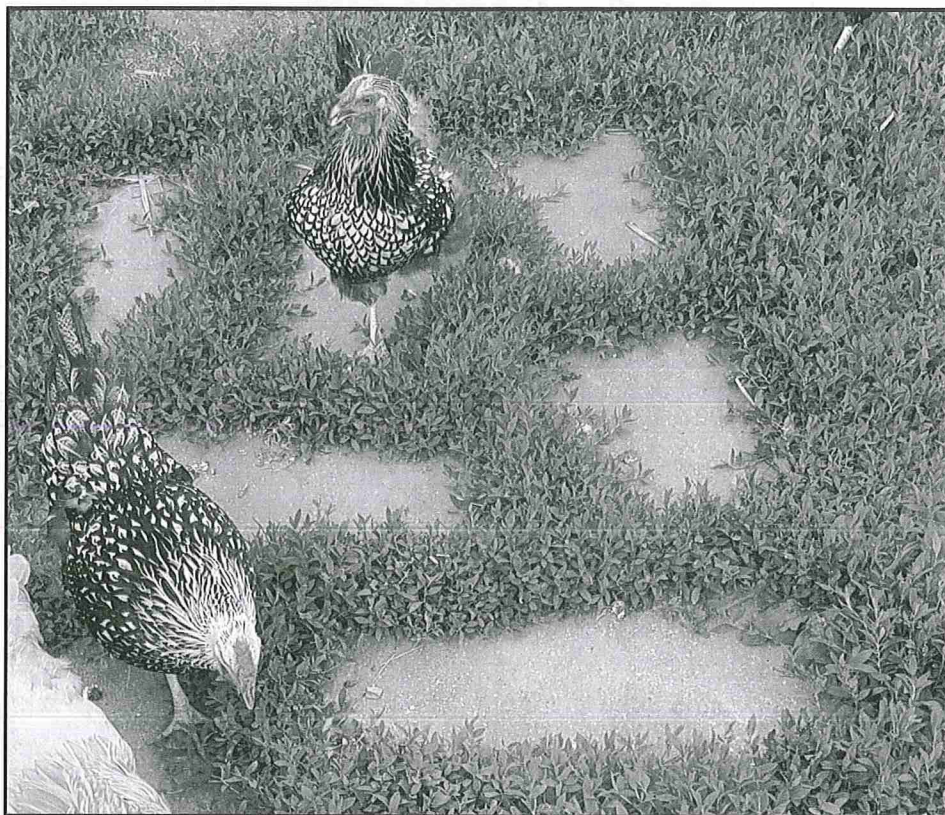
Scenes from a Road Trip

by Lisa Griffith

NFFC National Program Coordinator & FFD Board Member

Even before Niaz Dorry took up the reins as director of National Family Farm Coalition (NFFC) on May 1st, she advised the board she wanted to travel across the country this summer to meet NFFC members and allies on their farms (or in some cases, in their boats). Niaz Dorry also serves as the Coordinating Director of the Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance (NAMA), and felt that the tour would help to bridge the farming and fishing communities she will work with while providing excellent first-hand knowledge of the situations and solutions they manage every day. This became known as the America the Bountiful Tour, and it departed from Gloucester, Massachusetts, in a 30-foot RV on May 29th for Washington, DC, and points South before heading to Kentucky and the Midwest.

On a hot, steamy morning in mid June, Niaz, tour intern Elliot Snow and I departed the RV campgrounds near Cahokia, Illinois. We had dined the night before in St. Louis with Missouri Rural Crisis Center (MRCC) members and American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) allies, and were looking forward to seeing more MRCC folks in mid Missouri. During lunching on a member's farm near Fulton, we learned about the encroachment of concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) into their county and others throughout the state. (*More info at <http://bit.ly/MOfightingCAFOs>*). They explained that CAFO owners, such as Eichelberger Farms, Inc. of Wayland, Iowa, typically seek rural communities known to have generally low incomes and no county health ordi-



Free Range Chickens at Peterson's Farm

nances or well organized opposition. The idea of "more jobs" is often touted, even though the jobs are often low-paying with little to no upward mobility. The state's department of Natural Resources and Clean Water Commission (whose citizen representatives were recently replaced with industrial agricultural lobbyists) prioritize corporate profits over basic human rights, including accessible to potable water.

A discussion with more MRCC members and staff that evening focused on the current lack of political will to fight corporate agribusinesses. One recalled that Jesse Jackson, as a 1984 and 1988 Presidential candidate, stood with farmers calling for "parity, not charity"

during a campaign tour. The federal government's supply of Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) dollars to CAFO's and reduced funds for successful conservation programs further exacerbate the problems caused by free trade agreements that promote growing surplus commodities to sell at prices below the cost of production for export.

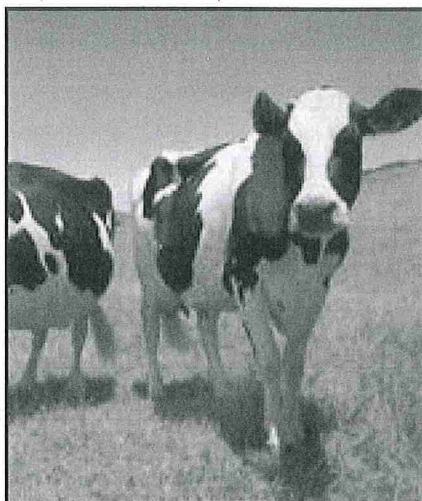
We concluded with the idea the farmers worldwide need to organize. Need to organize people from all walks of life to regain solidarity and sovereignty and to elect governing officials who will represent them, not industrial agribusiness interests.

Continued on pg. 15

After leaving Missouri, we passed many uninterrupted miles of corn and soybeans across Iowa, with the occasional sights and smells of CAFOs, until we reached Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Our hosts were Dakota Rural Action members who own a small farm and egg aggregation business on the outskirts of town. Their DRA committee is surveying area restaurants, schools and colleges to determine interest in and obstacles to serving more locally produced foods.

One late night, with a group of neighbors, they discussed fields formerly covered with wheat and barley that are now planted with corn and soy, which has supported CAFO expansion. DRA has aligned with several regional organizations, including Native American tribes and NFFC members, MRCC and Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement, to fight CAFOs, pipeline construction and other water-focused problems. They also employ "power mapping" exercises to identify who can help them win these fights and how to reach those potential allies.

Leaving Sioux Falls we crossed the Missouri River into "West River" territory. The rolling hills that became more closely spaced and considerably taller as we headed north to Spearfish. There we met a young couple who has used organic and no-till practices for the seven years they've owned their 3-acre farm. Unlike many young farmers they were able to secure a 0 percent interest loan on land that had been 'ditched' for irrigation, and even made enough on the farm to pay themselves a little last year through their market shares, on-farm store, farmers market and restaurants. In addition to growing various vegetables, herbs and laying hens, they planted apple tree and built straw bale greenhouse for winter growing and retreat. Their labors to improve soil health are obviously paying off well.



One trip highlight was spending a night in a campground near the foot of Devils Tower. This offered a view of some of the most beautiful skies imaginable and opportunity to enjoy some delicious bounty gathered en route. It was easy to appreciate why people settled and stayed there. After maneuvering switchbacks out of the park, we drove to Gillette, Wyoming, to meet Powder River Basin Resource Council members at the storefront farmers market there. This amazing food hub sells raw, fermented, canned, frozen, dried and baked foods from 30 local producers, thanks to the 2015 Wyoming Food Freedom Act. Like Maine's Food Sovereignty Ordinance, it allows farmers to sell directly to consumers without certifications and inspections (outside of meat), giving customers access to an array otherwise difficult to purchase from individual farmers.

Closer to Sheridan, where wheat and sugar beets once reigned, hay, alfalfa, oats and beef cattle are grown, although local dairies also existed until the late 1950s or early 1960s. Farms and ranches have been impacted by powerful coal, oil and gas corporations whose extraction breaks up natural habitat and access to water. PRBRC has helped to reform mineral rights through the Wyoming Environmental Quality Act and the Federal Strip Mine Act, although one creek was protected from contamina-

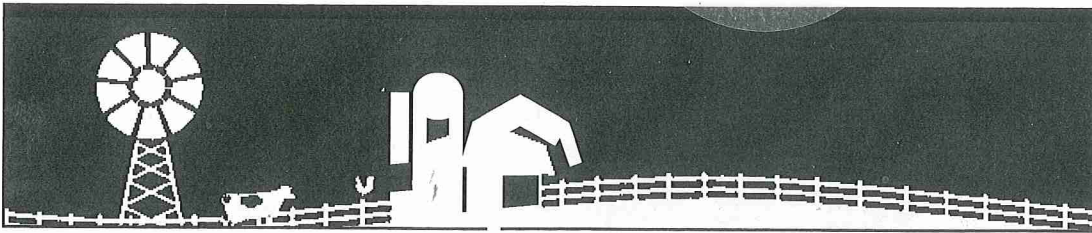
tion by mineral extraction because the baseline data was collected in and since 1959.

The organic farm fed by Clear Creek offers a bounty of vegetables, beans and herbs, while cottonwood trees (the state tree), bees, wild turkey and other wildlife also thrive. A couple nearby raise animals for pleasure, protection, wool, milk and meat. They must drive three hours to a USDA-certified meat processor, but are able to sell through their on-farm store and other local venues. As for many farmers, there's never enough money or time, but they eat well and strive to be good stewards of the land, water and their four children. Keeping prices affordable for their customers is also important, as they believe everyone should eat well, but acquiring loans for their land was difficult as "non conventional" farmers. USDA value-added producer grants and tree crop research project welcome additional support.

Through many conversations we heard several themes: the lack of political will to ensure local control over and protection of resources and markets, particularly from mining companies and agribusiness corporations; the need for governments to recognize the contributions of small- and mid-sized farms to regional economies, public health and food security; and the need for fair prices that ensure family farmers and ranches can afford to maintain their lives and livelihoods. Family farmers genuinely love tending land and livestock, and want to do it well because they know that if they don't they won't be able to enjoy clean water, healthy foods and spending much of their time outdoors.

This is but a small slice from the American the Bountiful tour experience - to learn more and see some amazing photographs visit"

<https://www.americathebountiful.org/>



PRESORTED STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Reedsburg, WI
53959
Permit No. 144

Family Farm Defenders
PO Box 1772
Madison, WI 53701
phone/fax: (608) 260-0900

current resident or:

Trom, Brad
P.O. Box 737

Reedsburg, WI 53959

Support Family Farm Defenders Become a Member Today

We are a tax-deductible non-profit activist organization made up of farmers and concerned consumers. We are seeking ways to bring fair prices back to farmers and insure safe, sustainably produced food for consumers. Your support is greatly appreciated.

I will contribute: \$10 \$25 \$50 \$100 \$150

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone (optional): _____ Email (optional): _____

Please make checks payable to: Family Farm Defenders

Lutefisk Dinner

First Lutheran Church
434 1st St SW, Blooming Prairie
Tues, Oct 16, 2018

Lutefisk & Lefse,
Swedish Meatballs,
Mashed Potatoes &
Gravy, Buttered Corn,
Cranberry Salad,
Norwegian Pastries,
Coffee & Milk

Adults: \$18.00

Children ages 5-12: \$6.00

Children under 5: FREE

Phone Danielle Hein at
First Lutheran 507-583-6621
8 am-3 pm Mon-Thur; 8 am-1 pm Fri
All Proceeds go to Benevolence

Noon Walk-Ins

Serving 11:00 am-1:00 pm
Tickets sold all morning

Carry-outs are reservations only: \$18.00

Advance Ticket Sale Only

Dinner Seatings: 5:30, 6:30, 7:30 pm



THE BIRTH OF OUR NATIONAL ANTHEM

On June 18, 1812, America declared war on Great Britain over a series of trade disagreements. In what became known as the War of 1812, British troops once again infiltrated America's shores. On August 24, 1814, British troops successfully invaded Washington, DC, where they burned the White House, the Capitol Building, and the Library of Congress. They then turned their attention to the Chesapeake Bay and the heavily fortified harbortown of Baltimore, Maryland.

At the mouth of the harbor stood Fort McHenry, an island fortification that needed to be taken before the large British warships could reach of the city. Beginning September 13, 1814, the British Navy began a 25-hour bombardment of Fort McHenry.

Aboard a British ship anchored a few miles from the battle was a young attorney by the name of Francis Scott Key. He was negotiating the release of a friend who had been captured by British troops. Unable to leave the ship during the attack, Key had to watch the bombing campaign unfold from an enemy ship. Throughout the day and into the night, the British rained nearly constant cannonfire onto the fort, but were unable to destroy it and eventually gave up. At daybreak the next day, Key was inspired to see the American flag still flying over Fort McHenry and wrote a stirring poem entitled "The Defense of Fort McHenry."

The poem was printed in newspapers and eventually set to the music of a popular English tune. People began referring to the song as "The Star-Spangled Banner" and, in 1916, President Woodrow Wilson announced that it should be played at all official events. In 1931, the Star-Spangled Banner was officially named as our National Anthem.



**Dodge County
Concerned Citizens**

Brad Trom
Director

P O Box 757
Blooming Prairie, Minnesota 55917

Phone: 507.583.7718
trom.brad@gmail.com

Advocating for Clean Water and Air
www.dodgeccc.org