

RE: Denver forum on antitrust activity in agriculture

My records show that the price I recieved for steer feeder calves dropped 29.3% from 1993 to 1995, and from 1993 to 1996 my price dropped 34.4%. The price I got in 1996 was less than I got in the early 1970's, yet many of my expenses at the least doubled in that time period. So, while I have taken a severe beating pricewise, especially in 1995 and 1996, the huge packers like IBP were posting record profits during those years.

While my price went so far down, prices at the meat counter stayed the same or moved up a little. It's obvious that someone had to be raking in the difference, so it is no coincidence that huge profits showed up in the packers' part of the meat supply system.

Producers like myself were and are being put out of business while the American consumer is being ripped off by the high cost of beef. Meanwhile the USDA stalls and dances around the obvious, therefore helping weaken my economic position while the monopolistic transnational corporations get fatter and more powerful. In the midst of this it is clear that my government could help me if they chose to. I am reminded of a statement that has been attributed to Napoleon: "Nothing in politics happens by accident." It is difficult to believe my government is accidentally overlooking the manipulated inequities involved in this situation.

My pernicious economic pattern would be bad enough if it were just in the beef industry, but it has become pandemic in American agriculture.

I am aware that controlling the food supply is an ancient military tactic used in controlling nations. One could speculate that this weakening of our agriculture is not by accident and is designed to force us into a position of accepting the global economics that NAFTA, WTO, et al espouse. (The apologists for global government have always been quick to vilify suggestions such as this.) It is sobering to note that much of the machinery for globalization is no longer in the shadows.

This forum has an opportunity to restore competition and begin rebuilding part of the strength that supports the foundational aspects of our nation. May God help us in that, both here and in the broader picture of American agriculture.

Nick Golder