

"You will observe with concern how long a useful truth may be known and exist, before it is generally received and practiced on." -Benjamin Franklin

The Lord Almighty is a wonderful teacher  
and gives the farmer wisdom.  
Isa. 30:29 Living Bible Translation

# KOW Ruminations

*Fully independent soil consulting-agronomy-nutrition. We do dairy nutrition from the soil up.*  
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## The Conspiracy of Duped Voluntary Subjugation Are you a dairyman in denial?

By Tom Weaver

**Discernment:** An act or instance of discerning (having or showing good judgment or understanding). To *discern* is to separate (a thing) mentally from another, to perceive or recognize a difference. Implies recognizing of something mentally (to discern one's motives).

Of all the skills / abilities that the modern dairymen must possess, the above must rank at the top of the list. It seems that with all the "free" advice offered to the dairyman today (piled on top of [or creating] the demanding workload most are harnessed with), that the process of making production management decisions should be easier than ever before. However, as an *independent* advisor to our industry, I see the task of *decision making* by the average dairyman becoming increasingly more difficult. Why??

One colleague (a nutritionist at a recent conference) commented that he wondered if there's really a reason to be hired any longer as an *independent* consultant in dairy management because any farmer could simply start asking questions of the various salespeople that visit his dairy and come up with *the same answers* (really?). Ask 12 people and you've got what you need. That individual has moved on into providing various services for his hire that do not require *full picture* problem solving –eliminating the source of *his* frustration (refuting the disinformation of the Brand X feed salesman), yet leaving dairymen to sort out the details alone.

Possibly this climate, in part, is due to what I like to call "*the Johnny Cash Method*" of procuring advice –like his old song, "I got it one piece at a time and it didn't cost me a dime." Did anyone get the point of this song? After "*procuring*" the parts from several years models of a particular automobile via the stealth of his lunchbox (while working at the auto assembly plant), he ended up with a car like no one else's (for sure!). However, the moral of the

song is: It wasn't without a lot of trouble making things *fit together* in the process. I see a lot of dairymen go through the same trouble while trying to assemble their "free parts." *This method is no better than making decisions based upon opinion polls.* While it seems to be the answer in politics, your farm should be operated based upon information from *informed sources who'll stand behind their word* and give you *real* results. Is there a better way to make decisions on how to manage? Are *independent* advisors really worth their pay? What is the proper role of an *independent* advisor and how can the farmer *discern* between helpful advice and hindrance? Who can you believe?? Let me dare to offer some more *advice*:

Getting to the truth in dairy management, or any issue in life, can be a formidable task. Therefore, in order to avoid being labeled as arrogant (believe it or not, it has happened before!), I will be deferring to the opinions of other *generally highly respected individuals*:

1. "The *love* of money is a *root* of all kinds of evil." Holy Bible, 1 Tim. 6:10 NIV (Emphasis added.)
2. "By their *fruit* you will recognize them." Holy Bible, Matt. 7:16 NIV (Emphasis added.)

Now, I won't claim a doctorate in Divinity, but I don't think I need one to interpret the Divine wisdom above. Without intending to pull things too far out of their context (I have and *do* study the text), I will put things in modern terms.

1. The profit motive *unrestrained by the Golden Rule* (Matt. 7:12) is the fundamental thing that causes men to do wrong or *overlook wrong doing*. (Which is may be the worst because *more participate* in that *sin of omission*.)
2. The best way to judge the character (and possibly competence) of people is by evaluating *the end product (long term)* of what they've done or have recommended to be done. Therefore, the best / surest source of guid-

Page 2      ance will be found from those whose potential to gain is without profit motive or at least *tied to your success* (They work for you alone, no another *higher authority* [excepting Divine!] who writes the paychecks.) and that have “fruit” that you can *personally inspect*.

**Have you considered the money trail that the advice you follow comes in on?** Did you actually see the *long term* results of the product, equipment, or program you purchased *before* the sale was made final? Could you see how it was the missing piece to your puzzle? Is your crop / ration / business plan *your* plan or is it *someone else’s plan all figured out for you*? Do you truly understand the why and how of it? From my experience, only a few of you (dairymen) can answer yes to all these questions. You’re just trusting in the benevolent intentions of your *suppliers and lenders*. Would you deny this? Actually, yes, many farmers do. (Mistakes may get you into trouble, but *pride keeps you there!*) Don’t get me wrong, most suppliers and lenders are fine people. **There appears to be a conflict of interest** when you rely on the them as your *sole* source of production and business management advice, but nonetheless, most are honest people. However, I am convinced that some are real crooks! Is it unreasonable to think there are a *few* bad apples out there? Or is it more logical to say 100% are pure as the wind driven snow? How does a farmer discern –gee, they all seem so smooth and professional? On top of that, everyone seems to have some university research / endorsement behind what they’re promot-

ing –hey, when you’ve got that you have to be on target don’t you? Yea, as on target as the theory of evolution (go figure). Should suppliers and lenders take offense? Not if they have your *best in mind*.

We *independent* consultants (we’re not salespeople with quotas) are often asking you to think *outside the box*. This is because the *sales bias* of much of our industry (include much ag sales funded research) would compel you to think only within the confines of what serves *their* best interest. Keeping dairymen *inside the box* is more profitable! Trustworthy advisors will discuss openly their fee for hire, be excited to show you the end product / results / **long term profitability** of their advice, and go to great lengths to *educate* you (not great lengths to make you *feel inferior* and keep you in the dark). To use another famous quote: **“Human nature is naturally prejudice against that it does not understand.”** If someone asks “Why?”, can you give the logic? If someone brings a new or different idea are you *confining yourself* into the *little box* by **prejudice** rather than using logic and reason? Do you say, “Because that’s the way everybody’s doing it –that’s why!”? Maybe you could already be *in the box*. Walter Duranty said, **“The trouble with most people is that they think with their hopes or fears or wishes rather than their minds.”** One way or another, you pay for the advice you follow (pay me now or pay me later!) and you do take advice, it’s just a matter of *who’s*. Here’s a little checklist to help you judge whether or not someone is trying to put you in a box or help you get out of one.

## General Areas to Consider

Your poor advisor is closing the lid

Your good advisor is opening the lid

### Complexity and Fatigue

The advisor tends to, in the long run, make things more complex and difficult all the time. You are becoming increasingly overloaded in work, considering more hired help / outside resources to *manage* the operation. You *have little time to think*, you must leave more decisions up to outsiders –especially suppliers of products and services. You feel rushed into uninformed decision making.

The advisor *educates* you on how to simplify things while reaching *your* goals. Lifestyle and workload are always important factors in the equation. *You’re enjoying your dairy career more* in part due to the implementation of this advice. *You feel competent* in your management decisions. You don’t feel rushed into them. You have and take time to read and think. *Your advisor encourages this*.

### Pride and Peer Pressure

You *often* hear *what you like to hear* from advisors. The advisor tends to use these (P&PP) as tools to get you to make decisions. You are kept well informed of how much more milk you could be getting as compared to so-n-so. You feel your *neighbors expect* you to have a certain level of production or size in your operation. You feel like everyone is watching or talking about how you run your farm, or what you might do next.

*Sometimes* your advisor irritates you as a nit-picker. Apart from examples made reference to in troubleshooting, what the neighbors do in their operation is rarely mentioned – *especially* production levels. *Profitability* is the main focus. You feel your advisor is assisting you to reach *your* goals, not the other way around. You’re caring less about what the neighbors think all the time. You’re in competition with no one, you don’t feel the pressure.

Business plans feel like the proverbial *carrot on the stick*, goals are very hard to reach. Your current advice *encourages* the risk of more debt and usually *assists you* with new plans for *investment* in more of the same *as the solution to problems*. Big ticket investments are a big part of solutions, without them the future looks bleak. The general tone is that you need to borrow and do it now –you owe it to yourself and especially your family. You are now taking an anti-depressant drug prescribed by your doctor since making several major “investment” decisions (not meant to offend or be humorous. This is a *real* problem.) You don’t feel much like an *independent farmer* anymore. Payments last, but the cows don’t.

The general advice, especially on big ticket items is, you don’t need it –there may be a lower cost way to get the same job done. Your advisor is especially cautious with *your* money. When in doubt, the advice is to pay down debt. Your business plan does not require *careful* monitoring of tank averages and cow numbers because you’ve got plenty of room to move. Decisions are *not driven by guilt* in association to the family lifestyle *because nobody keeps telling you how bad you’ve got it now, or how bad it’s going to be*. Decisions are driven by *real* needs, based upon cows’ needs –to provide family needs. Selling out to retire is not considered the worst scenario. Payments don’t last forever because you have extra cows to sell. You can imagine a day when you will be debt free.

“It must be recognized that the *liquidation of the individual capitalist in agriculture* had necessarily to be faced if the required increase of output was to be obtained.”

-Sidney Webb (1859-1947), one time (*socialist*) labor member of England’s Parliament (1922) regarding Stalin’s forced starvation of the *Kulaks* (peasant farmers) in 1932-1933. For a history lesson in *true* conspiracy, contact *Reality Zone* at 800-595-6596 or [www.realityzone.com](http://www.realityzone.com) and request a copy of the video “Harvest of Despair,” an award winning Canadian documentary. This will give you a historical perspective on the “benefits” of a government managed food system. Hopefully America will wake up before history must repeat itself. We need to maintain *independent* farmers in our country.

None of the above is politically correct. If I were not an *independent* (the key operative word) consultant, a big company politics would squash my *free* press (thank God this is still America!). Do I think this is all a *master* conspiracy? Not anymore than I believe in Hillary Clinton’s “vast right wing” theory. It’s all just the way *human nature* is played out in our dairy industry. Don’t be naive. The mere *appearance* of intelligence or good intentions are not enough assurance. George Orwell was quoted as saying, “Some ideas are so absurd that only intellectuals can believe them.” Don’t be a *dairyman in denial*. If there’s a conspiracy today in our industry, it’s one of *consensus*. We’re all supposed to be quiet and give our nod of approval to *everything* that the *smooth double-speaking credentialed* types have purchased / produced by/with research funding because it just isn’t very professional to disagree, but the truth is stranger than fiction. I see people losing their businesses and life savings following some of the Pied Pipers of the *challenge feeding* and *expansion is the only answer* brigade. Can Bio-Tech and *bigger* really save?

I and my Associates in KOW are daring to claim that *the Emperor has no clothes*. *Independent* consultants aren’t truly *independent* unless it includes their freedom to *think* and *advise*. Couldn’t everyone agree on that? We can’t always speak the party line *and be honest with you at the*

*same time*. Hey, I vote we put *experienced* men like *Marlowe Nelson* and *Harry Weier* in charge of teaching dairy management in this country! (Read about them in the July 2001 issue of *Wisconsin Agriculturalist*. Their quotes suggest they really see the problem and have no fear of speaking up about it! Title of the article is “Re-designing Holsteins,” but don’t limit your consideration to what they have to say about genetics –they also agree *the industry* has got a short term / short sighted approach to how we feed cows. Who started that?)

There, I’ve went and done it. Politics and religion in one article. Nothing is more controversial than the truth. There goes my career. Oh well, if things don’t turn around, there won’t be too many cows or dairymen left anyway. Don’t trust in long lasting high milk prices to keep you afloat. Use the opportunity to pay down debt. If we can help in the decision process, please call. KOW Consulting is an Association of *independent* advisors committed to looking out for *your* best interest, not climbing some corporate / university ladder. Disinformation abounds in our dairy industry.