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*A welfare state is what happens when you let government of the people and for the people **buy** the people.*
– Anonymous. *We can't be the home of the **free** if we're not **brave** enough to provide for ourselves.* –T.W.

KOW Ruminations

*A book everyone should read –if you want to know **why** our country is in *dire* trouble, *Liberty and Tyranny* by Mark R. Levin (ISBN-13:978-1-4165-6285-6), he explains a lot! Pray for the US of A.

Fully independent soil consulting-agronomy-nutrition. We do dairy nutrition from the soil up.

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How Precise is Your Feeding? Will grazing need to be banned to save the cows and the planet?

Naw, *I'm not serious* with that title, but I think some folks *might* be. As both a crop advisor and dairy nutritionist, I'm always reading a lot about both manure management and cow health concerns. As a freedom (free market) loving American, all this promotion of *taxing* businesses (and individuals) that produce CO₂ (all do!) and methane –in order to *redistribute the wealth* (confiscate the property of *those that worked for it*) –has me more than just a little concerned. While most dairymen (and myself) would simply like to see a better pay price for milk and might consider this talk about **naturally occurring gasses** from respiration / burning

A politician thinks of the next election. A statesman, of the next generation. –James Freeman Clarke

of all fuels and the fermentation process (in the rumen or slurry pit) to be a whole lot of

nonsense, unfortunately, it appears that it'll **significantly** affect us out on the farm. I wonder why *volcanoes and swamps* get a “pass” while cows are of concern (?). I don't know if dairymen will someday have to pay a tax for the methane each cow belches (a *serious* consideration in *some* circles that is, hopefully,

off the agenda *forever*), but it appears that there's a high probability that the **energy tax** (Cap and Trade) will pass the U.S. Senate. *Equally harmful* legislation –such as all the government “bailout” (unconstitutional nationalization) spending has already occurred. Judging

Dejamoo: The feeling that I've heard this bull before.

by the track record, I wouldn't put it beyond these *statists**↑ (hey, I'm

being *gracious* ☺). For those that are thinking, “Gee, Tom sure is being too political,” I ask you to **please** forbear, this *does* have a lot to do with managing dairy cows –in time you will see (if we stay this course). Used to be, we could sit out on the farm and shake our heads, roll our eyes at what the folks in the big cities and/or Washington D.C. have decided to *believe in*. We would just wink and laugh at some of the latest theories and fads, while adapting / overcoming, as we deal with the *realities* of what really *works* / matters. Economics have never been easy producing milk, at least not for long. Dairymen (and those of us who work for them) are *used to* working in a *depressed* market. The political leaders and most of the voting population seem to be out of

touch with the effort / cost associated with keeping food abundant, safe (healthy), and at relatively low cost. What's new? Well, the *new* thing is that, more than ever, the *uneducated and inexperienced* will be trying to tell us **specifically** how to run our farms. If you have been reading (as I have) the *proposed solutions* to "global warming" / "climate change" (What's the big deal? *Weather changes.*), you may share my concerns. This may be the case **no matter which political party** you promote, **if any at all**. This may be of concern **no matter how many cows you own** or how you currently choose to feed and care for them. If you have a thousand or more, you are already experiencing what it is like to have production management *details* micromanaged by the heavy hand of government as you strive to comply with your *comprehensive nutrient management plan* (which is only the *beginning!*). (In balance, after all, **local and state** permits controlling the *responsible* disposal of waste *should be considered* a necessary and *reasonable* requirement when the size of an operation may create risk sufficient to significantly damage and devalue **neighboring** properties and/or water resources [I'm *not* opposed to *all* regulation]). There are many more *small(er)* businesses producing milk that could make many *nutrient management* mistakes (mis-over applications of manure / fertilizer) without causing any measurable / significant harm to their *neighbors*. Unfortunately, these too –whether they

Few men have virtue to withstand the highest bidder.
–George Washington

are called **"family"** dairy farms, **"graziers"** or **"organic"** –will be caught up in the very same *dragnet* of

regulations and **economic problems** associated. Some folks from every size and type of dairy operation are being led to believe that progress and *profit* will be made in this new *"greener"* economic scheme. This due to the **forced redistribution of wealth** (taxation) *imposed* by government "capping" *allowable* emissions of CO₂, methane (so called greenhouse gases) –with the "option" to *purchase* "offsets" (a form of a *tax* that industries and **energy companies** will *have to* pay to continue to operate). These industries and **energy companies** are the very businesses that supply you! Does anyone suppose their costs will *not* be passed along to their customers? Yes, you know how this works, make the "other" businesses pay, "soak the rich", etc. I take a different view. I would like to see *all* businesses (even businesses *other* than mine) pay **fewer** taxes–so *some* can pay me! (and make the rural economy "hum"!). I *don't trust* that increased **federal funding** (two nasty **"F"** words in my book) will bring the same prosperity to rural America that **small businesses in free enterprise** have –or to the cities (that we *need* to buy our cheese and ice cream). Yet some dairymen are *expecting* to be benefactors of carbon / methane capture (sequestration) payments (*controlled* by the federal government) because they use no-till farming practices or have installed a manure "digester". Some people

believe the *"science is settled"* on the matter of **human caused** "climate change", but I wish they would investigate the **financial incentive** (FF?) some *"scientists"* have to promote it, and consider the **many** credentialed researchers that *don't agree*. The greater portion of this money will end up in the pockets of, first

Samuel Adams, "No people will tamely surrender their Liberties, nor can any be easily subdued, when knowledge is diffused and Virtue is preserved. On the contrary, when People are universally ignorant, and debauched in their Manners, they will sink under their own weight without the Aid of foreign Invaders."

the **carbon traders** and **large international** corporations (managing the manure / energy systems and selling the inputs *required* for all the **government mandated** practices). This is where how you feed, what you feed the cows, begins to matter.

The "F" words are now bringing us to the "P" word. One does not need to concoct an elaborate conspiracy theory to understand where we are *being herded* in dairy feeding and management. One need only to follow the emerging *money trail* to see the **potential** destination (I'm *opposed* to this, but must call it as I see it, **so you can plan** accordingly. Please bear with my lengthy

You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong.
You cannot help small men by tearing down big men.
You cannot help the poor by destroying the rich.
You cannot lift the wage earner by pulling down the wage payer.
You cannot keep out of trouble by spending more than your income.
You cannot further the brotherhood of man by inciting class hatreds.
You cannot establish security on borrowed money.
You cannot build character and courage by taking away a man's initiative and independence.
You cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could and should do for themselves.
–William J. H. Boetcker, 1916

explanation). One does not need a great level of discernment to understand that whenever the John Deere salesman visits, his agenda is to sell you a new piece of **green** equipment, same with the feed or fertilizer salesman. If the salesman can present you an "opportunity" to use **federal funding** (USDA, FSA, etc.) to purchase, he's got an edge. If the salesman can point to a regulation / mandate –it's a sure thing. Agronomy management has already seen the advent of 590 code nutrient management (regulations). A small, (yet *optional*) portion of this is a 592 **feed** management plan (purported to discourage / prevent the *overfeeding* of **protein** [nitrogen] and **phosphorus** in dairy rations). While I know *some* dairymen have historically overfed supplemental concentrates, I have *never* found it a challenge to encourage the *reduction* of the feed bill if

sufficiently educated ☺! However, modern dairy ration formulation has not been on a trend toward **practical education** for many years! Rather, the trend promoted (funded) by the feed industry has been one of unnecessary sophistication, and as I see it, for the purpose of **marketing**. We have now entered the new

My reading of history convinces me that most bad government results from too much government.
–Thomas Jefferson

era of “F” by **big** government for promotion of the “P” word – **precision** (purported as

a way to save the global environment!). Not to be lending credibility to any conspiracy theories ☺, but I often wonder why / how so many of our trade journals *seem* to stay so coordinated on their message. All too often, as I read the *Hoard's Dairyman*, *Dairy Herd Management*, and *Progressive Dairyman*, etc., I'm wondering who *orchestrates* the topics and **code words**

It cannot be a good thing for a state when the farming population decays. –W. D. Hoard, 1885.

☺. **Precision** agriculture has always been one of my favorite oxymorons.

Precision feeding may be my next to add to the list. Great effort is being put forth to convince dairymen of the merits of using a high degree of sophistication in ration formulation. While this has been happening ever since the advent of the personal computer and the discovery that dairymen, who are very busy, tend to concede feeding decisions to the sales rep if he can get the eyes glazed over and the matter between the ears feeling a bit dizzy, it has *never* been a certain road to successful feed programs! Taxpayer “F” university dairy nutrition education has led the way, with the aid of feed industry “F” all

Destroy our cities, save our farms, and our cities will grow back as if by magic. Destroy our farms, and the grass will grow in the streets of every city in the country -William Jennings Bryan, 1897

along. We now have the potential, and very probable, prospect of **greater** (than we have ever

seen before) federal government environmental “F” / **mandates** that'll **require precision** management practices as a **prerequisite** to direct “F” (sorry to use that “F” word so *liberally* ☺). One of the nutrition “models” being promoted is the Cornell University computer software (CPM dairy) within the **total confinement, total mixed ration** (TMR) management scheme. This “model” (or those similar) is being heavily promoted for its purported environmental / **reduced carbon hoof-print** benefits. Many international corporations stand to benefit greatly by the use of rbst, monensin, rumen protected amino acids, etc., just about any major corporation that can dream up ☺ a reason why their product can *reduce* the excretion of nutrients (in manure) or the loss of *methane* from a cow is on-board (manure digester / energy generator systems being the big ticket item). Many in the **big** agri-business

/ academic community are concocting an argument that only “modern” dairy practices are worthy of the “F” word –and–are our only hope of saving us from **global climate destruction**. They claim it will take us *backward* to the 1940s to be *pasture* based and result in a *larger carbon hoofprint*. (Reference: article “Study finds modern dairies sustainable” by Sarah Muirhead, *Feedstuffs*, June 15, 2009.) Economy of scale is still the mantra (especially to make the manure systems “pencil out”, yet with *including big* government “F”). Yes, it's all so exciting, wonderful, surely *too big* of an idea **to fail**, eh? Next will be **union labor** on the largest dairies (this is on the move). *Bailouts* (nationalization) next?

The American Republic will endure, until politicians realize they can bribe the people with their own money. -Tocqueville

What should KOW clients be doing in this new and “exciting” era? Should you jump on board with all the equity and credit you can muster? Should you be planning ways to implement the **precision** feeding

model **with all its related new (products) technologies**? No-till fencerow to fencerow? Well . . . yes and no. Let us consider the *probable* future and it's challenges and pick and choose our way through this potential minefield of *disappointments*.

Federal funding and grand (collective) government schemes are doomed to failure. Any management practice that puts too many eggs of capital into the promise of government confiscated / redistributed wealth is very risky indeed! The whims of political decisions / promises, the historical record cannot be called progress. **Our government does not have the wealth for this, cannot create wealth –and was never intended to have this much power over us.** An argument can be made that this too will pass, into the trash bin of history. **If you are going to alter your management practices to capture “green” payments, make sure it is not on long term debt requiring plans.** If you can gain some money by incorporating no-

The only difference between government and organized crime is recognition of moral obligations to God. Otherwise, the two gravitate toward one. –Tom Weaver

till in the system, great! Let someone else invest in the manure digester, even if the grant money is tempting! (That is, unless the money you put into

the ethanol plant has grown so much that you can't figure out any other place to invest in ☺.) Who will be left “holding the bag”? I think you get my point.

I have hope that the citizens (legal ones ☺) of the U.S. will, in time, rediscover value in both the free enterprise system and the production of high quality, abundant food. **We are all part of a necessary industry.** Beside the *confinement*, ultra-sophisticated, high tech-new tech model of dairy management, we have the **truly**

The Founders warned about the results should citizens abandon virtue. In his *Defense of the American Constitution* of 1787, **John Adams** cautioned, "If 'Thou shalt not covet' and 'Thou shalt not steal' were not commandments of Heaven, they must be made inviolable precepts in every society before it can be civilized or made free." **In these times of widespread socialism, when governments at all levels dangle other people's money before us, when the worst thieves never see the inside of a jail but are instead reelected to office,** when citizens expect and receive ever larger shares of the plunder, only men strong in virtue will resist . . . **Tom Paine** speculated in *Common Sense* that if we could "take off the dark covering of antiquity, and trace [government and its officials] to their first rise, that we should find the first of them nothing better than the principal ruffian of some restless gang, whose savage manners of preeminence in subtlety obtained him the title of chief among **plunderers**; and who by increasing in **power**, and extending his depredations, overawed the quiet and defenseless to purchase their safety by frequent **contributions**."

Ever since it hatched, the state has sought to neutralize morality with a series of logical fallacies. Government and most of its victims credit "the nation" –something that doesn't exist apart from the **individuals** comprising it –with privileges not a one of those individuals has. **No man may invade another's home and make off with a percentage of what he finds there. But let him don a government uniform while claiming to represent "the nation," let him call what he steals a "tax," and suddenly his theft is no longer immoral** –at least to people who spurn virtue. They never understand that **what's wrong for an individual acting alone doesn't become right when he's part of a group, even one calling itself "government."**

Citizens who demand their fair share of the government's spoils receive its **control** as well. Students expect the State to rescue them from the horrors of paying full tuition, so they agitate for subsidies, below-market loans, scholarships –even though politicians and bureaucrats **then set the curriculum**.

[Any of this apply to agriculture? I share this out of love of my country, our agriculture, our farm families.]
From *The New American*. March 30, 2009. "Revolutionary virtue" (www.thenewamerican.com).

environmentally responsible model of *perennial* forages harvest by **grazing** cows. There may yet be opportunities to gain *small* financial rewards in the carbon credit scheme with this system (but **big** hopes will turn to disappointments). Regardless, the great advantage to the **grazier** will be in maximizing the conversion of *solar* energy while *minimizing* the *need* for *taxable* energy. Make no mistake, **if** the tax is added to energy, the cost of *purchasing* energy will go up (likely / significantly). This is **not** limited to diesel fuel, consider electricity, LP gas, and **grain**. Historically (especially with the advent of *grain to fuel* subsidies -FF again!), as the fuel price goes up, so does the cost of grain and **all** supplemental feedstuffs. This is, in part, due to soy acres shifted to corn, and will be in a great way due to the **shrinking value of the U.S. dollar** (anything priced on the *world* market will take *more* dollars to buy!). All this over-use (*unconstitutional* use!) of the "F" word by the federal government **is the cause** of *inflation* –and we are at the point that foreign nations are losing interest in buying our debt. **A silver lining to this cloud of inflation may (might) be an increased export market –which could eliminate our milk surplus and increase the pay price to farmers.** (Would we even *have* a surplus if not for "FF"?) Historically, nations that follow this *foolish* path (of *printing* money to pay bills) make their paper currency of *bedding* value. **Interest rates** will need to go **sky high** to correct. Don't do anything you can't lock-in interest rates for or sell out of to break even!

I don't write these things to (further) depress (milk price is enough!), but to encourage *direction*. Many (most) of our clients are already on the path toward low concentrate / **high forage (legume based)**, grow-it-instead-of-buy-it, feeding management. This **is** good

nutrient management. Many are **grazing** livestock to some extent, and **I would encourage greater use of livestock to harvest forage and spread manure**. Will you be feeding a "**precision**" ration when the cows are on pasture? No, not **if** *precision* is defined as *only* pre-sampled / tested feedstuffs fed / measured via a TMR. Yet anyone with **experience** feeding TMR in confinement **knows** that's not all so "precise" either! (Gee, I'm happy to see nutrients kept within tolerable *ranges*! ☺ Really, that is all that is ever needed.) Hopefully, all that will ever be *required* is *documentation of compliance* (yippee!) –like nutrient management plans. **True** precision feed management is **not** entirely *numerical* anyway (confinement or grazing)! It's based upon **measuring output** (milk, manure nutrients) and especially upon responding in real time to biological feedback from the cow. Whether using sophisticated computer software or not, read my (science based / supported) recommendations to maintain a **precise** ration in the KOW guidesheet titled "**KOWboy sense for a precision ration**". It *ain't* rocket science. ☺

Finally, not everyone in this grand scheme is going to be happy seeing carbon credit payments going to the small business **grazing** and/or **organic** dairyman. Hang in there! The grand scheme **will**, and **must**, **implode**. Last, don't be surprised to hear a call for the need to *discourage* (or ban) *grazing* in order to save cows (and the "*safety*" of the milk supply for humans) from **Johnes' disease** (besides all the lack of **precision** and *extra methane belching* going on, those cows are poopin' all over their plate! ☺). Things will get *desperate* as the *parasites* ☺ fight over the dwindling supply of **other people's money**. The very *reason* I vote is because I **don't** trust in government. Our founding fathers were right! It **must** be **limited**. **More** is **not** a solution!