



NEWS RELEASE

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Cattlemen Are Urged To Speak Out Against The Growing Threat Of Radical Animal Rights Activism

If animal rights activists achieve their agenda, many livestock producers will go out of business and ultimately people will starve. However, the danger of activists advancing their cause through the federal government is greater than ever and livestock producers must take a more aggressive stand to protect their industry, animal agriculture advocate Steve Kopperud said at the Texas Cattle Feeders Association Annual Convention in Grapevine.

Kopperud, who is Senior Vice President of Policy Directions Inc., said the animal rights activists' dream of a human population happily living a vegan lifestyle is unachievable because "we don't have the land in the United States or on the planet to raise sufficient fruits and vegetables to feed 7 billion people."

"In the United States, two-thirds of our land mass will not support crops. What it supports is grass. That's why we are as good as we are at raising grass converters into protein. That is why the world is looking to use otherwise unusable land to graze cattle and other animals so that they may have protein," said Kopperud. With a lack of the right land for supporting a purely vegan diet, Kopperud said it is clear that "we must raise animals for food."

Such facts would seem sufficient to defeat the radical ambitions of groups such as the Humane Society of the United States and the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. But animal rights activists find an increasingly welcome environment on Capitol Hill where "fewer

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and fewer (Members of Congress) have any direct connection to agriculture” and there are “fewer and fewer that actually make the connection between cost of production and what their constituents pay for food,” Kopperud said. He added that party affiliation seems to matter little. “We look back on who has sponsored legislation to restrict animal agriculture, and it’s about as bipartisan a list as you can get.”

Animal agriculture is also up against an urban population that believes animals raised for food should be treated the same as pets and that such treatment will actually result in cheaper groceries.

While sympathetic with their plight, Kopperud said livestock producers are partly to blame for the way politics and consumer attitudes have gotten stacked against them. “We in agriculture allowed the issue to slide off our screens during the 1990s. We were winning. We had stopped everything on a federal basis, we had stopped most of the legislation on a state basis, and we let this issue languish.”

“There is no more credible source on where food comes from and how it’s produced than the men and women who produce it,” Kopperud said. But he added that the propaganda of animal rights activists has been aided by the fact that producers are not doing a good job of speaking out to consumers, retailers, legislators and the media, according to Kopperud.

Kopperud admonished those in animal agriculture to not “allow idiots to dictate policy on how we operate” because of reluctance to take activists head on. “There is no political consequence as ugly as losing your business. The fear that we might offend someone in this process is silly.”

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