



[Re]Building Community Around Local Food

October 2025

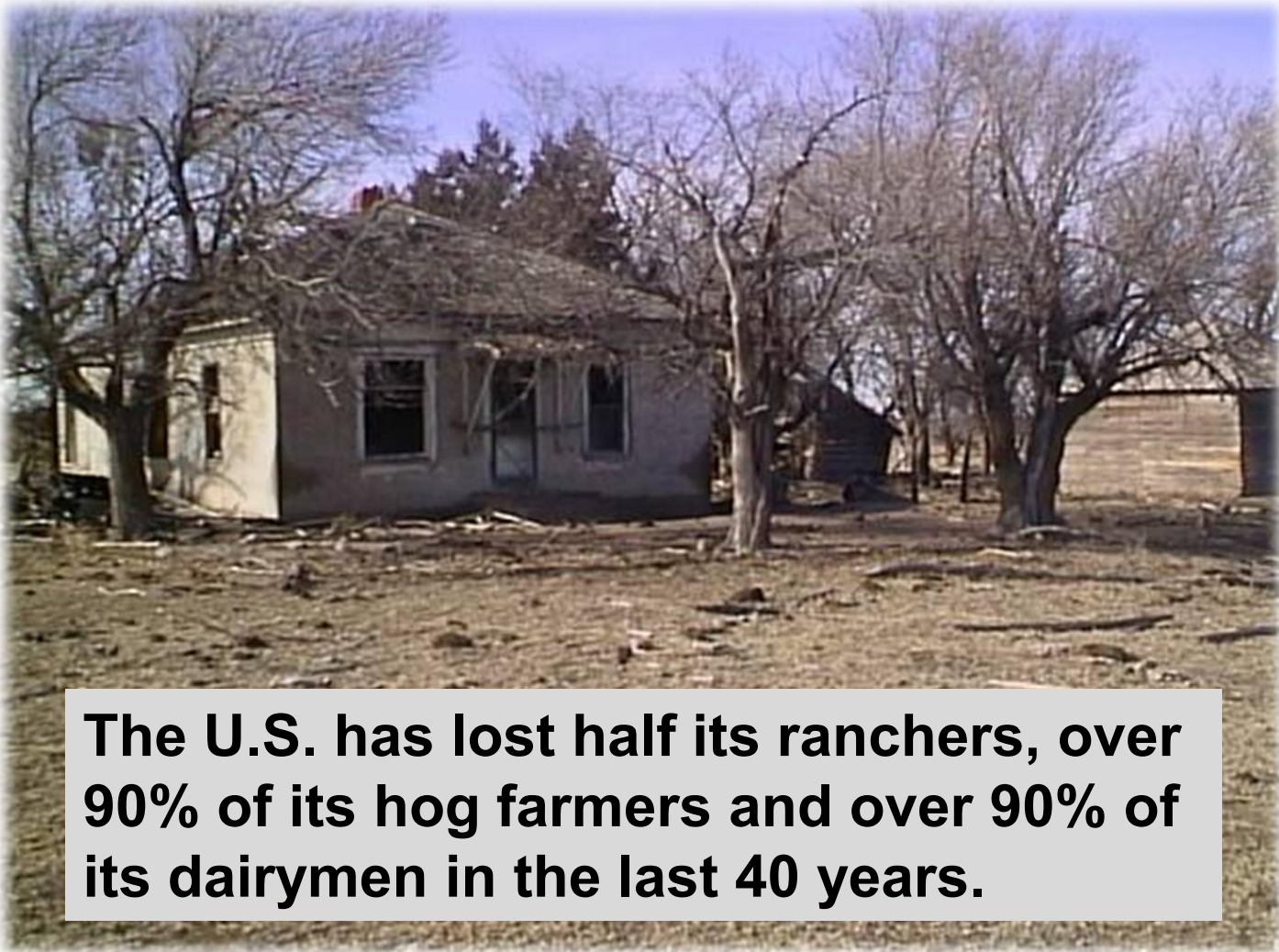
Rural communities have been ravaged by Wall Street and global corporations. The communities that once fed us are unable to feed themselves. Safeway stores in Lamar and La Junta, Colorado are closing, leaving empty store fronts and food deserts behind.

Perhaps the following 2018 proposal to Lamar, Colorado could be considered:

The Lamar and [La Junta] publicly-owned [Maker-Owned] market is serving the broad SE region of Colorado and the Four-State area. New locally owned businesses, from a fresh meat market, to a brewery using locally grown barley and hops, a coffee roaster, a baker milling their own grains, cheesemaker, and prepared food vendors of all sorts have an affordable home for their businesses, keeping people and money in the community. Essentially all food is sourced from the region in this energy filled year-around marketplace. Space is provided for seasonal farmers markets to outflow from the main market, welcoming growers from the Arkansas Valley and the region to sell directly to eaters and eateries. The market is THE community gathering place for residents and visitors alike.

Lamar [La Junta] would be the first to prove that the wealth created in our farming communities can remain, benefiting farmers, ranchers, students, and residents. LCC can provide a new non-industrial, regenerative ag curriculum from animal husbandry to meat cutting, to cover cropping, and cheese making. Let's build it!

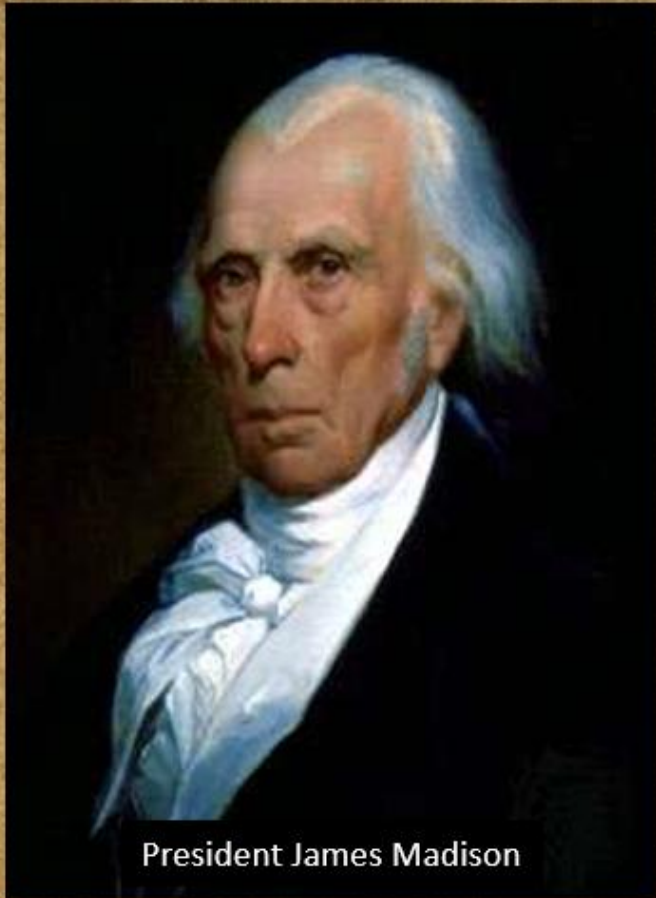
What happened Grandpa?



The U.S. has lost half its ranchers, over 90% of its hog farmers and over 90% of its dairymen in the last 40 years.

“All societies, from the simplest to the most sophisticated, engage in the production and distribution of new wealth that originates from farms, forests, earth and seas.”

- Charles Walters, The Nature of Wealth



President James Madison

“Concentrated wealth will destroy our nation, unless the laws change.”

President James Madison 1809-1817

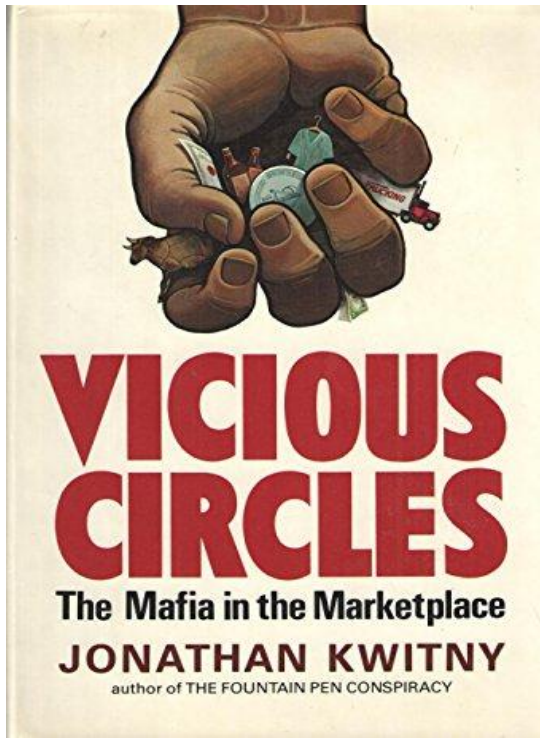
“The day will come when our Republic will be an impossibility because wealth will be concentrated in the hands of a few. When that day comes, we must rely upon the wisdom of the best elements in the country to readjust the laws of the nation.”



“...there is no stopping it (concentration). This is an evolution that’s going to take place in spite of whoever is in the way.”

Robert Peterson, IBP Chairman and CEO, July 1996
\$20 Billion by 2001 article, in *Meat and Poultry*

Peterson worked for IBP from 1961 to 2003.
IBP sold to Tyson in 2001.

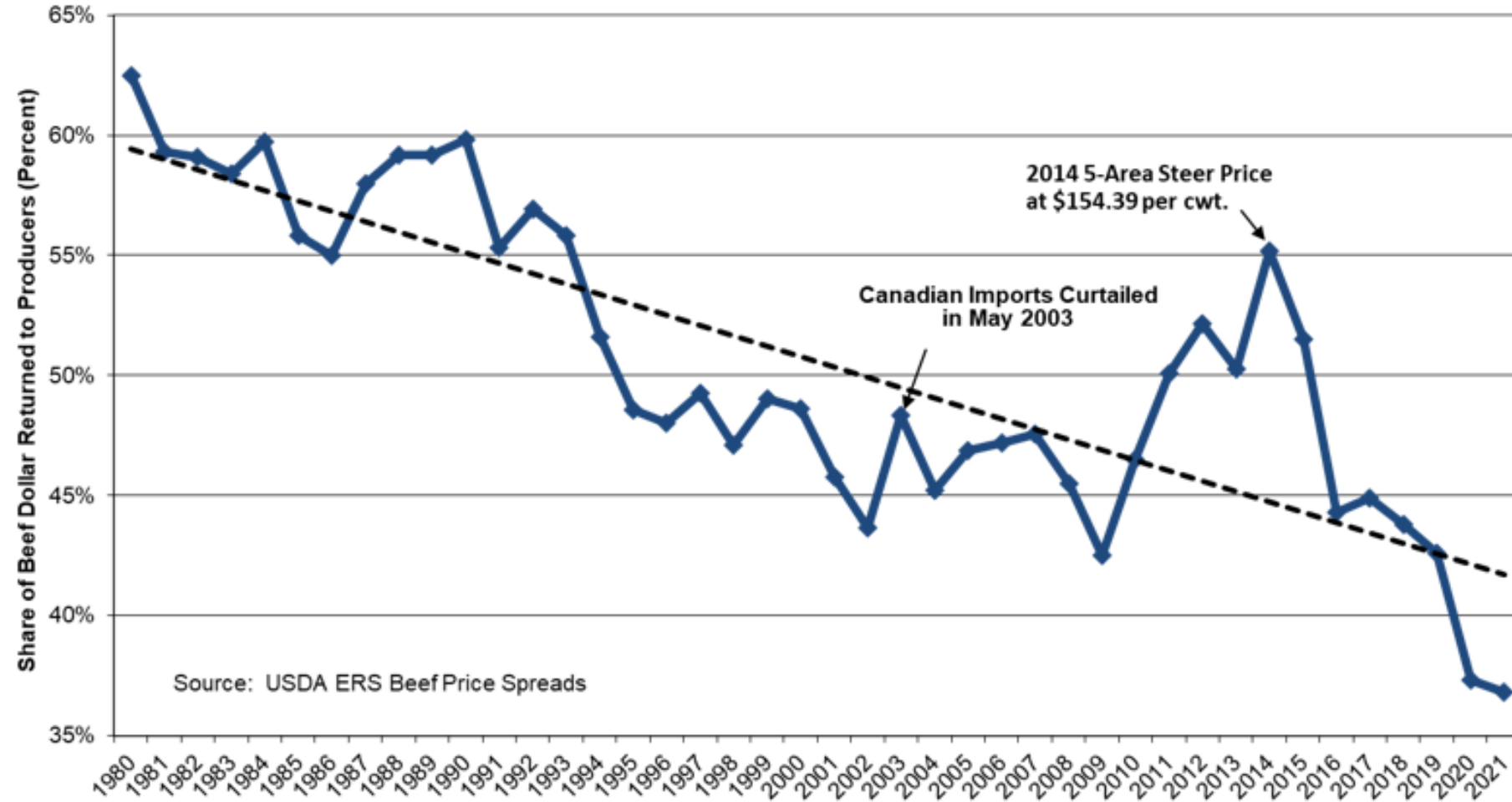


Published in 1979

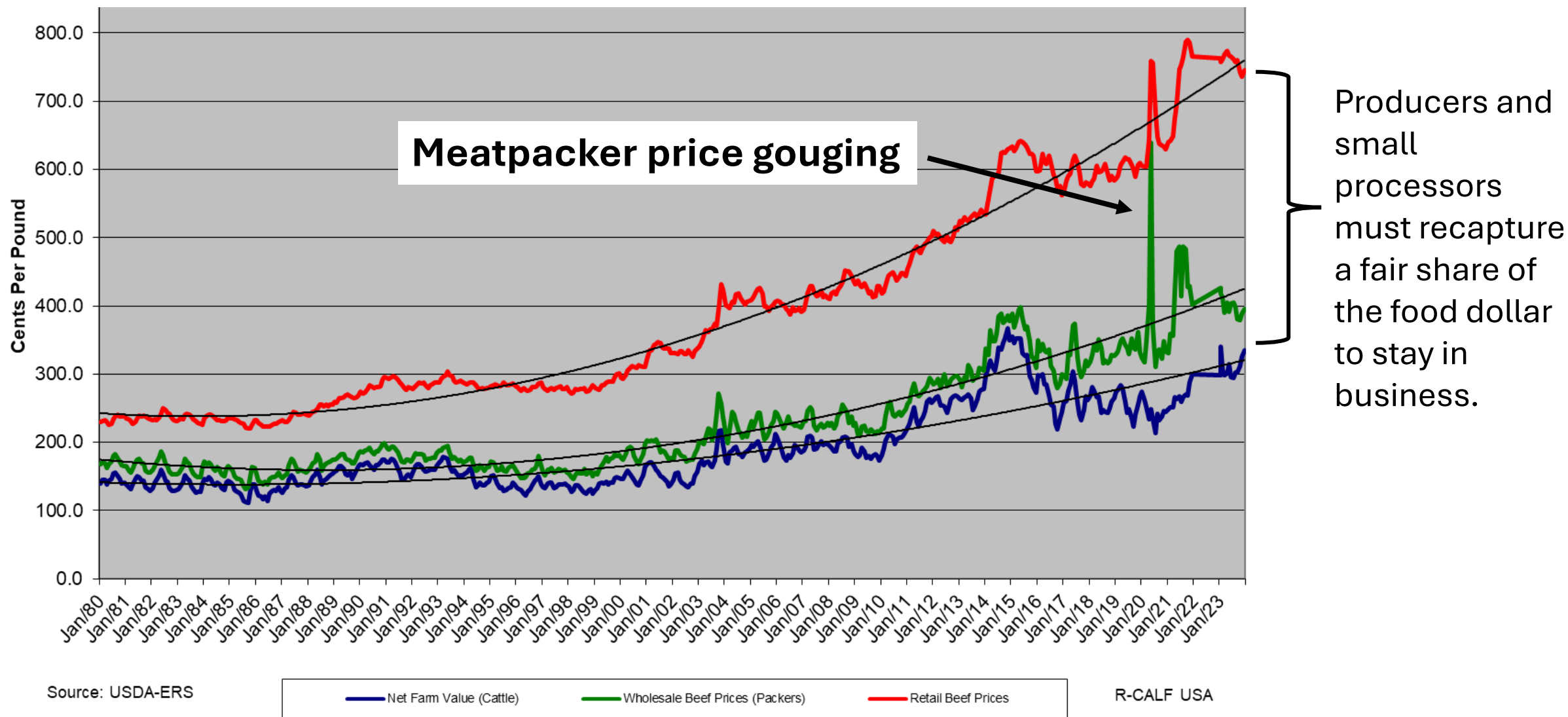
“By aligning themselves with the biggest feedlots and the biggest food retailers, Iowa Beef and the other big meatpackers would share the market, from the purchase of livestock to the sale of meat. At the same time, Iowa Beef would strategically engineer the demise of nearly all the small to midsized meatpackers in the country, **leaving America with a highly concentrated, dangerous, extremely fragile, and vulnerable meat supply chain.**”

Producers' Share of Consumer Beef Dollar

Prepared by R-CALF USA



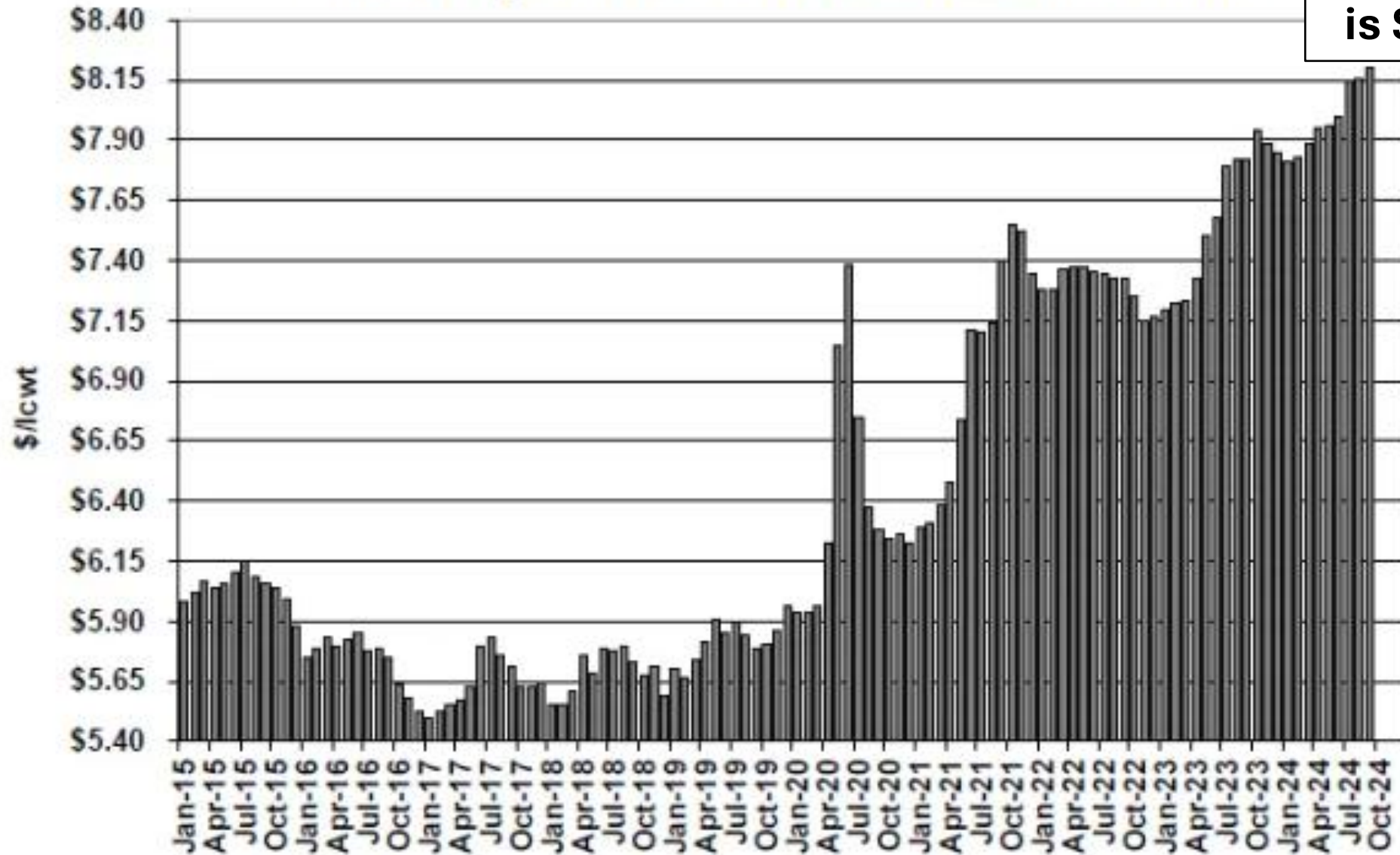
Middlemen have stolen the producer and worker share of the food dollar while overcharging consumers.



Retail Beef Prices vs Wholesale Prices vs Net farm value Jan 1980 – May 2022

Monthly All Fresh Beef Retail Value

August 2025
is \$9.85/lb.



Data Source: USDA ERS Meat Price Spreads





Dan Glickman, Secretary of Agriculture 1995-2001

Question – Why don't you enforce the Packers and Stockyards Act?

“Well you know Mike, in this modern day of globalization, we need big companies that can do business globally.”

- January 1999

Federal government won't stop buying food from meatpacker tied to bribery case

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said barring JBS from government contracts could hurt taxpayers because the company has so few competitors.



Tom Vilsack's letter illustrates how the government's options have become painfully limited in an agriculture sector heavily concentrated on everything from poultry to cereal. | Kevin Dietsch/Getty Images

In 2019, as Brazilian meatpacker JBS was proving itself as a leading global criminal, instead of protecting American citizens by revoking JBS corporate charters and grants of inspection for its many criminal violations, our federal government funded JBS with lucrative preferential meat purchasing contracts – JBS a big winner in USDA trade war relief contracts.



Greg Gunthorp received the 2023 Spirit of Farm Aid award

“Our agricultural and food system has economically gutted rural America. If we continue down this path of concentration and consolidation, there will be no independent family farms left.

“Most of the protein, the red meat and poultry, is already a feudal serf system where farmers don’t own the animals on their land, only the manure, the mortgage, and the mortalities.

“There's no independent egg and chicken producers left, and the small to mid-sized pig producers and cattle feeders are virtually gone, leaving industrial corn and soybean farmers and cow-calf guys, and they’re on the ropes.”

From Great American Prairie to Dried Up Industrial Wasteland



May 2023 – From the center of the Ogallala Aquifer at Garden City, Kansas, to the edge of the aquifer west of Lamar, the land is suffering from poor stewardship and abusive extraction of resources.



Mike Callicrate tried to warn the world...

WYOMING

NEBRASKA

COLORADO

Recharge water from the South Platte and Arkansas Rivers is being diverted to Front Range development.

OGALLALA
AQUIFER

The
**WORST
HARD
TIME**

TIMOTHY EGAN



Meathooked & End of Water – VICE ON HBO

Consumer Warning: Shopping at Wal-Mart contributes to the economic destruction of rural America and your community!



This slide was part of a presentation to students at Colorado College prior to 2010. Sam Walton's grandson, Lucas, was in attendance.

With pickle plant closing, workers think burritos

[News](#) | Nov 29, 2005



AP photo

A "We love pickles" sign sits outside Bay Valley Foods in La Junta. The plant, one of La Junta's major employers, will be closing in February.

“The closing will leave 153 people without jobs, a critically high number in this town of about 7,500 - a number made more devastating because the region's other major employer, a bus plant in Lamar with 300 workers, also is closing.”

”Whatever happens at the pickle plant will affect everyone,” said Glenn Parker, who lives in Rocky Ford. “Our agricultural community has gone to heck. **If we’re not an agricultural community and we’re not a manufacturing community, what do we have to survive?**”

“The La Junta plant opened in 1940, but was bought by TreeHouse's parent company, Dean Foods, in 2002.”

<https://www.vaildaily.com/news/with-pickle-plant-closing-workers-think-burritos/>

<https://www.chieftain.com/story/news/2005/11/17/la-junta-pickle-plant-to/8541475007/>



Over the past few years, Walmart has announced that they've closed well over 160 locations in 27 states throughout the U.S., affecting over 10,000 employees.

<https://www.rather-be-shopping.com/blog/all-the-walmart-stores-closing/>



“You should be suing Walmart [instead of IBP], they are the problem. They tell us what they will pay and we have no choice but to pay you less.”

– John Tyson 2001



Dr. William D. Heffernan
Former Professor of Rural Sociology, UMC

“Let’s start talking about an alternative food system, an alternative to this large global, mass food production.”

See: https://www.youtube.com/shorts/2UQsw_qdy8s

South Dakota Governor's Conference - 1996



In being the first to speak out, Bill faced retaliation from the growing number of academics supporting industrial agriculture.

In my mind, he was the grandfather of all anti-monopoly work to come.

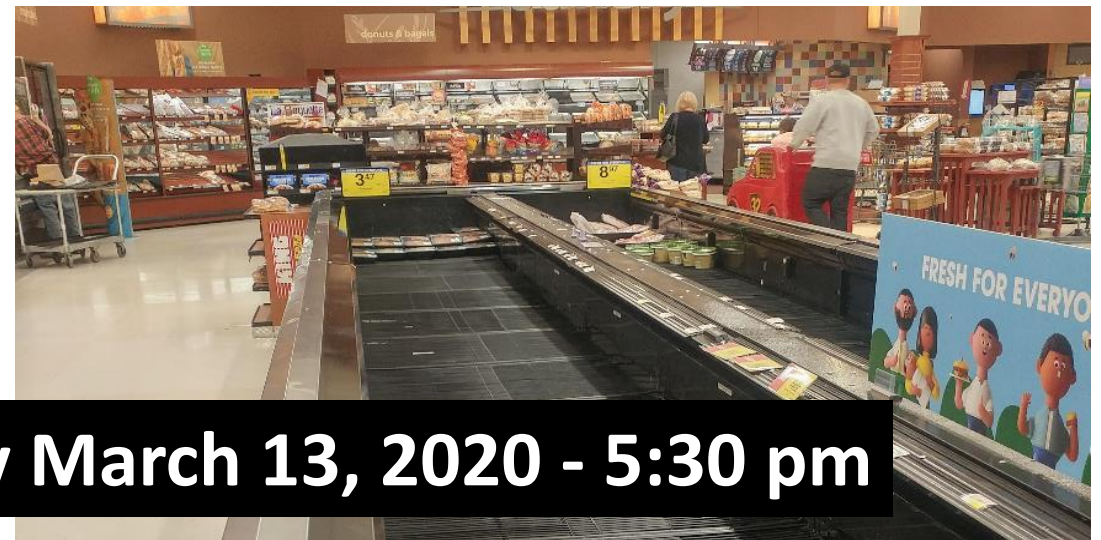
– Joe Maxwell, Cofounder of Farm Action

A Picture of Food System Success and Failure

Local Supply Chain - Ranch Foods

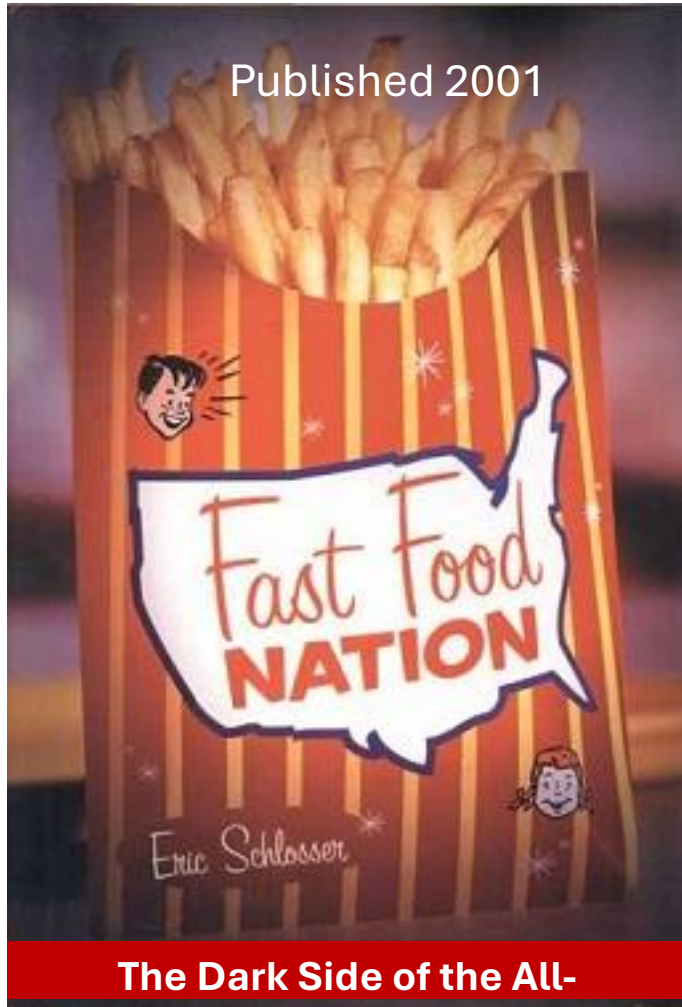


Global Supply Chain - Kroger



Colorado Springs - Saturday March 13, 2020 - 5:30 pm

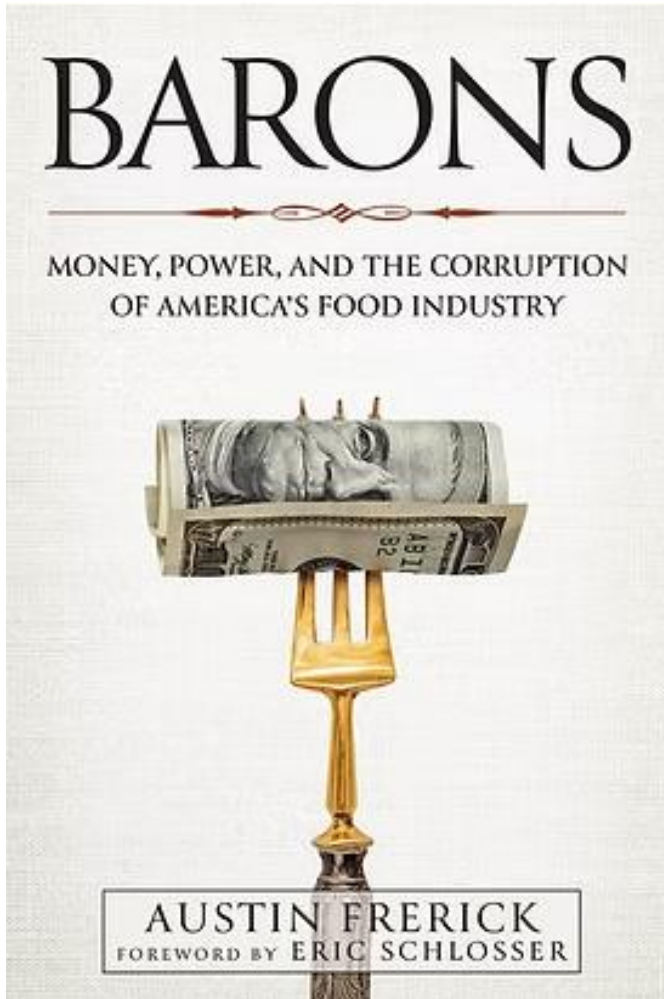
Elements of food system failure



Published in 2001.

- **1980s Reagan administration promoted no-rules deregulation policy - “Get big or get out.”**
- **Agency capture - Big business took control of regulators**
- **USDA and Land Grant institutions embraced industrial ag, declaring agriculture a business, not a way of life**
- **Stewardship was lost to extraction/mining mentality**
- **Animal science replaced high-welfare animal husbandry, moving sows to crates, and hens to battery cages**
- **Processing sector consolidated to match power of national distribution and retail, blocking market access and eliminating smaller processors and jobs for skilled workers**

Elements of food system failure ... cont.



Published 2024

- **Meat tradesmen lost jobs to unskilled, low-wage, easily exploited, and subsidized workforce**
- **Food quality was sacrificed for quantity and price**
- **Big retail, food management and food service companies developed anticompetitive and exclusive kickback schemes (aka bribery and extortion)**
- **Diverse, resilient family farms and local/regional food infrastructure were lost to industrialization and financialization – Return to Empire (landlord/tenant)**
- **Producer organizations and media were captured and controlled as producer share of food dollar declined**
- **Result: Rural decline, increased poverty, environmental degradation, poor health, and food insecurity**
- **The U.S. becomes a net food importer**

For regenerative agriculture to exist, we must see a return of family farmers, stewardship, and husbandry, along with a fair share of the consumer dollar to the farm and ranch gate. **Market access is the most difficult step. More direct connections to eaters must be developed.**



The Lincoln administration established the United States Department of Agriculture along with Land-Grant Colleges to develop agriculture and assure our ability to feed ourselves.

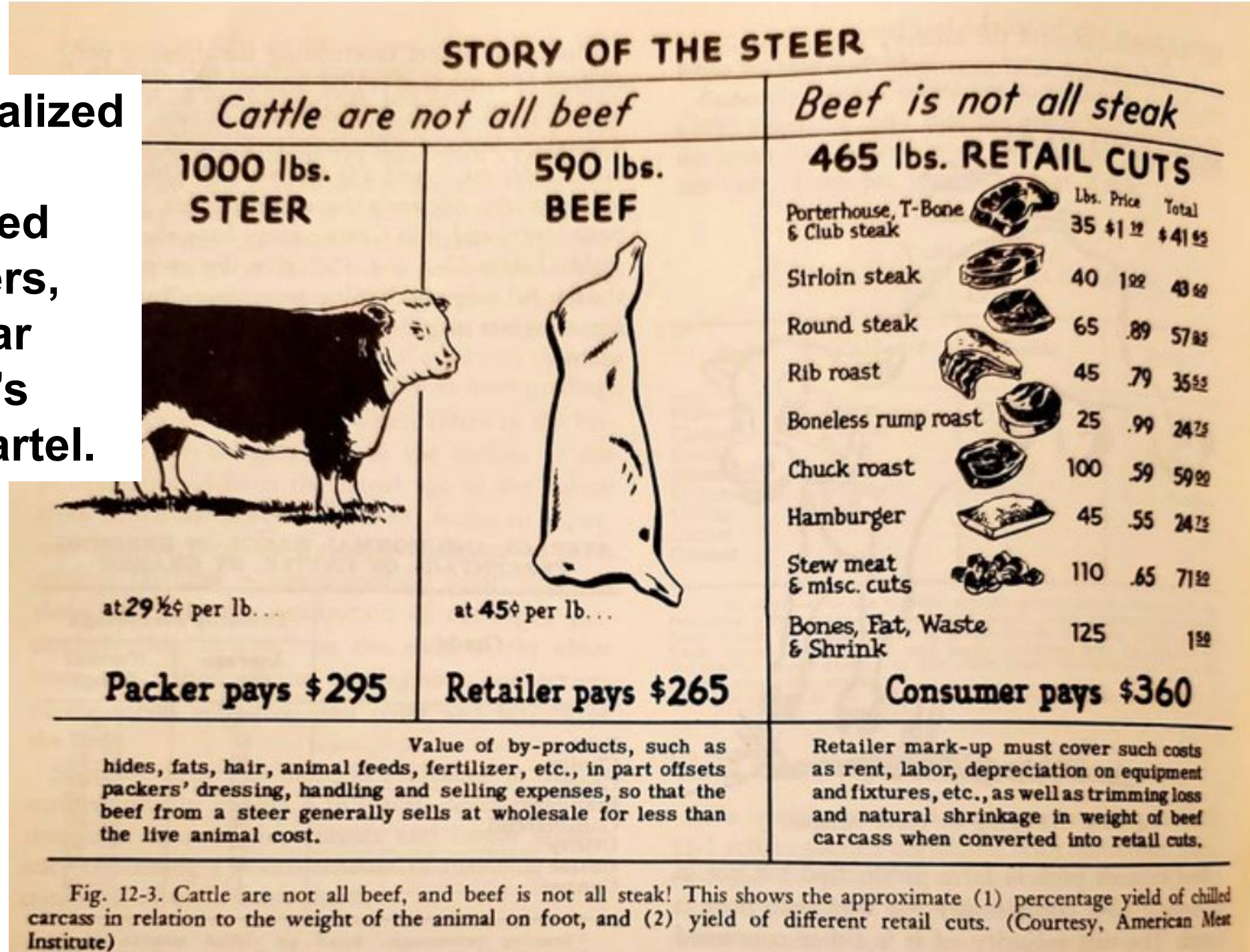
“... we must adopt the measures needed for bringing together the producers and consumers of food and wool, and thus augmenting their power to have commerce among themselves.”

– Henry C. Carey 1853, advisor to President Lincoln

The 1970 decentralized and competitive marketplace served producers, workers, and consumers far better than today's extractive food cartel.

1970 producer share was 82%

2023 share was 39 to 48%



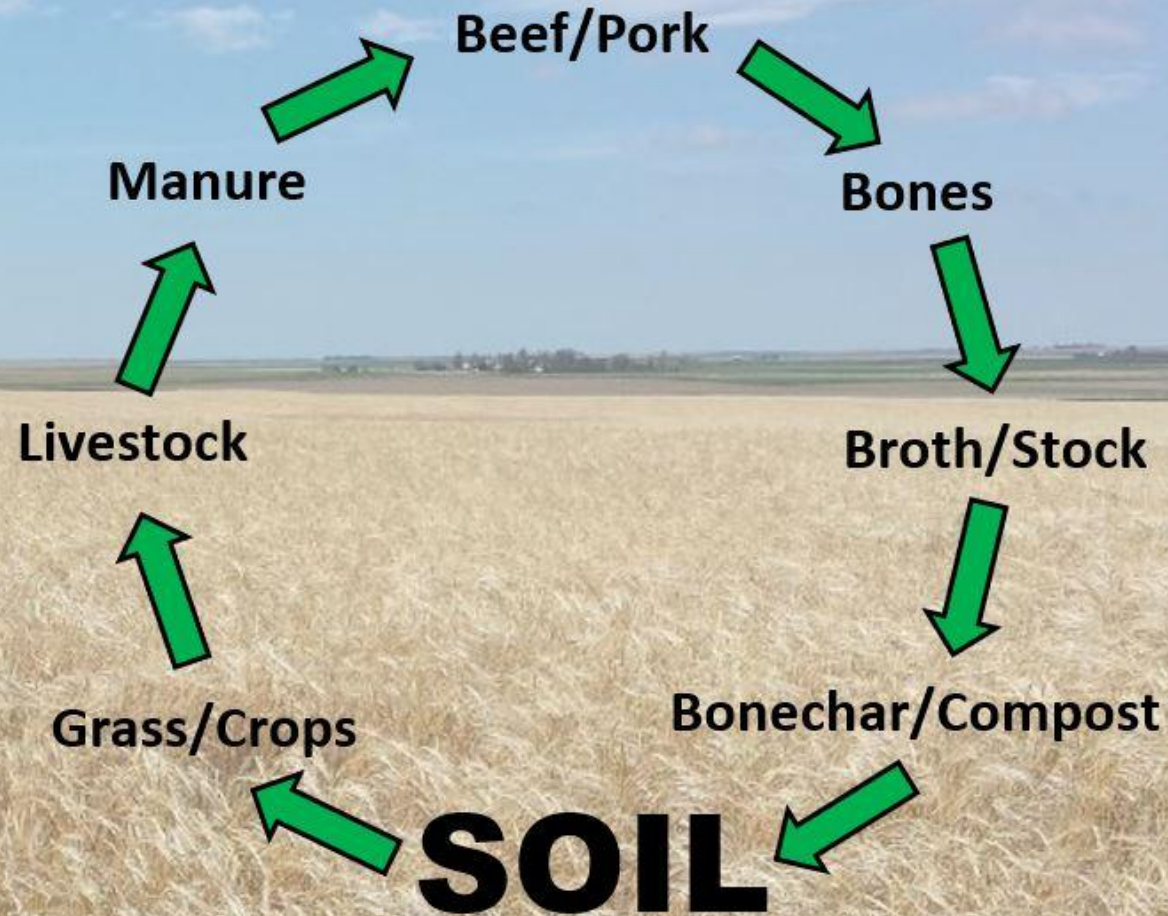
We believe the ideal farm is family owned and operated, diversified and livestock-centered, responsibly grazing and feeding the farm's production, with animal manure going back to the land.

CALLICRATE
CATTLE CO.

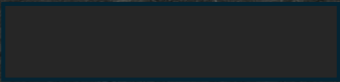


Regenerative Farming and Ranching

Callicrate Cattle Co.



Healthy Soils – Healthy People - Healthy Communities!



CALLICRATE
CATTLE CO



Carcasses are trucked from slaughter facility for further processing.



The Colorado Springs food hub provides space for meat processing, local fruit and vegetable distribution and value-added food production.



Connecting consumers with local/regional food producers since 2000





Co-located, El Chapin's award-winning tacos, smash burgers, and tallow fries bring in many new customers for the Fillmore store location.



Eat more meat, but make it good meat from family farmers and ranchers



**The world needs fewer MBAs
and more Master Butchers**

... and more beef should be cut directly from hanging carcasses.

The industrialization and deskilling of the beef industry has left us with precious few butchers that know how to break down a carcass into retail cuts. Oldtimers Roger Wichman and John Nicocia have trained their replacements at Ranch Foods Direct.

Jared, Roger, Nate, John and Joanna (JoJo) in the cut room.

With community support and strong antitrust law protection (AG Weiser?), maker-owned marketplaces could provide the transformational change needed for a profitable and healthy alternative for producers and consumers to connect around good food. Through collective ownership, local farmers and ranchers, along with artisan food makers, such as butchers, bakers, coffee roasters, and cheese-makers, would be insulated from “free market” forces (unregulated) and exorbitant rents, thereby enabled to create wealth and resiliency within their local communities.



Building Thriving Communities Around Locally Owned Marketplaces

Maker-owned marketplaces and food hubs provide healthy affordable local food, vibrant community centers, and profitable and dependable market access for family farmers and ranchers.

MikeCallicrate.com