

Cow tax – crazy but possible

Key Points

- Cow tax and USDA change are two crazy ideas.
- EPA would tax cows for violating the Clean Air Act.
- Writer ignores the importance of producing food.

RECENTLY saw a frightening example of how livestock producers might be affected by efforts to curb greenhouse gas emissions.

The Environmental Protection Agency released a notice of proposed rule making that raised the possibility of taxing farmers and ranchers for their livestock's greenhouse gas emissions. EPA proposed taxing dairy cattle at \$175 per head, beef cattle at \$87.50 and pigs at \$20.

A tax like this could effectively eliminate animal agriculture.

Unfortunately, some people in agriculture downplayed the possibility that this could happen and told stockgrowers not to worry about it.

In today's political climate, I don't think livestock producers can assume something like a cattle tax won't happen. If you can dream up a crazy idea that could negatively affect production agriculture, there is a chance that it could become the law of the land.

Sen. John Thune, R-S.D., says he will introduce a bill exempting livestock from the Clean Air Act, which is how a cow tax could be imposed.

If you don't like the prospect of having your livestock taxed, speak up. This is your chance to have your voice heard.

Department of Food

Did you see the op-ed piece in the *New York Times* called "Secretary of Food" (Dec. 10, 2008)? Editorial writer Nicholas



Advocates for ag

By TROY HADRICK

Kristof proposed that the U.S. Department of Agriculture be renamed the Department of Food.

Kristof argues that USDA should change its focus from farmers and ranchers to consumers because only 2% of the population produces food but 100% eats food.

Kristof repeatedly tries to minimize the importance of producers.

He doesn't once acknowledge that the "2%" not only

feed this country, but they also feed millions more around the world. In fact, every single U.S. producer is responsible for feeding and clothing 144 people each year.

Rather than appreciating the fact that he has never gone hungry, Kristof chooses to describe our livestock operations as "meat assembly lines" and wishes we grew "real food" instead.

The U.S. is the envy of the world for having the most abundant, safest, least-expensive food supply in the world. Our efficiency and production models are second to none. While consumers in other countries have to worry every

day about having enough food or whether or not it is safe, U.S. consumers don't have to give it a second thought.

While Kristof is busy trying to change the name on the sign at 1400 Independence Avenue in Washington D.C., American farmers and ranchers will be busy feeding the world.

Hadrick writes from Sturgis, S.D. He and his wife, Stacy, created a company called Advocates For Ag. Their mission is to inspire farmers and ranchers to speak up for agriculture. They do presentations about advocating for agriculture and write a blog about the topic. For more information, contact Hadrick at 605-347-9128 or see their Web site, www.advocatesforag.com.



Your Say

Insurance omissions

Regarding the examples in "Don't waste money on insurance" (November, Page 53), one puzzles me, one is questionable and one is not so good.

First, when you speak of "comprehensive" insurance, are you referring to medical coverage? I was not aware that a single policy is available.

Second, auto insurance may cover rental cars, particularly liability protection. But you may not carry comprehensive and collision on your own vehicle, which leaves you responsible for the entire damage to the rental unit. Even with damage coverage on your car, you are still responsible for repairs. Also rental companies are entitled to loss of use if their car is laid up for repairs. It would be very doubtful that your auto insurance or credit card covers this. This could result in some very expensive out-of-pocket charges.

Finally, the recommendation on auto medical has serious omissions. Do you ever have nonfamily passengers? Are they covered under your major medical? Does your major medical have a deductible? The auto medical covers all passengers with no deductibles. It could be very important to get emergency room attention for a nonfamily member. The cost is so reasonable.

My personal policy coverage is \$10,000 per person for \$15 per six months. That's why I feel this coverage should be included, not avoided.

*Ken Erickson
Fairfield, Iowa*

Erickson is a retired insurance agent.

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