

# Voting the way you farm

**I** AM voting for Sen. Barack Obama for president.

We try hard to be objective in the articles we bring you in each issue, but in this editorial I'm going to expose my bias.

Ag policy is one reason I will vote for Obama. He supported the 2008 Farm Bill. Both Republicans and Democrats

## OUR SAY

in the Dakotas tell me the price support and permanent disaster programs are essential to keep them on the land. Obama also supports production incentives for corn ethanol. More than 8,000

South Dakota farmers and ranchers have invested in ethanol.

Also, Obama says he isn't happy with the North American Free Trade Agreement and other trade deals. I think Dakota farmers have been hurt more than helped by free trade agreements. Wheat suffered mightily. Sugar is going to have to contend with a surge



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in imports from Mexico. Corn, beef and pork have fared better, but we seem to be constantly fighting bans based on bogus health concerns or World Trade Organization disputes over U.S. subsidies. At best, it seems as if U.S. trade negotiators were outnegotiated. At worst, they used agriculture as a bargaining chip in a bigger game.

I also agree with Obama that more government regulation of monopolies is needed. Many grain elevator managers in the Dakotas say they are being held hostage by railroads because there is no shipping competition. Energy deregulation led to Enron.

### He'll do no harm

Sen. John McCain is an appealing candidate. If he wins the election, I won't be especially disappointed. Charlie Hoffman, a Eureka, S.D., farmer and Republican candidate for the South Dakota House, told me McCain's opposition to ethanol production incentives is "ludicrous," but he'll do no harm to agriculture.

Stan Stien, a Wahpeton, N.D., farmer and also a delegate to the Republican convention, says McCain's handling of the economy and foreign affairs will make up for what I think is his shortcoming on farm programs. Some Dakota Republicans are trying to change McCain's mind on ethanol. I hope they succeed.

But here's my bottom line: I can't farm Democratic and vote Republican.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Anti-farm sentiment hits home

All of the farm publications I receive have done wonderful jobs detailing the true story behind a farmer's share of each food dollar and what's behind the inflation at the grocery store. Great job. Keep it up.

But what good is it? These great rebuttals reach only those already in the know. You're preaching to the choir.

I decided a few years ago to jump into the fray online — to stand up for us farmers in the blogosphere. I realized that as a 58-year-old who has farmed since I was a teenager, I have 40 years of experience, and maybe I have something to say.

But what I say is far too often met with hostility, disrespect and flat-out ignorance. I have been called an "AAA" farmer — April, August and Arizona — and a welfare baron unable to operate without sucking the gov-



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