

**The original documents are located in Box D30, folder “Michigan Angus Breeders Field Day, Grand Rapids, MI, July 19, 1970” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

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REMARKS BY REP. GERALD R. FORD, R-MICH  
REPUBLICAN LEADER, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
AT THE MICHIGAN ANGUS BREEDERS FIELD DAY  
AT GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN  
1 P.M. SUNDAY, JULY 19, 1970

Thank you for your warm welcome. I greatly appreciate this opportunity to return to Michigan. Compared with Washington, both literally and figuratively, our state helps to "cool it" for visitors and old hands alike.

There is an old saying, made famous by one of our former Presidents, that if you can't stand the heat you should stay out of the kitchen. I don't mind political heat, but believe me it is pleasant to "cool it" occasionally and get a new perspective on problems constantly facing us in Washington.

Problems are not exclusive with those of us at the nation's capital, of course. I realize fully that Angus breeders are faced with plenty of them, some resulting from what happens in Washington.

Washington problems probably trouble you the most because you cannot come to grips with them directly, as you can with problems that arise in your day-to-day operations.

In talking to you today I feel sure you are most interested in developments directly related to the cattle business. While I cannot predict what will happen in the months ahead, I can review some of the background and perhaps in this way help you make decisions for your own operations.

Speaking to Hereford breeders last week, I mentioned the research and selection methods that pure bred breeders are now using which give hope for an even better animal within another decade.

All of you know that the retailer, because of consumer demand, is seeking a carcass that will yield the same size cuts day after day in the cutting room. They want steaks and roasts to come out in the package like loaves of bread.

That achievement is probably still quite far in the future, but from *the* appearance of your Angus cattle ~~they~~ are approaching a "one mold" concept. As they reach a conformation that will bring them within an even narrower grading range, some of the present concern over our grading system will vanish.

You also undoubtedly know that the cattlemen of this country came up with nearly two and one-half million more animals this past year. Of these,



Michigan added its share. Compared with nine years ago, Michigan now has about 100,000 more beef cattle and stands 37th in the number of beef cows on the farms.

Meanwhile, beef producers are moving up rapidly in the economy, giving purebred producers a greater opportunity to provide the seed stock so necessary to improvement of the end product. I suspect that a lot of dairymen are using Angus bulls to give them that better "second crop" that can be fed out and sold as profitable finished beef rather than marketing the calves as vealers.

The Angus breeders of Michigan have kept pace with increased beef production, registering 50 per cent more pure bred cattle in 1969 than at the start of the '60s, and your association membership has doubled. That represents not only progress in numbers but in quality improvement to meet the needs of the '70s.

You know better than I what is happening in research to bring about even greater meat animals. The U.S. Department of Agriculture is helping in all areas, from better grasses and feed to improved genetics and management. Just this past month, Secretary Hardin appointed a National Cattle Industry Advisory Committee to better coordinate matters pertaining to the cattle business in relation to the Federal government.

In establishing the Committee, the Secretary called attention to the fact that production and marketing of beef cattle constitutes a major segment of agriculture. He noted that forces which influence prices and incomes received by cattle producers also have important repercussions <sup>on</sup> ~~the~~ markets for other farm products such as feed grains. Consumers, he said, have a real interest in making sure that a viable domestic cattle industry will provide an adequate supply of beef at reasonable prices.

The Committee is charged with assisting in development of long-range objectives which will benefit everybody, but for beef producers a forum is being made available that can be of real benefit in penetrating the bureaucracy.

I did not bring my crystal ball to your meeting, so I'm relying upon the U.S. Department of Agriculture to provide a look ahead on the cattle front. USDA is predicting further expansion of the national beef herd, again offsetting any possible decline in dairy cattle. Also, with nearly 2 per cent more cows, this year's calf crop will be larger.

With other commodities this might be a worrisome matter. With beef it may well have some later influence on prices, but it appears the appetite of American consumers is insatiable and that means a ready market at fair prices.

The cattle business, with no government supports, has been a bright spot for a couple of years. For the benefit of everybody, including consumers, we want to keep it that way.

That is why the Administration in Washington determined that imports should remain pretty much at a normal escalation as required under the 1964 meat import law. When the estimate of imports was made on June 30, importers were permitted an additional 40 million pounds, in addition to the 25 million or so that had been transshipped through Canada in the first six months of 1970.

We have no agreement on quotas with Canada. When Canada brought in a million pounds per week of beef from other countries and transshipped them to the United States, it became a little too much to accept. This practice involving Canada was halted as of July 1, and USDA also is preparing to cut off any further transshipments through Central American countries because we do have a quota agreement with all other countries exporting to the U.S.

Turning to another subject in which each of you is involved, I want to comment on the drive in this country against use of chemicals and biologics in control of diseases, insects, weeds, and growth rat ions.

These tools are undergoing a lot of criticism, and there is little doubt that the clamor will continue in and out of Congress.

The President has asked for an environmental agency which will deal with all phases of our living conditions. This does not mean that agriculture will have no voice. It means that justification will have to be made for some chemicals now being used, and it will take a longer time to approve new ones.

The worry over environment is becoming world-wide. We have already experienced embargoes against our meat products from smaller importing countries because of the furor over chemical residues.

We now must demand the utmost care in all chemical applications to prevent a situation which can seriously hurt our national food production.

What I am saying is that regulation will increasingly become a matter of public and national concern.

It all adds up to these facts:

(1) There will be a continued shift in emphasis from the cure of diseases to disease prevention. Biologics will have to find their particular role in campaigns to prevent animal diseases;

(2) Licensing requirements for vaccines and antibiotics will become increasingly the direct concern not only of the producers of these biologics but also of the livestock industry. This means that a larger group will need to be consulted in advance of the development of new products, which is another job to be undertaken by the newly selected Advisory Committee.

And (3) the standards for biologics will become more meaningful and more precise. In place of some of the rather ambiguously worded requirements of the past there will be sensitive and specialized tests that can be accurately evaluated.

To sum up my remarks, I am optimistic about prospects for livestock in this country.

If we can hold the line in government on many fronts affecting your future; if we can control inflation to halt the spiral of operating costs; if we can provide a farm program that will help carry producers over a three-year period while we work to develop more self-help programs, and if we can count on each of you to help expand knowledge and develop your own industry from production to the final marketing of your product, then we can truly expect that all of us will be able to eat better and live better as we move through the decade of the Seventies.

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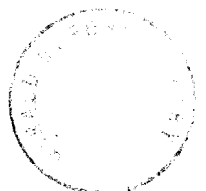
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