



## **LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

**02.12.08**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **American agriculture needs your support**

Farmers are under attack from special interest groups

If you're reading this while you enjoy your breakfast or lunch, chances are an American farmer had something to do with your meal. American agriculture continues to produce the most abundant, affordable and safest food supply in the world. So often we take it all for granted – from the time we pick it up at the local supermarket to its being served at our family dinner table.

Likewise, the average Indiana consumer probably doesn't realize how hard things have become for the American farmer. Animal rights activists and environmentalists have combined to make things increasingly difficult for those laboring hard to produce your food. That's why I authored a resolution in the Indiana Senate earlier this month asking for support of American agriculture.

Whether you realize it or not, agriculture is under attack and the biggest victims may well be you, the consumer. An example could be sitting in your refrigerator right now on your milk carton.

This month marked the beginning of a disturbing trend by such well-known retailers as Kroger and Deans Foods. Both began selling their store brand milk using a supply more expensive to produce.

Technology has been a friend to the American farmer – and the consumer – allowing us to more efficiently produce food products society demands. One of those breakthroughs involved treating cows with a synthetic version of the naturally occurring growth hormone.

This does not harm cows in any way, but it does help them produce more milk. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration have found no difference between the artificial hormone and the naturally occurring one.

But pressure from animal rights activists has led Kroger and Deans to stop stocking milk made by this production technology. Michael Schultz, a Purdue extension dairy specialist, was quoted as saying "the sad thing is, consumers will likely pay more for milk that is no different than the milk they purchased last month."

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Without the use of this production aide, dairy farmers will see decreased profits and smaller farms will be at greater risk. Farmers may have to increase the size of their herds in order to replace the lost milk. Increased herds likely mean increased costs.

This is just one example of how hard special interest groups are making things for the American farmer. Economies of scale and the dynamics of trying to make a profit is what drives modern agriculture today. It's like any other industry – you've got to get bigger and better if you want to stay in it. We have to take advantage of all the technology we can. The American consumer demands it. Grocery shoppers want every piece of meat to look and taste the same. For us to meet those expectations, technology – at times the kind special interest groups target as inhumane – is a must for the American farmer.

It's sad that the American farmer is perhaps the only member of our workforce not encouraged to use the technological advances that are available. Yet, it could be said America's farmers make it possible for all others in the workforce to succeed because they are the ones putting nourishment on the table for everyone.

Back during the Great Depression, approximately 55 percent of the U.S. population was involved in farming. Today, the statistic is less than 2 percent.

That's why we need to support the modern agriculture community's efforts to promote choices of farming methods, practices and crops. That's why we need to be on the offensive when misleading propaganda occurs and public misconceptions mount.

As you finish reading your newspaper with your meal, I hope you'll remember our American farmers – and not blame them the next time your grocery bill goes up.

**Sen. Bob Jackman (R-Milroy)**  
**Sen. Johnny Nugent (R-Lawrenceburg)**

To access a photo of Senator Jackman, visit <http://www.in.gov/S42/s42.jpg>

To access a photo of Senator Nugent, visit <http://www.in.gov/S43/s43.jpg>

