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# Opinion

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## OUR VIEW

# Immigration reform snared in D.C. politics

Anyone who still has illusions that a legislative solution to immigration — both legal and illegal — is possible before the next election wasn't paying attention last week.

Paul Ryan, the newly installed speaker of the House, ruled out any comprehensive reform of the immigration system as long as President Obama is in office.

"I don't think we can trust the president on this issue," Ryan said on NBC's "Meet the Press" and other programs. "I do not believe we should advance comprehensive immigration legislation with a president who has proven himself untrustworthy

on this issue."

Ryan was referring to Obama's attempt to give temporary legal status and work permits to as many as 5 million illegal immigrants by executive action, bypassing Congress.

We concede that the president's action, creative as he found it, was an egregious overreach of executive authority.

And the courts agree. A three-judge panel of the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals last summer upheld a lower court's order blocking implementation of the order. The appeals court said the action goes beyond reasonable prosecutorial discretion allowed the executive branch by taking

the affirmative action of conferring "lawful presence."

The president does not have the authority to grant work permits and temporary legal status to illegal immigrants. The Constitution (Article 1, Section 8) gives Congress sole power to "establish a uniform rule of naturalization." Only Congress can change the law.

That it has consistently refused to take action does not change the Constitution and allow the president to do so by fiat.

Still, the law needs to be changed and the fate of 12 million illegal immigrants — and the industries that depend upon their labor — must be decided.

Republican leaders must rise above their pique and either in small bites or comprehensive fashion begin to address the issue.

We've often touted our plan.

Congress should offer illegal immigrants willing to register temporary legal status and a path to permanent residency after 10 years if they meet strict requirements — no prior felony convictions, no violations while awaiting residency, learning to speak English and pay a fine and back taxes. Those not meeting the requirement should be deported.

As penalty for entering illegally, those made permanent residents should not be eligible for citizenship.

We think the border must be secured. A viable guestworker program must be established, and employers must verify the work status of their employees.

It seems to us both parties are happy to use immigration as a wedge issue for the 2016 presidential campaign. To that end, a resolution now probably wouldn't serve their interests.

But this situation has dragged on long enough and won't be improved with the passing of yet another election.

We repeat ourselves in stating that the choice is simple: Make them go, or let them stay.

One way or the other, do it now.

## OUR VIEW

# A wilderness proposal gone wild

Residents of Malheur County, Ore., are wise to be suspicious of a plan to designate 43 percent of their county as a wilderness area.

They should continue to resist the proposal any way they can.

It's a tradition among outgoing Democratic presidents to set aside massive swaths of the West as wilderness areas. They do it to curry favor with the environmental community.

Jimmy Carter holds the record, setting aside 27 million acres of Alaska as wilderness during his single term as president.

Bill Clinton set aside 9.2 million acres of wilderness in seven national monuments as he was heading out the door.

Now it's President Barack Obama's turn.

You'll note that in all of the above cases, the people who live in those areas were steamrolled.

That's why we're concerned about the Owyhee Canyonlands Conservation Proposal, which would designate a little more than 2 million acres as wilderness and 50 miles of rivers as wild and scenic rivers.

Under the Wilderness Act of 1964, "no temporary road, no use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment or motorboats, no landing of aircraft, no other form of mechanical transport and no structure or installation" is allowed except as a way to meet the minimum requirements of administering the area.

Even using vehicles to take out juniper trees, which ruin greater sage grouse habitat, is banned. A federal judge recently ruled that motorized vehicles couldn't be used to help clear junipers from a wilderness study area near Steens Mountain in south-central Oregon. And note the name of the plaintiff in the lawsuit: the Oregon Natural Desert Association, which is behind the wilderness plan for



Rik Dalvit/For the Capital Press

Malheur County.

Though proponents such as ONDA promise that grazing allotments would be grandfathered in, ranchers there find little comfort in the assurance.

Bob Skinner, a rancher, reminded the 500 people who filled the Adrian High School gym recently that proponents of the plan such as ONDA are litigators.

"Once this gets to court, all bets are off," he told the crowd.

The irony of the meeting was provided when Brent Fenty, executive director of ONDA, told the crowd he wants to stop mining and oil and gas drilling.

"We all care about the Owyhee and want to keep it the way it is today, we just may disagree on how we do that," he said.

Indeed. The most troubling aspect of this plan is the Obama administration is hiding its intentions from members of Congress. Rep. Greg Walden, R-Ore., represents Malheur County. He says he has asked the administration to tell the truth about the plan, but has thus far received no answer.

State Rep. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario, organized the Adrian meeting and plans to send a video of it to the White

House in hopes that members of the administration will understand what's at stake.

We often write about the "urban-rural divide." This is the perfect example of where it's getting wider. Proponents — nearly all from cities — want to impose wilderness status on rural residents. The urbanites don't care what the rural residents think or that it will ultimately eviscerate the local economy.

There is precious little in the record to show that the Obama administration will listen to the people of Malheur County. The administration has a long track record of imposing regulatory shock and awe on rural parts of the West. The Environmental Protection Agency's Waters of the United States regulations and the Department of Labor's "hot goods" actions against farmers are just two prominent examples of how federal agencies overstep their authority.

And consider this: There is also nothing in the record to indicate that proponents of designating more wilderness in Malheur County care even a tiny bit about the people who live there — or anywhere else in the rural West.

# Farm to Family: A resource for growers

By JACK VESSEY  
For the Capital Press

Guest  
comment  
Jack Vessey



There are a lot of unknowns in farming. Sometimes market conditions just aren't working in your favor. Sometimes the cold storage is over-packed. Sometimes we end up with a lot of secondary product that doesn't meet retailer or consumer demands for perfection.

But there is a solution to some of these variables — and it can help your business and your community.

Farm to Family is a program by the California Association of Food Banks, and it provides a reliable, timely solution to some of the challenges faced by growers and packers — and for me, it's also a key part of my business structure.

Farm to Family isn't asking for hand-outs — it works with farmers and packers to ensure harvesting costs can be recouped whenever possible. In many cases it offers reimbursements of a few cents per pound to cover picking and pack-out costs. The State of California also allows some growers to claim a 10 percent state tax credit on the value of donated fresh fruits and vegetables.

Just like the families, seniors and children who get relief from food given to them by food pantries in your community, Farm to Family gives me relief because I know I have a meaningful destination for my products that doesn't cut into my bottom line. It's a program that other farmers should support.

More than 100 growers and packers throughout California already participate, so I'm not the only one who knows about the benefits of this program.

Farm to Family is on a mission to reach new landmarks. Will you join me in helping them achieve 200 million pounds of fresh, California-grown fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy and other farm products donated each year?

If you have the means to make an outright product donation to Farm to Family, by all means do it. Even if you're not in a position to donate outright, give Farm to Family a call — they may be able to work to help you recover some harvesting costs. Steve Linkhart heads the Farm to Family program and can be reached at stvelinkhart@cafoodbanks.org. He'll connect you with a local representative who will handle all logistics — from supplying bins to sending trucks and timing pick-ups for your convenience. Farm to Family works fast to take care of you and your community. Every donation is seamless.

I was raised by a father who felt it was important to give back to the community and to be able to look in the mirror at the end of the day knowing that you did something good. Imperial County has the highest unemployment rate in the state and I believe as a fortunate farmer, it's important to do as much as I can to help. As farmers, we play an important role in feeding people nutritious food, and the Farm to Family program is yet another way to get good food on family tables.

*Jack Vessey, of Vessey and Co., is a fourth-generation produce grower and shipper based in Holtville, Calif.*

## Readers' views

### Answer to low producer pay prices

Processors and co-ops' violation of the economic law of supply-and-demand cannot be effectively cured through any government or political action (FMMO or mandatory check-off deduction programs), insurance programs (Dairy Margin Protection Program-MPP), give-away or price discount programs (CWT), or by hedging or futures trading.

No artificial gimmick will effectively cure a supply in excess of profitable demand.

Balancing the supply of milk with profitable demand by the maker of the supply of milk is the only effective cure for the violation of the economic law of supply-and-demand.

Dairy farmer — do not be tricked by the seller of snake oil solutions to your unprofitability. Do not continue to believe in and pay for ineffective gimmicks.

Only you, the maker of the milk supply, can make your milk worth more than what it costs to make.

Only you can effectively cure the on-going violation of the economic law of supply-and-demand and create a profitable price for milk you make. Because dairy farmers' ability to make milk far exceeds anyone's ability to create profitable demand, milk supply discipline which balances supply with profitable demand is required for any hope of dairy farmer sustainable profitability.

Dairy farmers can achieve profitability by properly managing themselves and the milk they make and their dairy farmer-owned co-ops. Dairy farmers need to step up and manage themselves and their co-ops for their own profitability rather than let their co-op management continue to manage them for everyone else's profitability.

*Bob Krucker  
Board Member  
The National Dairy  
Producers Organization  
Jerome, Idaho*

# Farming among the riskiest of businesses

By STEWART TRUELSEN  
For the Capital Press

Guest  
comment  
Stewart Truelsen



Noma, one of the world's best restaurants known for its new Nordic cuisine, will close at the end of next year and reopen on a different site in Copenhagen as an urban farm. Chef René Redzepi says he wants to grow all the produce on his menu. He's nervous about the decision, and who wouldn't be? Running a first-class restaurant is risky enough; running a farm is even riskier.

One would think that with all the advancements in agriculture over the last half century surely the risky business of farming has become more predictable and stable. Farming is less intuitive and more data-driven, but that hasn't eliminated the uncertainty of it.

Risk is the probability of an unwanted event occurring, and every year farmers and ranchers brace themselves for these

unwanted events.

In 2015, the spring outbreak of avian influenza and the western drought were at top of the list.

Nationwide more than 50 million birds were lost, affecting the production of eggs, chickens and turkeys at a cost of over a billion dollars. Consumers noticed a price ripple at the supermarket, but hard-hit producers may need a couple of years to recover.

The drought will result in losses of nearly \$2 billion to California agriculture this year alone. Nearly a half million acres of cropland were left fallow in the Central Valley. Mountain snowpack was historically low, forcing cutbacks in irrigation.

If you think farmers who escaped these unusually bad

events are in the clear you would be wrong. Across agriculture, net farm income is expected to drop by more than a third in 2015. The final numbers won't be known for some time, but it will likely be the worst drop since 1983.

The ups and downs of farming are nothing new; they were recorded as far back as the Bible. Joseph perhaps was the first person to practice risk management when he interpreted Pharaoh's dream and told him to stockpile grain ahead of seven years of famine. In biblical times, the risks to agriculture were primarily drought, pestilence and war.

Today, farmers and ranchers are faced with a host of additional risks that can result in financial loss. For example, there are political risks that threaten the renewable fuel market as big oil companies continue to lobby against ethanol. There are regulatory risks as the federal government attempts to extend

jurisdiction over just about everything a farmer can do on his land. The global marketplace is risky as well with American farmers susceptible to a fall-off in world demand, trade restrictions and currency fluctuations.

Most producers use a combination of financial strategies and tools to manage risk including forward contracts, hedges, crop yield insurance and crop revenue insurance. Off-farm employment by members of the household also provides a more certain income stream. Yet, nothing can offset all the risks of operating a farm or ranch.

As the public becomes more knowledgeable about how their food is grown, thanks to educators and the agriculture industry, it is important not to leave out the very basic fact that farming is still a financially risky business.

Stewart Truelsen, a food and agriculture freelance writer, is a regular contributor to the Focus on Agriculture series.