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Opinion

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OUR VIEW

Immigration reform will require courage

There are 12 million stories about those who have illegally immigrated to the U.S. They range from heart-wrenching to opportunistic. Each is different in many ways, and the same in one: Each person broke federal law in getting here.

That's why the discussion of illegal immigration is so divisive. While many Americans see the people behind the statistics, many counter with, "What part of illegal don't you understand?"

Democratic and Republican presidential administrations for decades have tried to come up with effective and fair means of addressing illegal immigrants that ranged from deportation to amnesty.

President Barack Obama even tried an end-run around Congress after that esteemed body refused —

again — to do anything substantive about the issue.

Though politicians tend to fall back on a combination of generality, placation and prejudice when they speak about illegal immigrants, many of the arguments circle around to what Congress needs to do to address the issue.

Most people agree that the border must be secured to prevent the free flow of people in and out of the U.S. Without that, we have no immigration policy.

Most people also agree illegal immigrants must pay a fine for breaking the law in order to be considered for any type of legal permanent residence. And they must not have broken other criminal laws.

They must also learn to speak English. It makes no sense to foster a nation in which the people do not share a common language.



AP Photo/Gosia Wozniacka, File
In this 2013 photo taken near Fresno, Calif., farmworkers pick paper trays of dried raisins off the ground and heap them onto a trailer in the final step of raisin harvest.

For the sake of the nation, and for the immigrants, they must learn English.

Much hangs in the balance, including the integrity of our country and an acknowledgment that, from its very beginning, this is a nation of immigrants.

Of particular concern to farmers and others is the fact that about 75

percent of our food is harvested or tended by illegal immigrants, according to Jeremy Robbins, executive director of the Partnership for a New American Economy, a bipartisan organization made up of 500 CEOs and mayors.

Each year, farmers and food processors are put at risk. They need to hire enough people to pick and process the crops. Though they insist that workers possess proper documentation, it is too often falsified. This puts farmers in a quandary. They need workers, but they have little choice but to accept at face value the paperwork that's presented.

The other option is obtaining H-2A guestworkers. While this assures that the work force will be legal, it is expensive and time-consuming and relies on federal agencies whose priorities are set in

Washington, D.C.

We are often told that congressional action on immigration will take place "after the next election."

As it turns out, there's always another election, allowing politicians to duck and cover one more time, leaving immigration reform — and a growing list of other pressing matters — unaddressed.

As the fall general election approaches, we urge our readers to listen closely to the congressional and presidential candidates. Brush aside the bombast and the generalities and look for positions on immigration reform that are practical, affordable, effective and offer a long-term solution.

They all know what that solution is, they just aren't willing to display the courage it takes to make it a reality.

OUR VIEW

Producers need tools to deal with eagle depredation

If a wolf kills a calf out on the range, the rancher is sure to let out a yell and report it to wildlife officials. But when sheep producers lose hundreds of lambs each year to depredation by eagles no one says anything.

Last week the Capital Press made public what has been an open secret among sheep producers for years — eagles love to feed on newborn lambs and there's not much they can do to stop them. If you didn't know it's because many sheep producers would just as soon everyone kept quiet.

Peter Orwick, executive director of the American Sheep Industry Association, said raptors are a huge problem for producers and that eagles are a particularly tough challenge. One producer in Oregon reluctantly told us she loses 300 lambs a year to eagles.

Producers don't report and wildlife officials stopped asking questions. In 2004, the last year the federal government collected separate data, eagles killed 6,300 sheep and lambs.

Eagles present as great a problem to producers as wolves and other predators, and farmers need better tools to deal with them.

It's difficult to say much against eagles because they enjoy a special place in our collective psyche.

Had Little Red Riding Hood and her grandmother fallen victim to an eagle



removed from the list, they and other raptors are protected under separate federal law.

And that's the rub. While ranchers on the range have many unregulated tools at their disposal to scare wolves away from their herds, even the most gentle ruffling of an eagle's feathers without a permit could land a producer in federal court.

Getting a permit to haze eagles is a Byzantine exercise involving the USDA and the Fish and Wildlife Service. As reluctant as producers are to allow the feds access to their property, they fear more the prospect of becoming the targets of over zealous conservation groups.

We concede that allowing producers to shoot problem eagles is a non-starter, and giving federal wildlife officials that authority would be an uphill battle. The optics of such a thing would enrage even those most sympathetic to agriculture.

But producers should be given freedom without federal intervention to scare eagles off by means that don't harm the birds. If it works for the protected wolves, it should work for the protected eagles.

instead of a wolf our perceptions of the animals might be quite different.

The dejected are "thrown to the wolves." Those practicing a dangerous deception are "wolves in sheep's clothing." Families in dire straits struggle to "keep the wolves from the door." Wolves are dangerous predators that might be admired from a distance but must be avoided under all circumstances.

Eagles are the symbol of liberty and independence. A bald eagle adorns the Great Seal of the United States.

Eagles are also an important symbol of the conservation movement, one of the first animals to be placed on the endangered species list. While bald eagles have since been recovered and have been

Studies show safety of GMOs

By JACK DEWITT
For the Capital Press

Guest
comment
Jack DeWitt



In the June 3 Capital Press, the writer of a guest comment column criticized a May 20 Associated Press story printed in the Capital Press concerning the National Academy of Science, Engineering and Medicines report entitled "Genetically Engineered Crops, Experiences and Prospects."

The Academy's major goal was "to make available to the public, to researchers and to policy-makers a comprehensive review of the evidence that has been used in the debates about GE crops and information on relevant studies that are rarely referred to in debates."

The AP story concluded that the report attests to the safety of GMOs. The guest columnist disagreed with that conclusion. The report is not yet available in print, but can be downloaded from the internet, and I have done so, all 407 pages. Like the AP story, I find the report reassuring as to the safety of GM crops.

Chapter 5 of the report deals with human health effects of GM crops. On page 114, the authors quote statements of safety from organizations around the world: The U.S. National Research Council, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Council on Science and Public Health of the American Medical Association House of Delegates, the World Health Organization, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the European Commission (the executive body of the European Union), which concluded "from the efforts of more than 130 research projects, covering a period of more than 25 years of research, and involving more than 500 independent research groups, is that biotechnology, and particularly GMOs, are not per se more risky than e.g. conventional plant breeding technologies."

The June 3 guest columnist implied that these organizations and the committees that put together this tome are in thrall of big corporations, or are members of a government conspiracy aligned with Big Ag. I find such a view blatantly cynical.

The columnist referred to a study led by Giles-Eric Seralini in which rats were fed GM corn and Roundup for up to two years and concluded that GM corn and Roundup caused extensive tumors. Seralini used the Sprague-Dawley strain of rats that are very prone to tumor production, and within two years most will die of cancer naturally.

In a 2001 experiment with untreated rats, 70-77 percent of females and 87 to 97 percent of males developed tumors over a lifespan of 89 to 105 weeks (Nakazawa, M, et al, "Spontaneous neoplastic lesions in aged Sprague-Dawley Rats". Experimental Animals, Vol. 50, No. 2, pp99-103.) Seralini's paper and conclusions ("Long-term toxicity of a Roundup herbicide and a Roundup-tolerant genetically modified maize") were roundly criticized by scientists around the world because of his small sample size and general methods. The

paper was published in Food and Chemical Toxicology in September of 2012, and retracted in November of 2013. Yet, anti-GMO activists constantly refer to this rejected study.

Quoting from a paper by Alison Van Eenennaam, UCCE Specialist, Dept. of Animal Science, University of California-Davis, "Over 100 digestion and feeding studies examining the effects of feeding GE crops to various food-producing animal species have been reported in the scientific literature. ... Results have revealed no significant differences in the nutritional value of feedstuffs derived from commercially grown GE crops compared with their conventional counterparts, nor have any peer-reviewed studies documented alterations in feed intake, growth, or other livestock production parameters." (Proceedings, California Alfalfa and Forage Symposium, Dec 2005. <http://alfalfa.ucdavis.edu>. See also Flachowsky, et al, "Animal nutrition with feeds from genetically modified plants." Archives of Animal Nutrition, Vol 59, pp.1-40. 2005.)

Dr. Van Eenennaam subsequently reviewed animal health data sets from 1983 (before the introduction of GE feedstuffs in 1996) to 2011, and published the results in 2014 ("Prevalence and impacts of genetically engineered feedstuffs on livestock populations," American Society of Animal Science, Vol 92, pp. 4255-4278.) Quoting from her abstract, "Numerous experimental studies have consistently revealed that the performance and health of GE-fed animals are comparable with those fed isogenic non-GE crop lines.

U.S. agriculture produces over 9 billion food producing animals annually, and more than 95 percent of these animals consume feed containing GE ingredients. ... These field data sets, representing 100 billion animals following the introduction of GE crops did not reveal unfavorable or perturbed trends in livestock health and productivity. No study has revealed any differences in the nutritional profile of animal products derived from GE-fed animals."

There are hundreds of studies worldwide that attest to the safety and "substantial equivalence" of GMOs where animal and human health are concerned, and to the benefits that accrue to the environment. I caution everyone to beware the voluminous, specious, sometimes mythical, anti-GMO information promulgated or inspired by NGOs such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth, whose agenda, if successful, will result in a world where only the wealthy will be well-fed, well-clothed, and well-housed.

Jack DeWitt has a master's degree in agronomy from Washington State University and has 50-plus years of farming experience and agricultural research monitoring. He lives in Milton-Freewater, Ore.

Readers' views

Cougars, wolves and deer study out of touch

Regarding the story about the study that says cougars and wolves benefit people.

Once again some supposedly educated people, being paid by tax dollars, are off on a tangent leading into the unknown.

How can so many people be so far out of touch with the real world?

Just in case they haven't noticed, the road kill of deer far exceeds the deer killing of humans. And the deer are predominantly in just certain areas

of roadways. How do they propose to keep the cougars within their designated areas? Outriders, anyone?

I fail to see the connection they are trying to make. One they didn't mention: Traffic and cougars. So now it is also going to be cars versus cats to look out for.

The most outlandish, most outrageous statement in the article was: "I think hitting a deer is something most people have either experienced or they know someone who has hit a deer."

I'm sure glad I never had such an out-of-touch teacher.

Marvin Reed
Reno, Nev.

MPP works just as it was designed

Lynne McBride does not speak for all California dairy farmers with regards to the MPP program. The program is designed to be catastrophic income insurance and it works just as designed.

Do people complain every year when they buy fire insurance and their hay stack doesn't burn up? Of course not. You have to look at the MPP the same way.

I bought \$5 margin cov-

erage for my 750 milk cow dairy. It cost me \$6,400. In 2009 my margin went down to about \$1.50 per cwt. In that year this \$5 coverage would have paid handsomely. Do I wish for a 2009 scenario so I can get a good return on my MPP "investment?" Of course not.

Some people are never happy with policies adopted by the government. I guess that is to be expected. I would just ask that as a reporter you try to get a broader perspective when you cover a story.

Geoff Vanden Heuvel
J&D Star Dairy
Chino, Calif.