Testimony to the House Agriculture Committee Re: HB 1371

January 27, 2023

Good morning,

The back door for corporations to come to North Dakota is already open. You need to shut it.

My name is Frank Matejcek. I'm a semi-retired farmer/rancher. I have owned cattle since I was six years old and still do. We have raised Black Angus cattle for over 40 years. I am a past president of the ND Angus Association. We originally had a dairy farm until my father sold the Holsteins due to a lack of available labor The same problem exists today, as you know. My farm was successful in part because we used Co-ops; from American Crystal Sugar to Thompson Farmers Elevator, Manvel Oil Co-op, Agri-Valley and others. And always using the ND Mill as our wheat market. Co-ops pay dividends to patrons and are managed by local farmers, as you know.

By letting corporations into our state, we will lose local control. We need local farmers and ranchers controlling our businesses, not meatpackers. Local farmers and ranchers have respect for their animals and the land. Corporations focus on the profits they can return to shareholders.

In a related issue, you probably heard about a Chinese corporation called Fufeng buying 370 acres of prime farmland just south of my farm to ostensibly build a wet corn mill. They paid $26,000 per acre. They wooed the city of Grand Forks with promises of jobs and a huge infusion of money. To help pay for the necessary infrastructure, the city used their powers of annexation over 400 acres of Falconer Township, including 40 businesses that have been there for over 60 years. A name change to "Fufeng USA" does not make them an American company.

I urge you to respect the will of the people of North Dakota who have already voted down corporate farming, on any level. I also urge you to adopt legislation forbidding foreign ownership of either agricultural or industrial land in subsequent legislation.

Thank you,

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