

Fly-In To Focus On Livestock Issues

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DENVER, Colo. — Livestock producers from throughout the country will travel to Washington, D.C. June 23-26 to meet with members of Congress and Clinton administration officials about concentration in the livestock sectors and other areas impacting their industry, such as transportation and credit.

National Farmers Union's (NFU) legislative fly-in is aimed at focusing attention on the economic crisis facing livestock producers. Many cattle producers have seen their market prices drop by as much as 50 percent over the past two years.

"This grassroots fly-in will enable livestock producers to directly communicate their concerns and ideas for change with U.S. lawmakers and rule makers," said NFU President Leland Swenson. "NFU has long held that the concentration of livestock processing companies is detrimental to producer prices and provides no price advantage for consumers."

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, four companies now account for 87 percent of

all red meat slaughter and processing. By comparison, these four firms had roughly 70 percent of all red meat business in the early 1980s. In addition, data from the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration show that 300 feedlots account for 82 percent of all marketing transactions, 89 percent of packer-fed transactions, and 56 percent of forward contracts.

The NFU legislative fly-in comes on the heels of last week's release of a report by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's 21-member Advisory Committee on Agricultural Concentration. Fly-in participants are expected to voice their support for recommendations within the report which they believe will enhance economic opportunities for livestock producers.

Committee recommendations expected to receive the most attention are increased monitoring and enforcement of anti-trust regulations, establishment of a disclosure policy on captive supplies, more timely and accurate information on price and volume of im-

ports and exports, better reporting and more accurate information on the farm-to-retail price spread, and enhancement of cooperative and bargaining entities to improve economic returns for independent producers. Farmers Union is also supportive of recommendations to maintain competitive transportation alternatives, as well as monitoring and limitation of transportation rates by the Surface Transportation Board, where there is little or no competition.

Special attention will also be drawn to the committee's minority report which calls for the prohibition of packers from feeding livestock, termination of loans on formula contracts as presently constituted, and value-based pricing based on verifiable market factors outside the control of the packer/buyer and applied uniformly to producers.

"The commission report, particularly the minority report, should be a basis of 'new thinking' for people in Washington," said Swenson. "The economic survival of independent producers and their communities is at stake."

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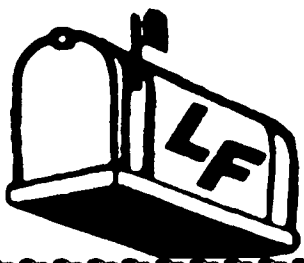
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 SECTION D - THURSDAY AT 9:00 A.M.
 OF EACH WEEK'S PUBLICATION

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25
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 - 10-Sheep & Goats
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 - 32-Miscellaneous
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 - 34-Autos
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 - 36-Real Estate