

# National Farmers Organization Supports USDA Plan To Require Livestock Price Reporting

AMES, Iowa — National Farmer's Organization recently commented on a new USDA proposal that has the potential to raise livestock producer pay prices. This comes as good news to farmers and ranchers who are coping with the worst prices in decades.

The new rule, which would require all livestock purchase prices to be reported, was first proposed in September. USDA invited public testimony on the subject to assess the need for regulatory action.

"Our organization believes all livestock sale prices should be reported — there shouldn't be discrimination or selective price reporting," said Gene Paul, National Farmers president. "It's one of the steps that need to

be taken for markets to be open, fair and competitive, so producers have reliable, accurate information to make decisions about how they market their hogs and cattle.

"Part of the problem in today's depressed livestock prices could be attributed to the price reporting issue," Paul said. "Mandatory price reporting would have no impact on quality and has the potential to raise the prices paid to producers."

The Packers and Stockyards Administration received complaints from producers about the pricing practice as early as 1991. Just this year, USDA expressed concern about the fact that some livestock transactions are conditioned on an agreement that the

transaction price not be reported to public or private reporting services.

"Price reporting is only the first step, however," Paul said. "It has always been our position that simply requiring livestock sales reporting without addressing the issue of captive supply won't totally solve the problem."

A captive supply of cattle the packer in some way owns or is able, through contracts, to dictate the formula that prices those cattle.

Other recommendations National Farmers made fit with the USDA's Advisory Committee on Agricultural Concentration about the collection and reporting of market information.

"For some time now, National Farmers has supported a petition filed by the Western Organization Resource Council and 1,500 other individuals and organizations. That petition, given to USDA, pushes for the department to eliminate captive cattle supplies in the industry. It is our position that this would compliment the required livestock price reporting," Paul said.

The public comment period concerning the proposed action ended Dec. 9.



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