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Lobbyists working hard to steal ranchers' freedoms



BEEF Daily

By Amanda Radke



Breaking News: President Donald Trump signs the PACT Act into law. That, and other bad news from Washington, D.C. can be found in today's blog.

Amanda Radke | Nov 25, 2019

Holly Spangler recently wrote for BEEF's sister publication, Farm Progress, a blog post that really hit home for me. Titled, "Tired, but making a difference," Spangler talks about the tough year so many of us in production agriculture have experienced in 2019, and she shared hopes for 2020.

Spangler writes, "If there's any theme to the conversations I've had with farmers this fall, it's that everybody's tired. Tired of fighting the weather, the year, the markets. Let's get this crop over with and start fresh in 2020.

"Those conversations are what I thought of as I listened to an energetic young National FFA officer give his retiring address last month. Ridge Hughbanks observed that it seems like everybody's tired these days. Then he dropped a profound bit of wisdom on his fellow FFA

members: 'The world is run by people who are tired. Anybody who is **doing anything worthwhile** is bound to be exhausted. So get used to it.'

And while farmers and ranchers are at home trying to hang onto their family operations, their livelihoods and the rural lifestyle they hold so dear, there are crocodiles in the swamp ready to pounce and make us their next meal.

In Washington, D.C., activists and lobbyists have been busy working hard to infringe upon our personal liberties and freedoms as property owners of land and livestock.

What do I mean by this? Well, get a load of some of these recent pieces of legislation that are being considered in Congress.

First, there's the Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act of 2019 (S. 1499), which is endorsed by the **Humane Society of the United States.**

Essentially a land and water grab, Protect the Harvest reports, "The Wildlife Corridor Conservation Act, S. 1499 was introduced to the Senate May 16, 2019. Its sponsors are the usual cast of animal rights characters, many of whom are HSUS 'award winners,' Udall, Booker, Harris, Merkley, Wyden, Blumenthal, Sanders, Whitehouse, Tester and Feinstein.

"There is a related bill, H.R. 2795, introduced on May 16th, of which a summary is in progress. H.R. 2795 has been referred to the House Committee – Natural Resources, Agriculture; Armed Services; Transportation and Infrastructure.

"The summary of the Senate Bill S. 1499 reads as follows, 'To establish National Wildlife Corridors to provide for the protection and restoration of certain native fish, wildlife, and plant species and for other purposes.'

We have a very important question. What does the bill mean by the statement, 'for other purposes'? This seems to be left intentionally vague so that it may be manipulated and enforced at will. There is a lot to this bill, and we will just be covering some of the key points. We encourage everyone to read it and to follow the referenced codes to fully understand its implications."

[Get the details on this act and its implications by clicking here.](#)

A second cause for concern is the Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture (PACT) Act. On the surface, the act appears to be preventing the taping of animal abuse for marketing, advertising, distribution or circulation.

To me, it reads as a way to prevent animal rights activists from going undercover and purposefully abuse animals with the intention of releasing the footage on social media. This tactic has been used for years to hurt agricultural businesses and line their own coffers through good-hearted donors spurred to action by the abuse they are witnessing online.

However, dig a little deeper, and it's clear to see that in the wrong hands or with a different administration at the helm, the definitions of abuse could easily be applied to raising animals, standard animal care and slaughtering of livestock for human consumption.

[Read the text here.](#)

Nebraska rancher Trent Loos puts it into context and shares why we should be worried about the PACT Act.

In a recent column, Loos writes, "Though the act, on its surface, seems innocent enough, imagine when a new administration comes in and the outrageous rule making where animal rights lobbyists will populate most of the political positions inside the United States Department of Agriculture and the Environmental Protection Agency. One could even see out-of-control rule making on the part of the Department of Interior. Think about that—the rule making that would result in essentially doing away with meat as a food product because prudent animal husbandry could be construed as a federal crime. If one is involved in producing meat products for food, one could be put **out of business** overnight."

Meanwhile, Sam Clovis, former agriculture advisor and co-founder of the Trump Ag Advisory Committee, recently wrote about the bill for Protect the Harvest, saying, "I am not sure people in Congress do not need a lesson in civics and perhaps a re-read (or more likely a first read) of the Constitution. Their ability to change rules to avoid accountability has led to a very dangerous situation for all of agriculture, especially for livestock producers. The PACT Act is the best example of how Congress ducks and weaves, avoiding any level of accountability to their constituents or, worse, to the American people. Thus, we see in the PACT Act the pernicious influences of special interest. Here, we have the insidious, and overt, power of the lobbyist class inside the Swamp.

[Read the entire article by clicking here.](#)

And now the PACT Act is the law of the land. The Cavalry Group reports, "President Trump signed the PACT Act (HR 724/S 479) into law on Nov. 25. Needless to say, we are not happy about this outcome and the dangerous precedent that this law makes, as well as the fact that President Trump has now supported the animal rights groups, knowingly or unknowingly.

"The danger of this (now) law is in the vague language and definitions which will become the gateway for future amendments. And because it was an ACT and not a bill, it can and will be easily amended and have Rules promulgated under this Act. Many of you have witnessed this under the Animal Welfare Act and Horse Protection Act which some have not been favorable to animal owners or their animal related businesses. So now we will have to stand watch to make sure nothing stupid amends this law. Playing defense sucks. But, here we are! Clearly, his daughter-in-law, Lara Trump had a strong influence in making this happen."

The Cavalry Group reports that more than 80,000 emails were sent on this topic in the last 10 months. Although I am concerned about the language in this act, it is important to note that the PACT Act does specifically exempt farm animals.

With these issues in mind, it begs the question -- what can we do as producers to protect our freedoms and liberties as property owners, livestock producers and meat eaters?

We may be tired from a tough year, but now is not the time to sit idly while the urban elite dictate how we'll operate in the future.

It's time we pick up the phone and talk to our Congressmen and women in Washington, D.C. At first glance, these bills appear to help dogs, cats, cows, pigs, sheep and wildlife; however, dig a

little deeper and we can see a far more insidious motivation at the core of these pieces of legislation.

Hold your elected officials accountable and make sure they are paying attention to the interests of their constituents and not these slick lobbying machines in Washington, D.C. We are in the fight for our lives, and we need strong voices in this arena!

The opinions of Amanda Radke are not necessarily those of beefmagazine.com or Farm Progress.