



Rep. Tom Emmer on Emmer Questions Costs of Mandatory GMO Labeling Laws

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****CHAIRMAN:**

** Mr. Emmer for five minutes.

****REP. TOM EMMER:**

** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and first to the panel. Thank you for being here, and I apologize. I had to step out and come back. This is quite an operation in this place. You have several meetings all at the same time in different buildings, and there must be a better way to run the train station. Be that as it may, I respect your time. I listened to my colleague from Minnesota talk about there should be dissenting voices in the room. I think most of us would agree that if the world would just agree with our position, it would be a much better place to live in, but that doesn't happen. And I think somebody can correct me, but I think it was Bobby Kennedy that said something to the effect that if you can get the American public, 80 percent of the American public, to agree on anything, that should be considered unanimous. And in this case, when you've got 90 percent of the science out there agreeing, I think that's pretty close to being unanimous. I want to go at this very quickly from a different, again, forgive me if somebody's already done this. I wasn't here, so please be patient with me. I want to go at it from the specific costs and break it down by level. Mrs. Lidbeck, you're running a dairy operation. You've got costs that are going to be added on for, you talked about the inputs when I was here earlier. You were talking about the cost of feed. Aren't there other costs in terms of having to manage and record, get inspections, certification? Can you, have you talked about those already today?

****MRS. LIDBECK:**

** No. No, so beyond the feed, I mean, to keep milk segregated from cows fed, non-GMO feed versus feed with GM, you'd have to put in a second bulk tank and you'd have to put in a second grain bin, and so you're talking about capital expenditures. And as you can imagine, on a 50-cow dairy, there's really not a whole lot extra left to go around to sort of fill those needs. So that kind of consideration might be a deal breaker for us.

****REP. TOM EMMER:**

** Well, and I was just thinking, labor, you and your husband are going to have to have some more kids in order to do this thing. Mr. Dempsey and anybody else, I want to go to the next level, because we've got the processors, those that have to put these products out. You talked about two lines, but it's much greater than that, isn't it? Aren't you going to have to hire all kinds of new staff to keep track of all these things, and then there's storage costs?

****MR. DEMPSEY:**

** Yes. The answer is, the two lines referred to just having one state that mandated the labeling and everybody else who didn't. So there's significant input, depending on the number of states who have different regulations. But yes, all up and down the line, as we talked, our grain is kept in MASA, is kept in separate silos, so you have



to have separate silos for that. The distribution charges would be significant, because you have to keep track of various different streams of products going to different states, the same product but labeled differently. So the multipliers in cost come up with how many different labels you have to keep and how many different infrastructure you need to build to hold those.

****REP. TOM EMMER:**

** And very quickly, because this just adds, it compounds as you go each level, and I wouldn't be fair if I didn't go to the Minnesota guy with the time that I have left. Mr. Policinski, you know, farmers are interested in operating a business, raising their families, they want to produce quality product that can be sold the world over. I imagine, and the farmers that I know, they don't much care for the litigation system, if they can stay away from it. What are the concerns and the costs that could be put into this at every level when you talk about the legal ramifications? Aren't those just as big? Mr. Policinski.

****MR. POLICINSKI:**

** Yes. First, you know, farmers are pretty savvy businessmen. They have adopted this technology at record pace of all the technologies over all the years. This has been the one that has been adopted by farmers the most quickly, and it is because they see the benefits so clearly to their operations, to the environment, less land and water, and to cost to consumers. So I think farmers have voted. What we are trying to do here in the discussion is preserve their choice of how they want to farm, as well as provide consumer choice. And again, the Pompeo Butterfield legislation that was proposed clearly affords that opportunity through developing a national standard and a voluntary national standard. I think your comment on legal cost would pass through the system to ownership. In our instance, we are a farmer-owned company. We did have a discussion a couple of times now on how onerous it is to have a State law or a series of State laws, and if you chose not to serve those areas, the implications of legal liability would be very onerous.

****MR. KLINE:**

** And at the end of the day, it all gets passed on to the consumer.

****REP. TOM EMMER:**

** I am sorry, I am missing something.

****MS. MALONEY:**

** No, Mr. K. I just wanted to add, Mr. Emmer, I mean, when I was trying to locate a non-GMO source for grain, I first, of course, started my own grain company, and they simply don't have the capacity either. They are already satisfying an organic grain distribution system as well as conventional, so they don't have the capacity for a non-GMO option either.

****REP. TOM EMMER:**

** And again, thank you all. My time has expired. Mr. Chair and to the Ranking Member, thank you for having this meeting because it seems like everybody here is interested in a win-win for everybody. Thank you.



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