

rate is about 15% [among] black residents in that community, and 7% [among] white or non-black. We are concerned that there might be some access issues; and community health workers can be very useful in providing positive peer pressure to decrease apprehension and fear, and improve access for the youth. Especially the group from 18-44 [years old]; we call that Group 2 here in D.C., and we think that would be a very critical group for the project to address.

So, this is kind of a quick and dirty [view] of what we're trying to do here in Washington. We really have been impressed with what you can do with collaboration among D.C. Med-Chi [the oldest African-American medical society in the world], MSDC [Medical Services D.C.], the Ward 8 Health Council, and the Health Department with Councilman Trayon White and the

Mayor.

We've reached the point now that we probably are going to have more slots than arms to put shots in, which is a good thing. We're targetting for the next 60 days, a full-court press. We'd like to get things pretty well in place, and we're told we'll have the vaccine available by May 31st, so we want to make sure we have the arms available to put them in. We think that what we do here in D.C. can be replicated around the world. We had a doctor from Lebanon speak with us yesterday, and compare the experience in Lebanon with what we have here in Ward 8.

So, thank you very much. My slides are available, and we'll put them up and try to enlarge them so you can see them. But thank you so much for your attention. I look forward to your questions. Thanks again.

Nicole Pfrang

## To Help Solve World Hunger, Break Up the Meatpacker Cartel

*Nicole Pfrang provided these remarks to Panel 4, "The Challenge of Famine and Pandemics: The Coincidence of Opposites, or Mass Extinction?" of the Schiller Institute's March 20-21 international conference, "The World at a Crossroad: Two Months into the New Administration."*

Hi! My name is Nicole Pfrang. I am a 5th generation cattle rancher in a little town called Goff, Kansas. I just got done tagging calves; we're in the middle of calving season. Before that, we sorted off some replacement heifers we're going to sell. We also have bulls we're ready to turn out for springtime. I am a college graduate from Kansas State University; I got my degree in Animal Science—the Production Management option. I'm also the Secretary of the Kansas Cattlemen's Association.

Along with this whole food shortage and world hunger issue, the big part that I see is how the meatpacker cartel completely controls everything: who gets the food, who buys it, and pretty much makes us producers jump through hoops. They say, if you don't do



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Nicole Pfrang

this, we won't buy your beef. My dad remembers back in the day when there were about five or six packing plants. They would flip a coin to see who would bid first. Now, the meatpacker says, "Can you get it to us? I'll give you a price in two weeks." So, they pretty much control the price. It's just ridiculous.

They also control—with regulations, they can slip money into lobbying organizations and government so that they can get what they want. USDA [United States Department of Agriculture] listens to the

meatpackers. There's a lot of legislation going through to try to get small packing plants to be able to sell across state lines, because these are inspected plants, that are as strict as the federal, but that are state-inspected. The big packers do not allow the small packing plants to sell across state lines.

There's a local packing plant that's close to us that is not far from the Nebraska border. They cannot sell into Nebraska. This [legislation] giving the smaller packing plants more wiggle room, more rein, it'll help the consumers' ability to choose what meat products they get.

The big four packing plants are now going into this whole fake meat. They're wanting to get rid of beef entirely. They got rid of the big thing that helps the consumers choose—country-of-origin labelling. They said, "We don't need that. The consumers don't need the right to choose where their meat comes from. We'll just buy all this meat from 20 different countries, and mix it with our meat, and label it 'Product of USA'." They know the United States product is what sells; it's what the consumers want. But the packers don't want that; they want to go for the cheapest amount of money so only they can profit. Not us producers in the United States, not the other producers around the world. They only care about themselves; they do not care about consumers. They just feel it's all about them. They want to set everyone up against each other; they want to eliminate the ranchers totally.

They do that by getting in with these organizations like NCBA—National Cattlemen's Beef Association—

and the state level association, KLA—Kansas Livestock Association—and completely telling them all these lies. And turn the organizations into saying, "We're for the producers," when they're actually for the packers.

If we're going to be able to help fix this world hunger issue, it will help to break up the packing plants. The big four packers, definitely. Get more packing plants out there. It's important because the most sensible people are the ranchers. They care about the consumers and what they want; they care about the land. If they didn't, they would not try harder. Because it's what gets passed down from generation to generation. Each generation does its best to keep the land going and healthy; they keep the livestock healthy, even more than our own health. We went through a horrible deep freeze with negative 35-degree temperatures; and we put our livestock first before us. We care about what the consumers want. Thank you.

### James Benham

## Bring in New Ideas and Young Farmers!

*Mr. Benham is the President of the Indiana Farmers' Union. He spoke on Panel 4, "The Challenge of Famine and Pandemics: The Coincidence of Opposites, or Mass Extinction?" of the March 20-21 Schiller Institute's international conference, "The World at a Crossroad: Two Months into the New Administration."*

Good afternoon! My name is James Benham. I'm a farmer from southeast Indiana. I also serve as State President for the Indiana Farmers' Union, as well as serving on the National Board of Directors for the National Farmers' Union. I'd like to take this time to thank Helga and the Schiller Institute for the opportunity to speak to you today about agriculture.

I wish I could really tell things that are upswing about agriculture. But, as you know, the global situation is we're all suffering, and things are not as pretty as we'd like to see them. It's changed. I'm 70 years old, I've ac-



James Benham

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tually retired now. But since I was a youth, I can remember back when, 50 years ago, our local agricultural university was telling us that the only thing the crops needed the soil for, was to hold them up. And that man could provide the fertilizer and the chemicals to keep the weeds under control, and so forth. So, in that time frame, what we have done to ourselves, is basically we have raped the soil to the point that the more we put on, we get less results.

Even though it's kind of a comical thing, and not being deprecating of farmers, but we're called *morons*. Not so much because of lack of intelligence, but because of the fact that we continue to put *more on* and expect more without getting more out of that soil. And the same problem, the type of commodities we produce now and the food we produce, has less value to our bodies than it did 50 years ago.

It's been a challenge for all of us, and even to our representatives that we elect to work in our nation.