



Meat & poultry producers weigh in on ag industry competition issues

By Agri-Pulse Staff

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Ankeny, Iowa, March 12 – Even before the first-ever USDA/Justice Department competitiveness workshop opens Friday morning in Ankeny, Iowa, livestock industry trade groups weighed in with their serious concerns. National Pork Producer’s Council (NPPC) President Sam Carney warned “Don’t fix something that isn’t broken.”

The Iowa all-day workshop, the first in a series to be held across the country on competition and regulatory issues in agriculture, is designed to “promote dialogue among interested parties and foster learning with respect to the appropriate legal and economic analyses of these issues.”

NPCC’s Carney explained that “The way hogs are priced is a market-driven solution to the challenges of marketing hogs and pork. There are good reasons we sell hogs the way we do, and government intervention will require pork producers to do something they have found to be ill-advised. Producers have a justified interest in consistent access to the marketplace. Packers have an equally justified interest in a predictable and sufficient supply of high-quality market hogs. Don’t fix something that isn’t broken.” To read NPCC’s comments on competitive issues, prepared for the workshop, go to: <http://nppc.org/uploadedfiles/USDA-USDOJWorkshops12-30-09.pdf>.

American Meat Institute (AMI) President and CEO J. Patrick Boyle commented that “The continuing success story of American agriculture is testament to the hard work, innovative spirit and collaborative efforts between livestock producers and meat processors. Parties in the food supply chain are increasingly working together to achieve mutually beneficial success and assure our customers’ satisfaction. These cooperative arrangements are generally referred to as marketing agreements. Marketing agreements have emerged as one of the most effective ways to enhance product safety, ensure consistent products and manage risks in a still volatile industry.” To read AMI’s comments go to: <http://ow.ly/1dli9>. For a copy of AMI’s op-ed on industry structure and competition which appeared in the Des Moines Register, go to: <http://ow.ly/1guNd>.

National Chicken Council (NCC) Senior VP and Economist William Roenigk pointed out that “Vertical integration is the preferred structure for the broiler chicken industry, and

contracting with individual family farmers to grow broilers is an integral and vital component of that structure.” For a copy of NCC comments, go to: <http://www.nationalchickencouncil.com/>.

National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA) President Steve Foglesong said that “Cattle producers, like other businesses, support free-market principles in the buying and selling of their cattle. This has led to innovations in our industry such as alternative marketing arrangements that give producers options. Throughout this process, we want to ensure the ability of the producer to market their cattle how and when they want to.”

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