

Angus Stakes

► by *Shauna Rose Hermel*, editor

An issue to watch

With attentions turned toward the animal rights activists, let's not lose sight of another important issue that could radically change your business: obesity — and the government's interest in actively eliminating the disease.

Good intentions

This morning's news included articles about First Lady Michelle Obama's address to the Grocery Manufacturers Association (GMA). She asked the largest food companies in America to support her "Let's Move!" campaign — which aspires to eliminate childhood obesity within a generation — by putting less fat, salt and sugar in foods.

Now there's nothing in that message that sounds ominous. Wanting healthier food choices for our nation's youth is akin to wanting world peace. Shouldn't we all want that? And it's an approach the GMA is embracing.

"GMA and its member companies share First Lady Michelle Obama's goal to solve the problem of childhood obesity. And we agree on how to get there," Richard Wolford, chairman, president and CEO of Del Monte Foods Co., and chairman of the GMA board of directors, said in a prepared statement. "In recent years, our companies have reduced calories, sugar, fat and sodium in more than 10,000 products. They have also enhanced the nutritional profile of many products with the addition of whole grains, fiber or other nutrients and created

the informative and convenient 100-calorie pack."

Wolford described changes to the way food companies are advertising and marketing their products, attention to food labels and the industry's launch of the Healthy Weight Commitment Foundation (HWCF).

"GMA's member companies are committed to providing parents and children with healthy choices, promoting healthy eating habits, enhancing nutrition knowledge, and supporting new opportunities for physical activity at school, in the work place and in our neighborhoods," Wolford said.

Sounds good, right?

He continues: "Everyone has a role to play, including government, if we are going to meet the First Lady's goal of ending childhood obesity within a generation. We look forward to continuing our work with the First Lady, the Obama Administration and Congress to help all Americans build and maintain a healthy diet."

Hmmm.

Just what is government's role?

Obviously, proactive approaches are better than regulatory ones. It's better for the industry to make positive changes itself

rather than face a "fat tax" as New York public officials are considering for sweet beverages.

But who decides what's healthy? You know from calculating cow diets that nutrients can be good or bad depending on the animal's current needs. Sometimes energy is most important; sometimes protein. Sometimes salt is needed; sometimes salt is toxic. Who says sugar is less healthy than a sugar substitute? Who's going to shoulder the responsibility when a sugar substitute is determined to be carcinogenic? What are the long-term ramifications of restricting fat in the diet?

Maybe government's role is to bring attention to the problem of obesity and the cost of poor food choices so people can exercise their freedom to choose healthier food options for their given situations.

Congratulations

Congratulations to our readership survey winners: November, Dawn Gronlund; December, Michael Hora; January, Steve Duckworth; and February, Diane Balich. These four individuals will each receive a \$25 voucher toward the purchase of Angus merchandise from the Angus Foundation or the Auxiliary Angus Sale Barn.

We love to hear comments such as "I enjoy the magazine from cover to cover" and "The *Angus Journal* has always been a 'must read'." But we also benefit from knowing which articles you do and don't read and how you rate them. And we will follow up on your requests for articles on feeding bulls and replacement heifers, pasture management, cattle handling, management techniques, etc.



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