

July 10, 2011


To the Beef Board:

It is with regret that I tender my resignation as Chairman of the Cattlemen's Beef Board. I also have notified Secretary Vilsack of my resignation from the Board. There are times when things become very clear and choices are not hard to make. My faith, my family, and my farm have always seemed to be easy to keep in order; however, they have all suffered enough. My Dad is having a real battle with ALS and I have neglected my time left with him. My wife has had to put up with all of this crap going on, and she deserves better. With Dad's illness, my farm needs more of my attention.

I am so sorry to the members of this Board who truly want what's best for every producer. Keep doing the right thing. Doing what's right is all that matters. Some board members put their allegiance to their chosen association before their oath of obligation to serve all producers who pay the checkoff. This is a dangerous position to take. The checkoff program could benefit from positive change and it is difficult to work for that when your allegiance causes you to wear blinders to the change that is needed. It will also be impossible to defend those attitudes if or when this program is challenged.

I have never in my life seen as much public defamation and misrepresentation as I've seen lately. I know many of you as friends. This kind of behavior is beneath us as people of agriculture. When I see that kind of action, I look for the real purpose behind it. More often than not, that purpose is fear—fear of change, fear of the future. Fear may cause someone to want to hide the true issues, which often are based on the desire for money and power. My resignation from this Board certainly won't solve all of the issues before the Board. You still have a lot of work to do and empty calls for "getting along" won't get you anywhere.

I was a policy guy when I came on this Board. I thought I could use that experience to make a difference. All it did was to show me how clearly this program is broken. I am going back to being that policy guy. Things have to get better, and that's going to take work.



Tom Jones