

Government should say no to ethanol

Extending subsidies to the ethanol industry is a bad idea. Ethanol is a form of alcohol that can be blended into gasoline, ostensibly to reduce "greenhouse gas emissions." Subsidies for ethanol are supposed to end today.

The truth is there's lots of science that says ethanol produces more of those emissions than straight gasoline. And, oh yes, ethanol has about one-third less energy than gasoline, so fuel with ethanol in it reduces gas mileage, which means we spend more to run our vehicles.

Ah, but ethanol in the U.S. is made primarily from corn, and what's more American than corn? It's a mainstay crop of farmers across the country because of federal agriculture subsidies.

Who could say 'no' to raising a crop the government pays you to grow even as it pays other people to turn the crop you were paid to grow into a lousy motor fuel?

The government this year has spent \$6 billion to subsidize the blending of ethanol into gasoline — that works out to about 45 cents a gallon — and also slaps a 54-cent a gallon tax on ethanol produced outside the country, where producers usually use sugar or other crops to make ethanol less expensively and more efficiently. That tax on foreign-produced ethanol helps enable our domestic producers to continue producing ethanol as inefficiently as they like.

Earlier this month, President Barack Obama's deficit reduction commission submitted its report. The commission recommended tax increases and spending cuts on items including national defense, the federal workforce and Medicare/Medicaid. Nowhere in the report was there a mention of ending the ludicrous ethanol subsidy.

What does it say about the hold the corn and ethanol industries have on government when our deficit commission can recommend cuts in national defense and Medicare and say nothing about ending ethanol spending?

This, this ... oversight? ... could be because one of the 18 commission members was one of the biggest champions of the ethanol boondoggle: Sen. Kent Conrad (D-North Dakota). He has teamed with Sen. Charles Grassley (R-Iowa) to lead the fight to extend the ethanol subsidies.

Iowa and the Dakotas do grow lots of corn. But they also have lots of farmers who use corn as food for chickens, pigs and steers, and who are seeing prices for their animal feed climb as a result of the diversion of corn to ethanol production. They also have voters who get hungry each day and who are paying higher prices on the food they eat as a result of the ethanol boondoggle. So do lawmakers all across the country.

When the ethanol subsidy ends, we'll know lawmakers are serious about ending runaway government spending. — Steve Stanek
(Steve Stanek, sstanek@heartland.org, is a research fellow at the Heartland Institute in Chicago.)

Happy New Year!

From

The Norton Telegram

Legacies can be more than just money

I wrote briefly about the Guided Writing workshop my husband and I attended as a birthday gift for him from me in my last column. Sr. Liebe, the leader of the workshop, asked that our final writing be about our own individual legacies. At first, that seemed very difficult. We are not wealthy people, so we won't be handing down large monetary gifts to our children. But of course legacies are much more than money.

From their earliest days, we tried to teach our children manners: please, thank-you, don't interrupt when another is speaking, tell the truth, do your best and be kind. They are all adults now, so our days of teaching them are past. So what can we leave as a legacy? I decided, as I wrote, the one thing I can leave my children and grandchildren is the knowledge that I have loved them and continue to love and will love them beyond the

Life is Good

Rita Speer



the day our oldest went to Kindergarten the first time and we thought, "Oh, what if he/she forgets the bus number/the way to get home or something else we knew we should have reinforced." But what we do, we do in love.

So I came to understand as I wrote that the only legacy I can leave for my children and my grandchildren is my love for them. Any things I leave for them are just that, things. But my love is unwavering, regardless of the circumstances.

I really liked the idea that Elizabeth Edwards wrote letters of guidance to all her children before she died. I have thought often of writing a letter for each of our three children, but I couldn't decide what to say. Now I know. All that matters is that I love them as unconditionally as I am humanly able to do and then let them know that they are wrapped in that love.

grave. Love — our human love for one another and our love for our children — is as close to perfection as anything on earth. Of course we err: we misjudge, we misstep, we over-protect. But we do those things because we want the very best for the person who is the object of our love. Our intentions are good. We rarely see the whole picture, so we make mistakes. We deny our children a treat, we refuse to allow them to attend some gathering, we send them out unprepared. How many of us remember

Vets can diagnose bladder problems in cats

Are you one of the millions of Americans who struggle with your cat having accidents outside the litter box? If so, it's frustrating! Accidents make life at home a challenge for both of you and your pet. Your veterinarian is the only one who can accurately assess your cat's bladder health and differentiate feline lower urinary tract disease (FLUTD) from purely behavioral causes of inappropriate urination. Diagnosis starts with a thorough history and physical exam, and a minimum data base which entails a complete blood count, blood chemistry, urinalysis, and sometimes radiographs. With the above information and a close veterinary-client-patient relationship, an accurate diagnosis can be made and a treatment plan implemented.

Cats that urinate outside the litter box have a condition that is termed inappropriate urination. When no medical reason for the inappropriate urination is found, the cat is diagnosed with idiopathic feline lower urinary tract disease. The term feline interstitial cystitis (FIC) refers to a specific type of feline idiopathic FLUTD that may be neurologically and/or behaviorally related. Two-thirds of FLUTD cases are idiopathic. Stress management can help relieve episodes

Vet tips

Dr. Sara White



therapy are very important in treatment plans. Cats love fresh water, so provide multiple sources of drinking water. Enriching your cat's environment is very important to relieving stress. There is no drug therapy that consistently controls idiopathic FLUTD.

Provide the best litter box possible. A cat may "hold it" or look for a different toilet spot if the box is too dirty. If the box is shared with other cats, is in a high traffic location, or is filled with litter the cat dislikes, it can cause problems. To minimize litter box stress, provide one box for every cat, plus one, and situate boxes throughout the home in a variety of locations. After a cat experiences painful urination, cats associate the litter box or location with discomfort, and avoid using the litter box even after the pain from FLUTD has resolved. Punishment related to litter box mishaps is not only ineffective, but can make the problem worse by increasing stress. FLUTD can happen to any cat, but multiple cat households usually have higher incidence due to higher stress levels.

If you have questions, or your beloved feline is experiencing problems, contact your veterinarian. We are here to help strengthen the human-animal bond!

of idiopathic FLUTD. It is thought that stress somehow causes a hyperactivity of the bladder and a need to urinate more frequently. Since there is no known cause of idiopathic FLUTD, treatment is very frustrating for veterinarians and owners. Missing the litter box can break the human-animal bond, costing the cat their home or even their life. Symptoms of FLUTD include increased frequency of urination, with production of small amounts of urine with or without blood. Affected cats may strain with little result, and may urinate on the bed or in the bathtub, or squat directly in front of the owner on the floor. Male cats are more likely to develop life-threatening urethral plugs that block the flow of urine. Unfortunately, approximately one-third of cats will have reoccurring episodes. Pain management, increase water intake, specific diets, and laser

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