

Do we really need a fourth "R" in schools

It used to be that there were only 3Rs a student had to learn to become successful: Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic. Mastery of these concepts along with a little ambition and drive made America an economic superpower. Now, anyone with entrepreneurial pursuits here in America must be skilled in a fourth: Regulation.

The scope of federal government involvement in the affairs of America's employers has expanded so much that it is becoming increasingly difficult not only to sustain an existing business, but to create a new business altogether. It no longer seems 'worth it' to aspire to small business ownership. It seems easier to just leave it up to someone else to create the jobs. Unfortunately, if everyone embraces this outlook, the collective wisdom of crowds will prevail, and 9.1% unemployment will seem attractive compared to the turmoil that would emerge.

The answer to America's stagnant unemployment rate is not more government, but less. The economic stimulus which was supposed to keep the unemployment rate at or below 8% ended up destroying or forestalling one million private sector jobs. With a final price tag of \$1.16 trillion, it is evident that an astronomical level of "stimulus" was in fact a poor "investment."

What grew during the stimulus experiment was the regulatory scope of Washington. While 39,284 private sector jobs have been lost every two weeks under President Obama, public sector job security has been enhanced. The passage and enactment of his health care law has added thousands of pages of new regulations which will have to be enacted, enforced, and updated by thousands of new bureaucrats. New environmental regulations promoted by this administration would add to the payrolls of the EPA, but greenhouse gas regulations would chop 1.4 million private sector jobs; cement regulations would eliminate 80,000. This, of course, is just the tip of the iceberg. The Phoenix Center recently released a study that for every one new regulator Washington adds, the private sector loses 98 jobs. This is a detrimental "output."

Excessive regulation drives government to the ends of the earth looking for small-scale "offenders." One needs look only to the USDA's pursuit of a Nixa, Missouri family that raised rescued bunny rabbits and eventually began breeding and selling rabbits. A fine of nearly \$100,000 was levied against them for selling more than \$500 worth of rabbits in a year. Failure to pay the fine, they were told, would result in \$4 million more in fines. In Western Kansas, a family business is facing thousands of dollars in fines for allowing a teenage child of an employee to operate a lawn mower.

One can only imagine the horror these families are facing right now. What may have seemed like simple, harmless ways for them to earn some extra money and to teach their children lessons about hard work are now their nightmares. There is a presumption in the law that you are to know it - ignorance of the law is not a defense - but there is no reason for laws and regulations like these to exist, particularly when warnings of these rules are not easily accessible.

Learning how to get along with government should not be the fourth classroom "R" one can "master"; rather, it should be something that can be done with great ease and little pain. American success stories are written by entrepreneurs, not the government. By Congressman Tim Huelskamp

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The juicy freshness of the watermelon diet

Jim has created a new diet. It's called "The Watermelon Diet". Here's how it works. First, you buy a watermelon and eat it. Then you buy another watermelon and eat it, too. Next, you begin buying watermelons in pairs so one can be in the fridge while one is always in reserve. We haven't progressed to the next step but, it might be he will come home with three watermelons next time he goes to the store. If I didn't know better, I would say he was pregnant.

The watermelon this year is especially tasty....and, I love watermelon as much as the next guy. But, Jim has taken watermelon consumption to a new level. However, I can't argue with the results. He's losing weight like crazy so, I don't think he's going to quit anytime soon.

Here's my advice: invest in watermelon stock.

-ob-

Harvest is just around the corner. Practically, overnight, the wheat has turned.

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



It's getting that golden hue that means it's "almost" ready. An anxious time for farmers as they wait and watch.

We have one farmer friend whose daughter is getting married Saturday. I sure hope the fields aren't ready before then. She might have to wait for her dad to come in off the combine to walk her down the aisle.

Oh, come on. You know I'm kidding.

-ob-

Sunday we had dinner out with our across-the-street neighbors.

Judy said, "Well, the other night I saw

you two doing something I thought I'd never see."

"Oh, no," I thought. Was she referring to when I slammed the pick-up door shut and told Jim if he didn't like the way I was backing the trailer, he could do it himself?

"What was that?" I innocently asked. She answered, "Oh, it was after dark and you were shining the truck lights so Jim could see where to mow. It sounded like a combine coming down the street."

Her husband added, "Now, that's what I call togetherness."

Whew! Our secret is safe. Nobody will know we aren't the "perfect" couple. We have our little spats like everyone else. But, here's the real secret. We get over our disagreements just as fast as we have them. We have this commitment "thing" going. Divorce is not a consideration. Homicide maybe; but, not divorce.

Happy as a clam, eating on the Virginia Coast

Insight

John Schlageck

As a consumer who enjoys eating a wide variety of fine food, I always relish the opportunity to learn more about where it comes from, how it's grown and the men and women who provide such feasts for our dinner plates.

I enjoyed just such an experience last week when I traveled to the Virginia coast and spent four days eating every clam, oyster, blue crab, shrimp and some of the finest seafood in the land.

Heck, I didn't eat anything but bivalves and fish until the last night I was in Virginia. That's when I was forced to eat a juicy filet mignon to prep my land legs for back home and the wonderful pork, lamb and beef our Kansas farmers and ranchers raise.

Incidentally, bivalves (clams) have a shell consisting of two asymmetrically rounded halves called valves that are mirror images of each other, joined at one edge by a flexible ligament called the hinge.

I devour at least a dozen raw oysters a day whenever I'm on the coast. This tradition started for me 40 years ago when I went to Florida the first time while serving in the U.S. Army. I enjoyed my share of oysters during this trip as well. I also ate large quantities of littlenecks and middlenecks - the stuff great clambakes are made of.

The difference from previous visits to Virginia's Eastern Shores, the clams we ate this time were raised in a controlled environment from conception to cultivation. That's right, clam farmers are providing these tasty treats to much of this country's restaurants and groceries.

On this visit I had the opportunity to visit Cherrystone Aqua Farms. This farm provides 85-million clams each year. There are times when 1-million clams are shipped out of the Northampton County facility in a single day.

"Our farm enables us to harvest clams year-round," Ron Crumb, vice-president of the Cherrystone Aqua Farms told us on the tour.

That makes the company happy as a clam to know its customers are eating fresh, consistent quality bivalves. Cherrystone is one of the largest producers of aquaculture clams in the United States. Today it's part of Ballard Fish and Oyster Co., Inc. a seafood company that's been around since 1895.

The clams are grown in the high salinity waters of their namesake, Cherrystone Creek. Cherrystone clams are grown in the ocean-flushed waters around the Eastern Shore.

Bivalves begin life onsite in a hatchery. Workers at the plant bring adult clams into a building and place them in 66-degree water that is ideal for spawning.

After the eggs are fertilized, they are placed in containers of algae-rich water. Some of these six-foot tall tanks are brown, forest green, lime green - they look like a modern-day Frankenstein laboratory.

The larvae are microscopic and look like granules of sand. After they grow

bigger, about the size of a pencil eraser, they are moved into trays of sand in shallow-water beds for approximately three months.

It takes a clam 2 1/2 to 3 years to grow from egg to market size. Once harvested, clams and oysters are immediately cleaned, packed, refrigerated and shipped fresh all across our country. Littlenecks at Cherrystone are shipped out within 24 hours of being harvested. They're sold to wholesalers fresh, live and in the shell.

Like an increasing number of food producers today, littleneck clams from Cherrystone Aqua Farms are grown without the use of antibiotics, steroids or other feed additives.

Believe me, after eating several dozen of these tasty morsels last week, littleneck clams could certainly be considered one of the perfect foods. High-protein, low-calorie, lip smackin' delicious these little babies weigh in at only 100 calories per serving (12 clams).

Littlenecks have special oils rich in omega-3 and fatty acids - all good for us. Now that I realize I can buy these locally, fresh and alive, I'll definitely eat more of them. After all, it's easy to substitute clams for other protein foods in stir-fry dishes, salads, soups and pasta recipes.

Clams with garlic, olive oil and a squirt of lemon anyone?

John Schlageck is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. Born and raised on a diversified farm in northwestern Kansas, his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.



Thumbs up to all who helped with the 4-H Day Camp! The kids had a great time. Called in.

Thumbs up to each and everyone involved with putting on the Lenora Jubilee. It was another great year to attend. We know that a lot of hard work went in to putting it on and it is greatly appreciated. It is something pretty special to have in our rural area. Thanks again. Emailed in.

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