

**Leland Neal Hill**

April 16, 1927 - Dec. 25, 2002

Leland Neal Hill was born in Cheyenne County, Kan., on April 16, 1927, to Merl Melvin and Stella Lourine (Todd) Hill. He was the eldest of 12 children. He died on Christmas morning, 2002, at the age of 78 years, 8 months and 8 days.

He began his education in a Cheyenne County rural school, but transferred to St. Francis Grade School during his primary years, attending St. Francis Community High School during 1941-1945, received a bachelor of arts degree in education from Ft. Hays Kansas State College in 1958, took graduate classes at Pittsburg State University in Pittsburg and received a master's degree in education from Northwestern State University in Alva, Okla., in 1973.

Neal was always a conscientious, dedicated worker. During his boyhood and youth, he had various after-school jobs including *Grit* newspaper carrier, farm work, *The St. Francis Herald*, the movie theater, service stations and others. "Mick" was a nick-name he acquired while working at the news office. When an adolescent, he was baptized in the Christian Church.

Immediately before his 18th birthday, Neal enlisted in the Navy as a Seabee, participated on Navy

wrestling teams, and was stationed in the Philippines during World War II. He was awarded medals for the Asiatic Pacific Occupation, Naval Occupation, World War II Victory, the Asiatic Pacific Campaign and the American Theatre Campaign Ribbon. Honorable discharged in August 1946, he resumed work at *The St. Francis Herald*. In the fall of 1951 he moved to Goodland and worked at the *Goodland Daily News* and the *Sherman County Herald*. During 1958-1968, Neal taught English and journalism in Sherman County High School in Goodland, and was the wrestling coach a few of those years. He taught English and journalism and was the golf coach in Ashland High School, Ashland, during 1968-1989. Due to ill health, Neal retired in 1989.

Neal married Betty Eileen Gotchall on Dec. 20, 1952, in the Methodist Church in Raton, N.M. They were both rebaptized preceding the marriage ceremony. Neal and Betty made their home in Kanorado, later moving to Goodland, to Hays, back to Goodland, to Ashland, and then back to Goodland. They recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in Minneola where Neal was hospitalized. To this union three children were born: Kathi Lourine, Lauri Kay and Jerry Kurtis. Neal taught his children the importance of dependability, honesty, integrity and morality.

Neal had a great sense of humor as well as an enormous appreciation for nature in which he especially enjoyed hunting, fishing, camping and golfing. Enjoyable indoor ac-

tivities included poetry writing, solving crossword puzzles, playing cards and watching television. He was a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Lowell Coleman Post #1133.

He was preceded in death by his parents: Merl and Stella; two brothers Laddie and Jerry; daughter Kathi Lou; two sisters-in-law Jo and Bonnie Hill, and nephew Scott Hill.

He is survived by his wife Betty; daughter Lauri Kay and husband Tracy Townsend; son Kurt; three grandchildren Amanda, Lauren and Kurtis; seven brothers and spouses: Ted, Ron and Dot, Bill, Ed and Barbara, Dale and Bonnie, Larry and Craig and Becky; two sisters and spouses: Dolores and Doyle Hall, and Sandra and Ken Swann; two brothers-in-law and spouses: Lee and Lila Gotchall and Tom and Ruth Gotchall; sister-in-law Lorna Tovrea; 15 nephews, 18 nieces and many other relatives and friends.

The funeral service was held at the First United Methodist Church in Goodland with Rev. Lorna Gotchall Tovrea officiating. Music was performed by soloist Melissa Fulton and organist Carol Guyer.

Honorary casket bearers were: Ted Hill, Ron Hill, Bill Hill, Ed Hill, Craig Hill, Tracy Townsend, Lee Gotchall and Tom Gotchall. Casket bearers were: Dale Hill, Larry Hill, Terry Gotchall, Larry Gotchall, Frank Walls and Warren Milne.

The graveside service was held in St. Francis with full military honors presented by a U.S. Army squad from Ft. Riley, Kan.

Knodel Funeral Home was in charge of the arrangements.

# Feedlot owner files lawsuit against KC-based meat packer

By Eric Palmer  
The Kansas City Star

Kansas City-based Farmland National Beef used its market power to punish a small Kansas cattle feeder that publicly criticized the giant meat packing operation, according to a lawsuit filed in Kansas City.

The lawsuit in U.S. District Court alleges Farmland National Beef quit buying cattle from Callicrate Feedyards in St. Francis because Mike Callicrate publicly criticized Farmland and other large meat packers for having too much market power.

The lawsuit seeks actual damages of \$5,345,000, as well as punitive damages and attorney's fees.

Callicrate's lawsuit is similar to a complaint filed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture against National Beef in 1999. The United States Department of Agriculture alleged National Beef used its market muscle to retaliate against Mr. Callicrate. The United States Department of Agriculture dropped that complaint last year after National Beef agreed to repay the government the cost of the investigation.

That administrative action did not keep Farmland from continuing to refuse to buy cattle from him at competitive prices, Mr. Callicrate said. The result, he said, is that he must now close his feed yard.

"None of the meat packers will buy from me," Mr. Callicrate said. "I have already let 12 people go that worked in the feed yard."

John Miller, chief executive of Farmland National Beef, said Mr. Callicrate's lawsuit was without merit.

"National Beef's conduct with respect to Mr. Callicrate has always been fair and lawful," Mr. Miller said in a prepared statement.

He said that when Farmland National Beef settled the complaint with the United States Department of Agriculture, the agency's order found that National Beef was not required to buy from any particular producer.

"National Beef owes an obligation to its customers and owners to buy the highest-quality cattle at the lowest possible price," Mr. Miller said.

Farmland National Beef is a partnership of Kansas City-based Farmland Industries Inc. and U.S. Premium Beef Ltd. It operates beef processing plants in Dodge City and Liberal.

Farmland Industries, the country's largest farmer-owned cooperative, has been operating under bankruptcy court protection since May 31. But the National Beef partnership is not part of the bankruptcy proceedings.

Mr. Callicrate has been an active critic of the consolidation in the meat processing industry, which has concentrated about 80 percent of that business in the hands of four major companies. Farmland National Beef is the country's fourth-largest beef processing company.

The lawsuit points out Mr. Callicrate was a plaintiff in a class-

action lawsuit against meat packer IBP for allegedly uncompetitive practices at the time Farmland began its boycott.

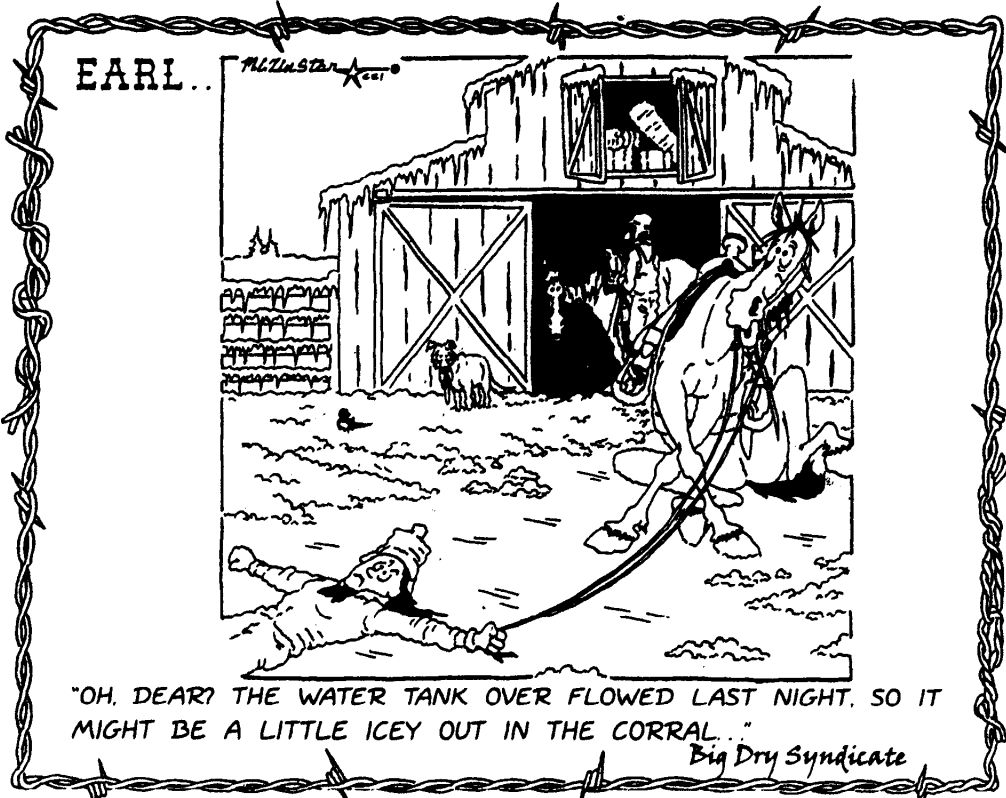
Mr. Callicrate said Farmland National Beef has the closest meat processing plant to his feed yard and does most of the cattle buying in the area. The company was his main customer for 12 years before it essentially stopped buying from him in 1998 after he and an employee spoke out against the prices National Beef was offering to cattle ranchers who sold direct to the company.

The new lawsuit alleges National Beef violated the Packers and Stockyards Act of 1921 and the Kansas Consumer Protection Act. The suit says both acts forbid retaliating against a critic, boycotting a cattle feeder and engaging in any act or practice to promote a monopoly "including a local or regional monopoly."

The fact the federal government settled the United States Department of Agriculture's complaint without a finding of fault does not preclude Mr. Callicrate from filing his own action, said David Domina, the Omaha, Neb., attorney who filed the suit.

He believes there has been no political will for years to enforce federal laws against anti-competitive practices in the meat industry.

"This is why other people won't speak out," Mr. Callicrate said. "As result we are going to lose our markets and our domestic cattle industry. So much for free speech."



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