



Other Viewpoints

Stay level-headed about farm subsidy

Sen. Pat Roberts had it right. Don't take a "Lizzie Borden" ax to ethanol subsidies. Roberts' inventive humor notwithstanding, he had a larger point. The idea of rushing to cut subsidies for farm commodities and crop insurance is more than a little facile. Yes, we need to reduce federal spending. (We also need to raise federal revenue.)

But the part played by farm support programs in the big budget picture is not large. In a tough year those programs may amount to \$25 billion in a total federal budget of \$3.4 trillion.

Just because the tea party took hold in the Great Plains last fall does not mean all our elected lawmakers should abandon the ship of support for farm subsidies.

Our economic interests remain tied to farm supports and the rural development programs that accompany them.

The case for cutting deeply into direct farm supports is basically political, not economic or fiscal. The case for eliminating those supports is short-sighted.

In the long run, those elected officials from our territory who stand up for the interests of our farmers and the communities they support will be rewarded.

The hot knife of fiscal conservatives, urban and rural, in Washington needs to be cooled.

— *The Winfield Daily Courier, via The Associated Press*

Where to write, call

U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774
roberts.senate.gov/public/

U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran, 354 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510 (202) 228-6966. Fax (202) 225-5124 moran.senate.gov/public/

U.S. Rep. Tim Huelskamp, 126 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715 or Fax (202) 225-5124. Web site: huelskamp.house.gov

State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol Building, 300 SW10th St., Room 225-E., Topeka, Kan. 66612, (785) 296-7399 ralph.ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us

State Rep. Rick Billinger, Docking Building, Room 754, Topeka Kan., 66612, (785) 296-7659 rick.billinger@house.ks.gov

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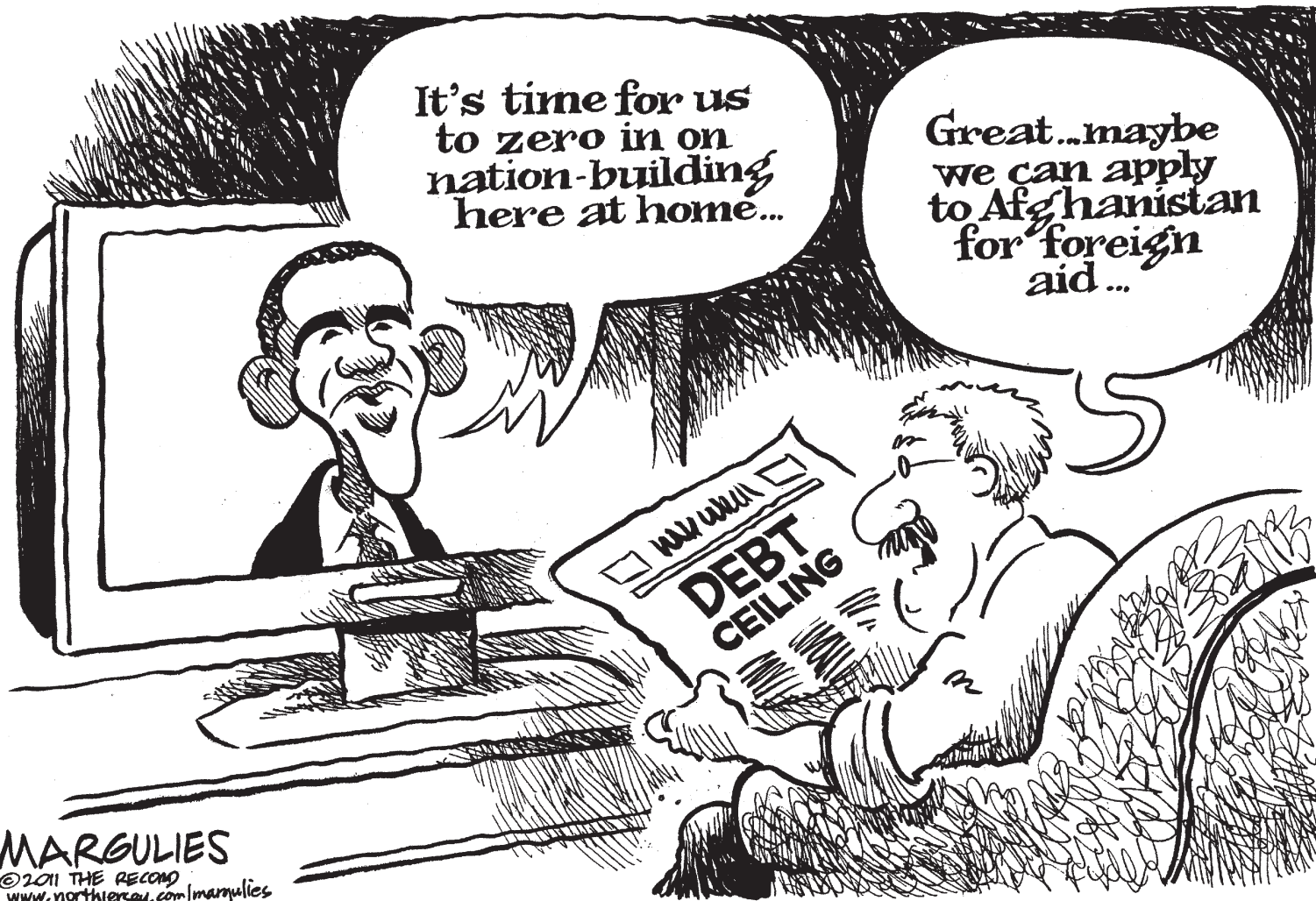
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Sad eyes take a pup a long ways in life

Big sad eyes watch me eat my dinner. Trying to seem small, he creeps closer to me and thinks that I won't notice him getting closer. Boy is he ever wrong. If I try to ignore those eyes he puts his chops on the arm of the couch and sighs as if to say "I'm still here." It is quite funny to watch him shuffle quietly trying to get my attention. By now he should know that he has stolen my heart.

When you lose your heart to a bloodhound, you enter a whole new world of adventure. When Noah first came into our lives we didn't have a clue about how much maintenance would be needed to keep our house in some semblance of order. Now it all seems routine and you just do it without thinking. You are probably wondering how much maintenance there could be on a shorthaired big dog. Well, let me fill you in.

Shedding with a bloodhound means hair in every corner of your world. I don't mean a little hair, I mean giant rolling balls of hair in corners and dancing across the bedroom floor. When you pet Noah your hand comes back with red hairs everywhere. One of my favorite games is to go into the backyard and massage him and watch the flying hairballs blowing in the wind.

The birds like this game. I watch them from the kitchen window as they grab great big pieces of the hair and hightail it to their nests. I have seen some of the nests filled with Noah



Sharon Friedlander

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hair and just bet the babies are very comfy with the hair lining.

Every item of clothing and linen in the house gets a covering in the same red hair as the nests. Running around in your socks means that they look like they need a shave. Sometimes I toss our blankets into the dryer to get the extra hair off and am always amazed at how much shows up in the lint tray. I could probably weave us another dog from just the hair in the lint tray.

Bloodhounds are blessed with wet mouths. The wet helps with their scenting, but not with keeping your walls, furniture, clothing and floors clean. I guess the shoestrings drools must have been in the fine print that I didn't read. The large print said they could shake their heads and sling the drool 20 feet. Personally I think that is an underestimate. I swear the dog just grins when I fill my cleaning bucket, grab my rags and announce that I am on drool patrol. He doesn't seem to mind when I scrub his artwork off the walls, but instead thinks it is a giant game of keep away with the rags.

Oh, yeah, did I mention that bloodhounds will eat anything – and I mean anything. You have to be quick and aware to win the keep-away game. He loves to steal and run.

He seems to think we should chase after him until he gets tired instead of just using the mom tone to call his name. When he hears this tone, his head drops, his tail drops, but the rag he swiped doesn't. He wants to be sure that you are really serious about wanting it back.

When he finally gives up, you do feel like you are being really mean. It's those great big eyes again.

Those big eyes can make you so happy – or nearly break your heart with just a quick glance. Sometimes he just looks at you as if to say "I love you" or "I am sorry."

I haven't been able to stay mad at him since we got him and sometimes it is all I can do to not laugh out loud and let him know he has won after all.

Never raise your voice to a bloodhound unless you have a heart of stone. They will just give you the look of complete "what did I do" and you will feel about an inch tall.

They know when they have done wrong and will do anything to make it up to you – so be prepared to be won over by the big sad eyes.

Sharon Friedlander, publisher of the Colby Free Press, enjoys reading, hot rods and critters. Contact her at sfriedlander @ nwkansas.com.

Farmers are not truckers

Just in case you've been busy cutting wheat, spraying weeds, hauling feed or water to your hungry cattle or selling some of your livestock at the sale barn and you haven't had a spare moment to hear the news – the Federal Motor Carriers Safety Administration recently released a 30-day request for public comment on a series of transportation issues directly related to production agriculture.

What the government is concerned about is the movement of commodities grown and raised on the farm/ranch. You know wheat, corn, beans, cattle and other livestock.

The first fly in the ointment I have already mentioned. Farmers and ranchers already have their hands full with planting fall crops, wheat harvest and caring for their livestock. Thirty days is not enough time for ag producers to review and contemplate the likely impacts on their operations and respond.

Farmers and ranchers are willing and able to weigh in on this important discussion, says Steve Baccus, Kansas Farm Bureau president who farms in Ottawa County.

"We're eager to help Washington-based regulators understand that a farm truck is not an over-the-road motor carrier," Baccus says.

Sen. Pat Roberts (Kansas) is pushing for a



John Schlageck

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Kansas Farm Bureau

90-day period to allow farm and ranch families the opportunity to fully understand the potential impacts of the issues involved and to provide thoughtful and constructive comments to the agency.

Here's the real kicker. If adopted, regulatory guidance recently published by the feds will mean farmers/stockmen moving a single cow to the local sale barn in a 16-foot trailer will fall under the same regulatory regime as Yellow Freight or J.B. Hunt.

There's a big difference between a farmer hauling his own grain down the road a few miles to his country elevator and a trucking company transporting appliances across several states. For-profit truckers have the capital and manpower to handle these chores, farmers don't.

"Farmers farm for a living and truckers transport products" Baccus says. "Farmers produce crops and livestock and haul them to market so people in this country and around the world have food."

Our government believes there's lack of a uniform definition of "implements of husbandry." They further note that many states exempt tractors, combines and other farm equipment from vehicle safety regulations.

At this time the agency believes implements of husbandry and off-road agricultural equipment don't meet the definition of a commercial motor vehicle, but officials are asking if they should.

Secondly, federal officials question whether a producer hauling commodities to market, part of which is his and part his landlord's, should be considered "for hire."

"In Kansas, we believe if the farmer transporting the commodity also raised the commodity, it shouldn't matter," Baccus says. "However, if the government puts farmers in the category of 'for hire' carriers, they would be regulated like commercial truckers."

Even more alarming is the issue of interstate versus intrastate commerce. In terms of grain and livestock movement, agriculture has long operated under the belief that hauling a farmer/rancher's own commodities within 150 miles of the farm/ranch was exempt from regulation.

Long ago Congress distinguished agricultural transportation from commercial because it is typically seasonal in nature and occurs over relatively short distances.

This country became a global power because of its infrastructure and its ability to transport crops, livestock, automobiles and other goods fast and efficiently. Exporting U.S. crops to other parts of the world will do us no good if this nation can't get the grain off the farm, out of the field and ultimately onto the barges and other shipping containers for transport around the world.

Kansas agriculture, and agriculture across this nation, has its work cut out for it on this transportation issue. Farmers will rapidly lose their competitive edge if they are subjected to overzealous regulation.

John Schlageck of the Kansas Farm Bureau is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. He grew up on a diversified farm near Seguin, and his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.



Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

