

# Let Congress vote on trade pacts, Mr. Obama

When I stop and think about how quickly we exchange information and ideas with people across the globe, I am astonished.

In a matter of seconds you can transmit your voice and picture to someone thousands of miles away. In a matter of hours, you can travel to another continent. But what you cannot do is sell our goods to people in certain countries. It's neither technology nor transport that's the impediment, either.

Sitting in the White House right now are pending trade agreements with Colombia, Panama and Korea. They have been ready to go for months and years, but remain on the President's desk. We can exchange e-mails with and visit people in these three nations, but if these agreements are ratified, Kansans will be able to sell their goods and products to people there also.

If the president would submit these three agreements to Congress, they would be approved swiftly. Democrats and Republicans alike in



**On the Potomac**  
By Rep. Tim Huelskamp  
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both the House and the Senate have already expressed their support for expanding trade with these nations. There are often disputes in Congress, but members of both parties understand the significant economic impact these agreements would provide to each of the 50 states.

With unemployment high, manufacturing declining and overall economic growth stagnating, these agreements would provide immediate relief and opportunity to reverse these trends. Like every other state in the nation, Kansas would benefit both in economic activity and job creation.

According to the Kansas Farm Bureau, our state is likely export \$106 million a year in agricultural goods to Korea, \$21 million to Colombia and \$1 million to Panama. This is not chump change; this would provide a much-needed boost to our rural communities in particular.

More than a thousand new jobs would be supported. And, what's more, trade-related jobs pay up to 18 percent more than average. When Washington is in search of an easy – and inexpensive – way to get Americans back to work and money back in their pockets, this is

a golden ticket.

In our global marketplace, we cannot afford to wait. One need only look to the new agreement between the European Union and Korea as an example of the opportunity created by opening trade between the U.S. and Korea.

On July 1, Europe and Korea began a new agreement; the first two weeks saw a nearly 20 percent increase in trade volume for the union. The U.S. would likely see similar surges. If Kansas could have the opportunity to trade on better terms with Korea – particularly beef – the gain would be ours. According to some estimates, every \$1 billion in beef exports to Korea would create 12,700 jobs.

Members of both parties anxiously await receipt of these trade agreements from the White House, so it is my hope that when Congress is back in session in September, the President will send them immediately.

Every day that goes by without

ratification will likely include more negative economic indicators. Every day that passes, economists will continue to scratch their heads, wondering from where the recovery will come.

These trade agreements may not be the full solution, but they are certainly one key piece of the puzzle of getting our economy back in shape.

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## Volunteers made carnival success

To the Editor:

When I first started on the Decatur County Amusement Authority board with others who had never been on before, we were, to say the least, overwhelmed. The first year was a struggle to learn how and when to do things, and without the help of some of the previous group, we would not have made it.

Each year, we have made minor and major improvements. We've had volunteers come forward to help, and we've had more help each and every year. We've added rides and hope to add another next year. We've ordered new storage units for the toys and supplies, and offered the old trailers for sale.

We try to improve the quality and safety of everything, re-investing our money as we can. Financially,

## Who runs the checkoff?

To the Editor,

In regards to recent remarks by Bill Donalds, president of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, might I just remind all of you that we tried to get a handle on the checkoff.

First, how did it get to this place with the issue of misappropriation of funds at all? Remember that thousands of producers signed on with the Livestock Marketing Association "referendum" challenge several years ago only to get stopped by the Cattlemen. Why did we not get to fix it then and have the ability to vote on the board, direction and messages we would have liked to have? It is simple: just one big happy fraternity with a lot of cash!

We as checkoff-paying producers know the abuses that happened. We also know that the fox (the Cattlemen) isn't going to protect the chickens, or in our case, the "wolf" isn't going to protect the calves.

Go figure; we can't even in the United States (with the best retail market in the world) promote our own "Product of the USA" for our cattle producers' benefit with a well-funded checkoff system that we all pay for.

So, the next time you read about how they are going to "improve the system," ask just how much one of those full-page ads cost.

I am not throwing any stones, but I don't like being lied to, either. So divest your fraternity ties and let each individual organization, the Cattlemen and the Cattlemen's Beef Board, stand alone. There is far more to this subject than in print, and I ask that each of you personally get involved and not to buy into the political garbage that we are fed every day. I believe those on these boards all should be held accountable for dereliction of duty and failure of fiduciary responsibility as board members. Either they were asleep or just yes men to the system.

Accountability starts when you take a seat on any board. By being a yes person on the board doesn't exempt you from your responsibilities as a member for the use of producers' money collected by those who pay with hard earned dollars.

The Cattlemen and the board need to prove the change. We should demand a "USA Produced Beef" label; it will do far more good for our producers than any product labeled from Mexico and Canada. Ask any consumer if it matters; many tell me they now pay closer attention to the origin labels.

By the way, we need to tell the World Trade Organization and the congressional supporters to take a hike or find a new job. This battle is all about competition to the best

## Letters to the Editor

we've helped out the county Fair Board, as we give a percentage of our earnings to the Decatur County commission each year, and we even managed to donate \$2,000 to the bowling alley project.

This year has by far been the best! We have a full roster of members, of all ages, with great ideas and the energy to implement them. We've had more help putting up and tearing down the rides than ever before. We have young people getting involved, and they are realizing that without volunteer help, things do not get done.

Whenever I've become frustrated, or just felt we weren't doing

something right, I think back to the original group that began this Home-Owned Carnival. I can't imagine the hours, money and muscle they needed to get this going and keep it going every year. Until you have helped, you have no idea what it takes. I have been blessed to work with people whose only concern was to do the best job that we could and bring smiles to people's faces.

I am so proud to be part of a group built on the values of community, fellowship and volunteerism. When you get right down to it, it's the volunteers that do it.

Whether they help with a ride, game, concession, donations, putting the fair up and taking it down, or even picking up trash, they do it because they want to help. They don't ask for anything, and they don't expect anything. They do it because it needs to be done, simple as that. I would like to let them know

how much we appreciate them and express my gratitude for what they contribute to the community.

In closing, I would just like to say that through all the difficulties, frustration, weather, hard work and deadlines, when I walk around the fairground during fair week and see children screaming in delight because they won an animal or were thrilled on a ride, my heart just melts.

When the parents and grandparents can sit on a bench and visit, knowing that the kids are safe having a good time, and when they run out of tickets or money, they'll be back, it makes me appreciate where I grew up and how glad I am to have helped in some small way.

When the volunteers check and double check to see if we need help, I like to think that's what the founders had in mind. Tradition. Good old small-town, take-care-of-each other tradition.

God bless you all.

Judy G. Scott, president  
Decatur County  
Amusement Authority

market in the world, the U.S.A!

Mike Schultz, Brewster  
chairman, R-CALF USA Country  
of Origin Labeling Committee

# There's No Place Like Home

By Eunice Boeve  
Illustrated by Michelle Meade

## Chapter 1 Worry and Fear

Jack jerked awake. Mr. Crawford stood beside Mollie's desk. He knew his twin had also fallen asleep, for her head was down on her arms, although her hair, as red as his own, hid her face from him.

"Mollie," Mr. Crawford said, and her head bobbed up, her eyes flying open. A few of the kids giggled and her face flushed with embarrassment.

They managed to stay awake the rest of the afternoon, but after class Mr. Crawford called them aside.

"I'm concerned about you two. You are both excellent students, but your grades are slipping. If this continues, I'll have to talk to your parents."

The twins looked at each other and then back at their fourth-grade teacher.

"We'll go to bed earlier," Mollie said.

Mr. Crawford sighed. "Well, run along now before you miss your bus. But if you ever want to talk I'm available."

They rode the bus in silence and in silence, walked the quarter mile from the bus stop to their old farmhouse. They wished they could tell Mr. Crawford how worried and sad and scared they were. *But, no way was he going to believe anything about a time machine.*

Ever since the night they had eavesdropped on their parents, they'd dreaded coming home. Every day they wondered if their old dog waited for them on the porch, his head on his paws, or if Dad had taken him to the vet to be put to sleep.

"Why do they say 'put to sleep'?" Mollie said.

"Because it sounds better," Jack said. Their old dog, part collie and part

something else, used to meet them at the bus stop before he got so old and crippled. Now he could barely get up and down the porch steps, and if they had to move to Grandpa and Grandma's they couldn't take him, and at 15 he was too old to be adopted.

They had always thought it was so funny that Dad, who got him from the pound as a puppy, had named him Dog.

"A stupid name," Mom once said with a grin, "but it fits him."

Now, nothing was funny.

Coming in sight of the house, the twins hardly dared breathe, but there he was in his usual place on the porch. Their book bags, bouncing, they ran up the porch steps and, as they knelt to hug him, silent tears fell on his soft, brown coat.

Each day that Dog lay on the porch, waiting for them, gave them hope that somehow the terrible, awful news they'd

still have the time needed to build and perfect the machine. But that night the twins learned it had not been enough.

"We knew it would be a costly venture," they'd heard their dad say. "But not this costly. Maybe we should go back to working full-time jobs and try again in a few years."

"If we don't," their mother had said, "we'll lose the farm."

Their dad's next words had really startled them. "We'll have to borrow a truck and wait until after dark to move the time machine to a storage unit. Otherwise, the news media will be swarming all over us, wanting a story."

"And because it doesn't work yet, we'll be seen as a couple of weird kooks," their mom added.

The twins had looked at each other in horror. They could both imagine the kids' reactions at school; the teasing, the snickering, the outright laughing.

"If we just had a little more time," their dad had said.

"We can't hold out much longer." Their mom's voice had sounded sad. "I hate it for the kids. They've gone without so much. It takes all our time and money and we've so little left for them."

Her voice had softened. "They are such good kids. Some kids would be whining over not having the latest gadget, but they rarely complain."

"I don't know what to do next. We've sold everything we can." Their dad had paused before adding, "Our kids are the only things of value we have left."

With a snort of a laugh, their mom had said, "Well, we can't sell our kids."

"They wouldn't?" Mollie had mouthed to Jack.

"No!" he'd hissed. "Don't be stupid. Of course she was being stupid. Mom and Dad loved them more than time machines or farms or anything."

Then they'd heard the terrible, awful part. If they lost the farm, they'd have to go live with Grandpa and Grandma Andrews in Hutchinson. That would mean a new school where they wouldn't know anyone at all, and Dog... *What would they do with Dog?* Grandpa Andrews was very allergic to dog hair.

"We'll have to have Dog put to sleep," Dad had said, just like he'd heard their thoughts, "He's too old to be adopted."

"I feel like we're falling apart." Mom's voice had sounded raggedly like she was

trying to hold back tears. "I wish..."

"I know, sweetheart," their dad's voice had also held tears.

Hearing those tears in their parents' voices had sent them scrambling back up the stairs to Mollie's room. Sitting on her bed they'd tried to talk away their fear. They'd both agreed that it was an awesome thing to have their very own parents discover the secret to time travel and build a machine that might one day take people back into time. But they couldn't help but wish they were more like regular parents.

They'd have their tenth birthdays next month and there were lots of things they wanted, although they wouldn't get much, and now, maybe nothing at all, but they couldn't help but want something, even if it wasn't much.

"It's not fair," Jack had said. "Mom and Dad had worked so hard and for what?"

Mollie had seen the anger spark in her brother's eyes, the exact shade of brown as her own, as he said, "We don't have anything like other kids have. And Dog..."

"Don't say it!" Mollie had said, swallowing tears. "Just don't say it."

*To Be Continued.*

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