MILKING AND THINKING

CHARACTERS:

JESS: DAIRY FARMER

RANDY: BLUEBERRY FARMER

FARM CHORUS: Similar to the Greek Chorus in Greek plays – in this case the entire audience

JESS:

Hi Randy.

RANDY:

Hi Jess.

JESS:

How ya doing?

RANDY:

Fine. Got myself a whole bunch of organic blueberries ready to harvest. Real beautiful they are.

JESS:

Why that’s great. With a good price they’ll bring a good income.

RANDY:

Yup. And what about yourself?

JESS:

Well, my herd of milk cows are giving lots of milk. And they’re real happy and healthy. Hoping it’s going to be a good year for milk prices.

RANDY:

Well, that’s great Jess. It’s about time us farmers got some income. You know farmers are the forgotten part of the economy.

JESS:

Forgotten?

RANDY:

Yup. People don’t think about how fundamental farming is to civilization. Without farming, year in and year out, our cities would not exist, nor our industry, nor our arts and science. Our civilization has been created by people working, expending energy, creating and building. And all the people need food every day to get their energy to build and work.

FARM CHORUS:

Hallelujah, hallelujah.

All wealth comes from the earth.

Hallelujah, hallelujah.

Without farmers we are doomed.

JESS:

I agree Randy. Why, not only all people but all industry needs the products from the raw materials producer -- farmers and miners, lumberers and fishers, even recycling. Without raw materials, industry can produce nothing.

RANDY:

Yup. People don’t think about farmers that way. They don’t know that the farmers’ production is the foundation of our national economy.

FARM CHORUS:

Hallelujah, hallelujah.

All wealth comes from the earth.

Hallelujah, hallelujah.

Without the farmers –-- doom.

JESS:

We don’t show up in the national papers, except maybe when the Farm Bill is up for passage in Congress. We need a national media that talks about the primary role of farmers and farming in our country.

RANDY:

Well, the other day I heard a lady on a national radio program. She was talking about meditation. A person called in to ask, “What is a farmer thinking about when he’s milking his cow?”

JESS: [LAUGHS LOUD AND LONG]

Oh, I love that! Let’s see. I wonder what we’re thinking about.

RANDY: [PRETENDING TO MILK A COW]

Well… yes, yes, yes … what a great udder. Feels really fine.

JESS:

Or how about … [ PRETENDS TO BE MILKING] ‘Why, the wife’s breasts are as soft and round as this udder. Got to tell the wife my thought tonight and see what she does with that.

RANDY:

Or … perhaps the farmer is thinking about how he is like a bird, except the bird is better off.

JESS:

What do you mean?

RANDY:

Well, farmers and birds … the bird is better off than the debt-ridden farmer, because at least the bird can make a deposit.

[PAUSES TO SEE IF JOKE WAS UNDERSTOOD]

JESS: [LAUGHS LOUD AND LONG]

I get it, Randy. I get it. That’s a good one! Our farmer is milking his cow and thinking ‘how am I gonna pay the bank the next payment on that loan?' Or, maybe he’s thinking about his neighbor Abner who had to give up his farm because he went bankrupt.

RANDY:

Perhaps the farmer is thinking about how he is in the same boat as students with 100,000 dollars in college debt, or people living hand to mouth, month by month, or increasing credit card debt, or how the national debt is twenty trillion dollars.

JESS:

Why, he’s probably sitting there pressing down on that wonderful udder and thinking ‘what the hell is twenty trillion dollars’ and ‘who does our country pay interest to for god-awful twenty trillion dollars?’

RANDY:

Or maybe he gets more and more upset thinking about all this debt and he squeezes that warm delicious udder too hard, and the cow gets really upset and kicks the milk bucket over.

FARM CHOURS:

Hallelujah. Spill the milk.

Hallelujah. Dust to dust

Hallelujah, Hallelujah --- moooo!

JESS:

We all got to put our heads together – farmers, workers, business owners, manufacturers, retailers, and most … most of all… consumers, which we all are. Yeah. We need to do some educating. Since 1952 five million family farms have been liquidated. Liquidated by too low prices. If 1952 gave the farmer a proper price for his products, 2017 only gives him 34% of that price. If the food in 2017 has the same nutritional value as it did in 1952, why the ridiculous low prices? Who is manipulating the value of our labor and our production?

RANDY:

Well, you know Jess, here’s an interesting fact-–-farming and its products make up 70% of all the raw materials produced each year in our nation, such as cotton, wheat, beef. All from nature. It’s a gift of nature the farmer gets each year. Sun, rain, soil and labor gives us the food to feed everyone everyday.

And, Jess, let me repeat myself -- we wouldn’t have any manufacturing, unless we had raw materials from nature.

JESS:

Yep, it would be good if city people could think that way.

RANDY:

Without the farmer working with nature to produce his crops and livestock, our economy would cease.

FARM CHORUS:

Hallelujah, hallelujah.

All wealth comes from the earth.

Hallelujah, hallelujah.

Without farmers we are doomed.

JESS:

Maybe that’s what the farmer milking his cow is thinking, ‘Without me, everything collapses.’

RANDY:

And he wouldn’t be crazy. Even though a city person might think so.

JESS:

But then, how do we get rid of all our debt?

RANDY:

We need prosperity. What I mean by that is a good-paying job for everyone.... in an economy where wealth is being created and enjoyed because everyone has enough income to buy the goods and services.

JESS:

Well, now Randy. You’re seeming a little crazy to this here farmer. [POINTS TO HIMSELF]

RANDY:

Okay, Jess. I hear you. But some folks do have a knowledge of history and can point to times when the entire country was prosperous. Employment was increasing and debt was decreasing.

JESS:

What made that happen?

RANDY:

Some folks in the 1930’s figured out how the economy worked. It was a ‘macro-economic’ analysis because it was based on all the parts of the economy – farmers, miners, manufacturers, distributors, retailers. It came to be called ‘raw materials economics’ because the success of the system depended on the raw materials producers getting a proper price for their production, thereby ensuring the entire economy prospered.

JESS:

‘Macro-economics?'

RANDY:

Yes, producers, manufacturers, retailers, and all others working in our economy. The entire economy working together to create, process and distribute the wealth we all need.

JESS:

‘Raw materials economics?'

RANDY:

Yes, the next time you’re milking your cow, remember your production is the foundation of our entire economy.

JESS:

The entire economy?

RANDY:

Think about this. A farmer’s production times the price he receives creates his income. If the price is proper, what we call a parity price--equal in purchasing power to the workers in the other parts of the economy - the farmer will be able to spend his income on farm machinery, fuel, wages, and more and have a profit left over for his own wage.

What the farmer spends becomes income to the factory owners, to retailers in the small towns, and to his laborers. And so the initial proper farm income flows through all the sectors of the economy. Owners get profits, laborers get wages, and the raw materials are turned into the final goods and services all of us need to have a good life.

All have an ample income and are able to buy the wealth being created in their country. All without borrowing to make it work.

JESS:

But why don’t we have that now?

RANDY:

Because the farmer has been beaten down since 1952 with lower and lower prices for his production. This means less and less money flowing through our economy. Profits and wages get less and less. So we have unemployment, low wages, and debt to all.

JESS:

Where did our low farm prices come from?

RANDY:

You won’t believe it.

JESS:

I will. Tell me.

RANDY:

After World War II, the financial powers decided to open up our domestic markets to ‘free trade’ in agricultural products. U.S. farm prices slowly went lower and lower, strangling millions of family farms with unpayable debt. From 100% prices in 1952 to 34% prices today.

JESS:

Well, Randy, I guess I’ll have a lot to think about as I milk my cow.

FARM CHORUS:

Hallelujah, hallelujah.

All wealth comes from the earth.

Hallelujah, hallelujah.

Without the farmers we are doomed... UDDERLY doomed.