

Interview with Charles Hartke
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Excerpt from Interview # 1: September 23, 2008
Interviewer: Mark DePue

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Hartke: When you look at the movement of livestock and livestock production today, it's totally different than it was ten, twelve years ago. It's not big brother interested in where in the hell you are, what you doing, how many hogs you got, how many chickens, how many cattle you got. We just want to know where they've been. If you're son came home at night after being out, and he come home with a black eye and teeth marks in his ear, and cut up, clothes all torn up, you'd say, "Where in the world have you been?" and that's all we want to know.

DePue: Can you explain why that's important?

Hartke: It's important because we have livestock today that are born in North Carolina, shipped to Iowa to be raised. They're born in North Carolina, raised from three pounds to ten pounds, shipped to Iowa to a nursery, and they're taken from ten pounds to fifty pounds, and then shipped to Illinois from fifty to 270 pounds and then taken to Beardstown. They're not raised, born, and slaughtered in the same location today, and so the transportation of those animals to and from, and across the state in various different directions can cause the spread of some very crazy, exotic disease that could be disastrous. You take foot and mouth disease. Very deadly. With cattle, same way. We have cattle that are born in one spot, shipped from 200 pounds to 400 pounds to a feeder prep, from 500 pounds to finishing in another location, and we could be spreading this. Truckers are traveling all over the United States, back and forth. That's why the importance for the inspection of things coming into the United States, as well, at our borders, whether they be fruits and vegetables or horticulture, decorative plants or whatever, because they could contain small bugs, diseases, emerald ash borer, all kinds of things that we don't know anything about. And if they're here and there's no natural predators to take 'em out, they're going to spread like wildfire.