With this issue, *The Milkweed* completes 25 years of publication. *The Milkweed* has evolved as dairy’s most influential publication—not the biggest, but the best. The secret was a success to a lot of hard work, and most capable assistance. John Bunting, Joel McNair and I—along with several skilled technical contributors—work well as a team. Thank you all.

My wife Rachel deserves a big thank you for her love, understanding and support. Let’s reminisce about a few of the “big ones” since the paper started in June 1979.

$20 million libel suit in 1981
Two years into this publishing venture, Eastern Milk Producers (a semi-bankrupt dairy co-op) hit the paper and publisher with a $20 million libel suit. The co-op claimed damages from 12 alleged falsehoods in a May 1981 article that detailed how the co-op’s $20 million loan guarantee to buy two Mozarella cheese plants from Leprino Foods was illegal, due to numerous financial misrepresentations. That federal loan guarantee was approved the last day Jimmy Carter was in office. Key Farmers Home Administration employees were dismissed over the matter.

The federal judge eventually ruled all 12 contested statements were factual—a process that consumed 16 tough months.

Shortly after the lawsuit ended, I obtained Eastern Milk Producers’ latest financial statement. By analyzing several worthless assets (like an “account receivable” against members), I showed the co-op’s net worth was zero. The headline blasted: “Eastern’s Assets Bare”

When I arrived at the printer for that issue, employees were about to replace the worn out canvas rollers on the offset press. Worn spots on that canvas cause blank spots on paper. The pressmen did a full press run before spotting that a “mysterious force” was roller on the offset press. Worn spots on that canvas were about to replace the worn out canvas rollers on the offset press. Worn spots on that canvas were about to replace the worn out canvas rollers on the offset press. Worn spots on that canvas were about to replace the worn out canvas rollers on the offset press. Worn spots on that canvas were about to replace the worn out canvas rollers on the offset press.

Recombinant bovine growth hormone
An investigative journalist can’t predict if a project will become a B-I-G one. In 1985 or 1986, Monsanto unveiled recombinant bovine growth hormone. Injecting milk cows with a synthetic hormone to boost milk production seemed unwise, since the nation was awash with “surplus” milk. Widespread opposition quickly gelled, headed by folks like John Kimmian, Jeremy Rifkin, Dr. Samuel Epstein, and John Stauber.

The rbGH issue is the single biggest controversy and the most closely watched controversy in food biotechnology. Monsanto’s rbGH had government! rbGH was merely the first in a family of applied food biotechnology. Monsanto’s rbGH had FDA’s connivance, trying to discount that IGF-1 from the milk of rbGH-injected cows than untreated cows. Reproduction problems at the same plant that forced Monsanto to stop making rbGH graphically showed “dead tissue” (non-malignant necrosis) at the injection sites.

IGF-1... powerful growth stimulant
Insulin-like Growth Factor 1 (IGF-1) is a micromolecule that circulates in the blood of mammals, coordinating cellular function. This nearly indestructible little molecule makes all the cells and organs in mammals’ bodies function in concert. IGF-1 is structurally identical in cows and humans. IGF-1 spurrs growth. (That’s probably why people in milk-drinking countries are bigger.)

Trouble is: tens of thousands of articles published in medical and scientific journals have attempted to link IGF-1 to cancer. Recreational doses of growth hormone (natural or synthetic) = more IGF-1 and more milk. IGF-1 circulates through the blood, stimulating somatotrophic tissue to make more milk (among many responses).

The federal Food and Drug Administration went to great lengths to discount that IGF-1 from the milk of rbGH-injected cows could enter the human bloodstream and pose dangers. FDA’s poor job of evaluating the safety of rbGH for milk-drinking humans is a criminal scandal. FDA’s “safety” studies showed laboratory rats with significant physiological changes—but FDA claimed “no effects” were shown.

Boy were we anti-rbGH activists naive, thinking we could overturn big corporate money and big government! rbGH was merely the first in a family of applied food biotechnology. Monsanto’s rbGH had to gain FDA’s approval.

Presently, Monsanto is selling half-rations of its controversial, milk-inducing cow hormone, as the company’s Austrian supplier struggles to correct quality control problems. (No surprise here: the September 1993 issue of *The Milkweed* revealed secret Monsanto documents detailing product contamination problems at the plant that forced Monsanto to throw away a ton of rbGH.)

What’s going on with Monsanto and rbGH? My personal opinion is that the company, with FDA’s connivance, is trying to intentionally sink the ship, to avoid (publicly unknown) tobacco-like liabilities involving either animal or human health.

Mid-Am, DFA... and related crooks
For the first half of my publishing career, I thought Mid-America Dairymen was the top-notch major U.S. dairy co-op... and that its CEO/president Gary Hamman, was the dairy farmers’ most effective asset. Boy was I wrong! Starting in 1980, I attended 14 out of 16 Mid-Am annual meetings. Sometime in the early to mid-1990s, Hamman’s Stalin-like stripes started showing. The take-over of the Southeast turned me against Hamman.

Mid-Am became Dairy Farmers of America (DFA) in January 1998—merging three financially destitute dairy co-ops (Mid-Am, AMPI Southern Region, and Western Dairyman’s Co-op, Inc.) with one mediocrity (Milk Marketing, Inc.). Since that time, many producers have been forced to market their milk through DFA (or a subsidiary). It’s scary that one-third (or more) of all U.S. dairy farmer income is cycled through this indebted ball of lies, extortion and bogus assets.

For a longer explanation of DFA’s misbehaviors, read my speech from the April 1 meeting on our website: www.themilkweed.com

MPC = other illegal consumer food ingredients
Aside from the abuse of producers by their own cooperatives, the most irksome thing I’ve seen is illegal ingredients in dairy and food products. Worse yet is the nearly complete failure of state and federal governments in enforcing food standards/safety laws.

The milk protein concentrate battle—single-handedly kindled and conflagrated by *The Milkweed*—is a prime example. Lust for cheaper food ingredients has forced major food processors (like Kraft Foods) to import massive quantities of dairy commodity and ingredients imports.

MPC is not approved as a safe food ingredient under FDA’s “Generally Recognized As Safe” protocols. MPC and other dairy products from Eastern Europe’s radioactive-contaminated farmlands... or the Third World cesspools like India... are not safe or sanitary, period.

Repeated efforts to get state/federal agencies to crack down on illegal food products have gone nowhere (yet). We’re living in a lawless land, when it comes to food standards and food safety.

Federal Food Antitrust Policy: Zzzzzzz...
Equally shocking is the control of giants in the food industry, primarily Dean Foods’ market share of fluid milk in key states and regions of the country. 80%? 90%? What ever happened to competition?

What’s dangerous about Dean Foods’ market share in fluid milk is that the federal Antitrust policy for food uses the doctrine of “allowable concentration.” That means, whatever the biggest market share (measured as a percentage) allowed by federal regulators in food industry mergers, that market share becomes the new benchmark for legalizing all future food industry mergers.

Thus, the 80% or 90% market share that Dean Foods holds for fluid milk in some states and regions means that other food industry giants can gain equal market shares in other sectors. Federal Antitrust laxity is pushing this nation into the food system controlled by a few giant corporations, to the harm of all others.

The whole truth... a war to control food
The single greatest wisdom I can offer, as a life-long agricultural journalist, is that a war is on for the control of our food system, from farm to consumer. Most farmers and consumers don’t even realize that. This war seeks to redefine, control prices of, and limit access to our food. Farmers and consumers are losing. I foresee the need for an entire refocus of U.S. food policy and practices. Our energy-dependent, long-distance delivery system of foods is not sustainable. This nation needs to redirect food policies to produce food much closer to where it’s consumed.

Future water and energy shortages allow no other choice. This nation needs to redirect food policies to produce food much closer to where it’s consumed.

The whole truth... a war to control food