

We Want To Feed the United States: End Speculation; Build NAWAPA!

Rich Anderson was interviewed on The LaRouche Show, March 1, 2014, by hosts Harley Schlanger and Marcia Merry Baker.

Harley Schlanger: We'll be discussing the drought, the implications of the drought, and NAWAPA, with a very well-known, longtime collaborator of ours, who is out there in the middle of the drought area, Rich Anderson, a former member of the Board of the Southwest Cattle Ranchers Association. He has a ranch in Texas; he is a longtime political activist, and someone who has been dealing with this problem for a while.

So, Rich, welcome to the program.

Rich Anderson: Well, thank you, Harley.

Schlanger: Rich, give us a report on what you've faced out there—Rich lives in Gail, Texas, in Borden County. What's the situation on the ground, as far as water?

Anderson: Well, of course, our water from Midland, Snyder, Odessa area comes from Lake Thomas, and Lake Spence, and Lake Ivy. Lake Thomas is 1% full; Spence is about 7-8% full; and I think Ivy is about 12% full. So, the water is a critical situation out here. We have just come through a three-year drought, but it's not over yet, because you don't get over a drought in one rain; like in California, it's been so dry out there for so long that it's gonna take a lot of rain to fill up the reservoirs and to grow grass again. And the people out there have had to get rid of their cattle and sheep, and they're just devastated.

I noticed in the paper just the other day where a meatpacking plant in Brawley, Calif., was closing because of the lack of cattle to kill; and also, here in Texas, in Plainview, a longtime packing plant up there closed because of the lack of cattle to kill. The packing plants are closing all over the United States because of lack of cattle to kill.



Rich Anderson describes the Texas and California drought as "very debilitating." It is not only affecting farmers and ranchers, he pointed out, but all those who work in the agricultural industries, not to mention those of us who like to eat.

The Smallest Cattle Herd Since the '50s

Schlanger: There's a report out, that the total number of head of cattle in the United States has hit the level that we had in 1951. What does this mean? Because people don't understand what it means when you have to slaughter the herds—these can't just be rebuilt overnight, can they?

Anderson: No, it takes a long time to rebuild our herd. But, what you said is right. We've got the smallest herd of cattle since the early 1950s; and then we went into a five-year drought, which further decimated the cattle population. But it takes from three to five years to start rebuilding a herd. You just can't do that overnight. Because if you bred a cow today, it's nine months until she has a calf, and then it's nine months before you can wean that calf, and it's another nine months before you can breed that heifer calf to start your production cycle all over again. So, it's a minimum of three years, and more than likely five. But, like here in Texas, we can't start rebuilding because we've been in this drought, and we're carrying about



NOAA

Today's severe drought in Texas recalls the 1930s Dust Bowl, which ruined the western states of Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, Texas, and New Mexico. Shown here, a dust storm approaches Stratford, Texas, 1935.

half the number of cattle that we need to carry, in order to make this a viable operation; and it'll take years for those people in California.

And you remember last Winter, or this Winter, the terrible, terrible storm we had up in the Dakotas and Montana, which killed thousands upon thousands of cattle and horses and sheep. And, incidently, I was talking to a rancher up there, and he said the snow and cold weather didn't kill his cattle—they drowned. The rain was so thick that they couldn't breathe, and they breathed in water, and filled their lungs, and they died from drowning instead of from the cold weather or the snow.

But the drought is debilitating—it takes years to come back from that, and for instance, here on the ranch, I know I've got a lot of grass that's dead, the roots are dead. So that's going to have to come back from seed in the ground, which, fortunately, that seed will stay viable for at least ten years, but conditions have to be just right for that seed to sprout.

So this drought is very debilitating. And it's putting people out of work, like the plants closing—I believe that plant in Brawley is going to fire 1,300 people, and the one in Planview is 2,300, or something like that. So, not only does it affect agriculture, but it affects people in town.

Schlanger: Rich, what are you hearing from other

ranchers? I assume there's a sense of desperation about this situation.

Anderson: Well, it's not so much desperation, Harley, it's just part of our life that we have to contend with. Now, I'm 85 years old, and in my life, I've seen debilitating droughts before. You remember the Dust Bowl in the '30s, which just ruined a lot of land, which they had plowed up to grow wheat, because the price of wheat had gotten so high. And then it didn't rain, and then the winds came, and it just ruined western Oklahoma, western Kansas, eastern Colorado, and northwestern New Mexico. I wit-

nessed that drought.

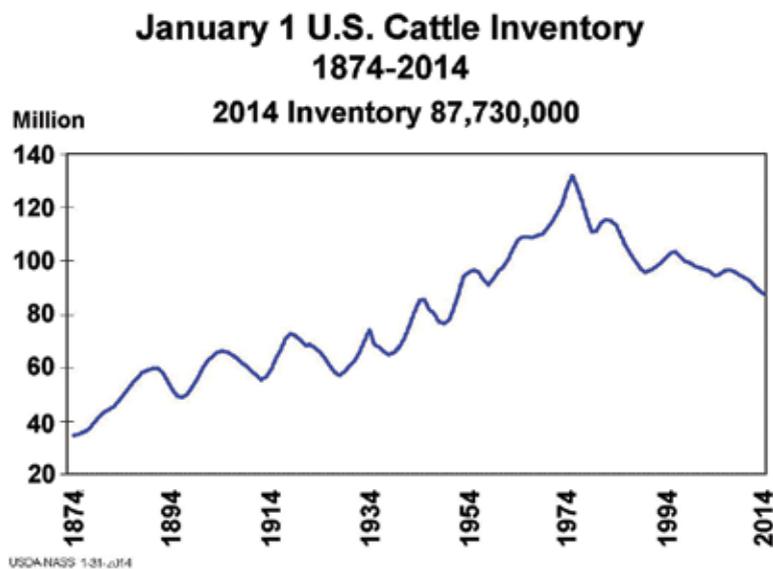
And then, periodically, we have droughts that last, usually, a couple of years, and then it'll begin to cycle again, and rain. But then all this climate could change—I laugh at that—I've seen a lot of climate change in my life, and being a historian, I can go back to, I believe it's about 1885 or '86, somewhere along in there, there was a bad, bad snowstorm, a norther, came down through Texas and drove the cattle—at that time, there were very few fences, if any—clear to the Rio Grande River in south Texas.

I know [my wife] Barbara's grandfather, and other ranchers put together ranchers and teams and cowboys, and went and started gathering cattle, and tried to bring them back into this area when they could.

So, these weather cycles happen—I don't care what they say about climate change—we've always had climate change. But these droughts are debilitating. Fact of the matter, when I went off to college, I told my mother, "I'll never step foot on another ranch," because all you do is work seven days a week, and you make a little money, and then along comes a drought, and you start all over again. It's just a never-ending cycle.

But we've got to raise food for the people in this country, and the demand for meat, not only in this country, but overseas, has become a great item. We export a

FIGURE 1



lot of meat, and so, if we don't have it, we can't export it, and if we don't have it, the people won't have it to eat.

Cloud Seeding Works

Schlanger: Rich, in 1982, Lyndon LaRouche wrote a pamphlet, titled, "Won't You Please Allow Your Grandchild To Have a Glass of Fresh Water?" in which he brought up the need for NAWAPA, the North American Water and Power Alliance. You may remember, we had a very big conference in Houston, where you participated. And at the time, we talked about this question of the cycle of drought, and the need to free our agricultural sector from these kinds of periodic cycles. You were a participant then; you've been a supporter of NAWAPA. Obviously, this is something that we need.

But you were also talking about short-term measures that used to be taken in terms of seeding the clouds, and I'd like you to tell our audience about that, and why it is we can't do that cloud-seeding anymore.

Anderson: Well, Back in the '70s, we had gone through a dry spell, and the state developed a cloud-seeding program, where when we did have clouds, they would fly up and seed with silver iodide, and it would rain. Fact of the matter, I kept records, and in a ten-year period, my rainfall increased by five inches, from 18 1/2 to 23 1/2 inches, and filled up our reservoirs and Lake Thomas was full, and we had good water. But people began to object to that, and the EPA stepped in,

and said, "Well, you can't fly those planes into a thunderstorm. It's dangerous."

Well, yes, it was dangerous, and those planes that flew and spread that silver iodide—they had dents in them, and one thing and another, and it was dangerous. But it worked. But, you know, "the government always knows best," and so they stopped that program. And since that time, well, we've not been able to do that. But it certainly works; there are some people that have been against it. They say it produces hail, and one thing and other. But all I know is that, in a ten-year period, I grew a lot of grass, and my pond—fact of the matter, back here on the ranch, we don't have any well water. We depend upon earthen ponds to collect the water to water our cattle and the wildlife. And it filled them all up.

But now, in this last drought, our son told me that he cleaned out 32 tanks, still had some to go, but we ran out of money, to be frank with you. And it takes a lot of rain to fill those up.

Now we were fortunate to get some rain, and we have water now, and we've got old grass, but we've got a lot of dead grass, and when the grass dies, and it does rain big, the water runs off, and doesn't soak into the ground like it should. The ground is hard, and it's hard to get any water into the ground.

Schlanger: In the rain now going on in Los Angeles these last couple of days, there are mudslides because there's no vegetation to hold onto the rain.

I know you're no big fan of the President of the United States, Obama, but I assume you saw that he went out to California, and essentially, offered peanuts to farmworkers, and then said his big effort would be to put more money into so-called "climate research." This is obviously completely wrong, and LaRouche has called for his impeachment. I assume you're a supporter of that—impeachment.

Anderson: I certainly am.

I'll tell you, going back a little bit to NAWAPA, I'm certainly a supporter of that; and, the fact of the matter, I was appointed to a water board here in Texas, and we studied how to bring water to West Texas, and I talked to a Representative from this area, George Mahon, a longtime Representative [1935-79], and I spoke about that [NAWAPA]. "Oh," he said, "I know



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service/Robert Burns

“We’ve got to raise food for the people in this country,” Anderson said, “and the demand for meat, not only in this country, but overseas, has become a great item.” Here, due to the drought and a lack of grass for feed, a Texas rancher provides supplemental feed to cattle, in 2011.

about that, but, you know, the people of the United States won’t act until there’s a crisis.” And so, we never got anything done. But had we done that at the time, California wouldn’t be suffering as much from the drought, because their lakes would be full; and here in West Texas, our lakes would be full, and we’d have plenty of water to drink.

But, because of the environmentalists—and they have such a hold on this President, and past Presidents—that we’re running out of water.

I noticed the other day where, for the first time in over 40 years, and maybe longer, they’re going to be able to build a nuclear plant in Georgia, and we should have been building those nuclear plants all along, because these windmills are the most inefficient way to make electricity that there is! And they’ve tried that in Europe, and it just didn’t work, and we’re buying lots of their machinery that they used over there and it just takes so much land and so much area to build these windmill farms that produce a little bit of electricity.

They’re Gambling with Our Food Supply

Marcia Merry Baker: Rich, if you care to say anything about the pricing, like the larger context of shortage of beef for the public—your lifetime spans a time when you didn’t have the Chicago Board of Trade spec-

ulation going completely wild, as it has for the last 25 years. And, you know, cattle futures, Harley, went to the highest ever since 1964, when they started keeping records for cattle futures. Cattle futures for delivery in April are \$1.54/pound, or something like that.

But really, you have day-trading speculators going mad, which is called the free markets, but in fact it just adds another element of uncertainty, parasitism, and so forth. Do you want to say anything about that, Rich?

Anderson: Well, it’s always made me mad, for those people up there to trade on my product, that I was producing. We don’t use

the futures. Now, with feeding cattle, you can lock in a profit. You can do that. But still, I think—the price of oil, for instance—speculators have driven up the price of oil, and they make a lot of money at that.

I know that one time, Russia said that they were having a drought, that there was going to be a shortage of wheat; but before they did that, they bought a bunch of futures on the Chicago Mercantile, and they made a killing out of that. With no wheat, they made a killing on that market.

No, I’m against it. I wish they never had started it. It’s just a way to gamble; it’s no different than going to Las Vegas and gambling with your money at these casinos. It’s the same thing. It’s just a gamble. And people are sitting there, and they gamble on our product, day after day; they can drive it up or drive it down. And a lot of the big companies do this and make a lot of money out of it.

Schlanger: And they’re gambling with our food supply.

Anderson: Well, sure. It’s unreal, what they’ve done. And you know, Argentina has had a bad drought, and their wheat crop is down. And I think that they’ve done soybeans down there, in Argentina and Brazil, but the wheat crop has been a failure in that area, so it wouldn’t take much to tip the pan. Up here, in this country, we

could have a drought; a widespread drought in the Midwest could ruin the wheat, and the oats, and corn.

Schlanger: And Rich, I assume you're an opponent of the idea of using the corn crop, 40-50% of the corn crop, to produce inefficient biofuels.

Anderson: Oh, it's idiotic, to start with! Nobody wants that ethanol. You can't transport it in a pipeline, because it collects water; it takes more energy to make that ethanol than it saves. And I'm against using our food supply to make fuel that nobody wants! It's just idiotic!

Five Generations of Food-Producers

Schlanger: Well, Rich, I thank you for joining us, and we'll make sure that this message gets out.

Anderson: Well, all right. I'd just like for you to know that the average of the farmer here in Texas is about 62 years old. And we're not getting any younger, because nobody wants to go into agriculture anymore. We need young people to go in, but they have a hard time affording it, because speculators have driven the land price up so high, young people can't afford to get in.

Baker: I just couldn't agree more. We break with everything that Rich has been describing, that is, the speculation, the destruction of our ability to defend ourselves against periodic droughts which we know we're going to have. We break with this, and start to move on it, on doing what we ought to do, and then, young people will be in the forefront. And maybe we need a lot of training, and Rich can help with that, right? To get the skills. But then the speculation on land prices, on food, on basic energy, can be wiped away.

So, I agree. Amen.

Anderson: Well, we're trying to keep that alive in our family. Fact of the matter, last June we celebrated this ranch being in the family for 100 years. Barbara and I are the third generation that's lived on this ranch. Our son, who runs the ranch now, is the fourth generation, and his children—one grandson's working on the ranch—there's a fifth generation. So we're trying to do our part to produce food for the United States. If the government would just get out of our way, it sure would help.

Schlanger: Well, Rich, thank you again for joining us.

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