

Lying With Statistics and Other Political Ploys

By
Thom Cantrall

Very recent to my penning this missive, it came to my attention through discussion on a small farm site I follow that there is a “Covid Relief” package being prepared for minority farmers only. This sounded suspicious to me as I could see no real reason for such an action that did not apply to all small farmers equally. I, therefore, instigated discussion on the issue and was amazed by the results.

First came the accusations of racism then the counter charges of racism, but as time went along, some referenced statements were made and I was able to consult the references cited.



One of the first things cited by those supporting this legislation was the fact non minority farmers received 97% of the monies from this 2020 bill, suggesting that minority farmers were grossly ignored by this allocation. It would certainly seem so on the surface, but when I went to the source data for these data, I found that only 1.7% of farm production comes from minority owned farms... therefore, if the funds were allocated on terms of production, then minority owned farms received MORE per production unit than the non-



minority farms... A perfect case of lying with statistics...

There is an old adage that states, “There are liars, damned liars and statisticians!” This would certainly be the case here... My first reaction was, YES, if non-minority

farmers received 97% of the federally allocated funds, then there was, indeed, a great injustice perpetrated and it needed to be corrected... then I learned of the actual numbers involved and a different thought came to light.

Further investigation into the distribution of those funds showed that the bulk of those funds did NOT go to private farms, minority or non-minority, but to the corporate giants... **Tyson Foods, Archer Daniel Midlands, Smithfield, Iowa Beef and John Morrell...** the big five who control over 80% of the food production in this country!!

Now, this explained the distribution of the 2020 funding... it went to the corporations who buy the politicians... those few corporations literally OWN the US Dept. Of Agriculture, known to most independent farmers as the US DUH, and they just arranged this for their benefit... Business as usual in government circles. It had nothing to do with race whatsoever... it had everything to do with politics as usual.



Okay, if this is “business as usual”, what is the problem? Why lie about it? What is the real purpose of the 2021 farm legislation that is for MINORITY ONLY?

Perhaps the best way to answer that would be to look at the discussion on that thread surrounding these data. The breakdown was very nearly as what I would have expected... the far right 10% screaming reverse racism, the middle 80% discussing it logically with many good citations to back up their statements and those like me who were just trying to make sense of it all. Then there was 10% far left who were calling anyone who opposed it, or even mentioned the 2021 legislation, racists.. and calling for the admins of that group to end that thread... statements that there were not supposed to be any politics brought up on that site and this was totally politics... anything they could do to STOP discussion.

Perhaps I should not mention politics either, but this final point is the core of my dissertation... Those people sponsoring this truly racist legislation that is the 2021 Covid Farm Relief bill KNEW what they were doing... they fomented dissension in the populus by intentionally promulgating skewed data obtained from legitimate statistics... that much is fact... it is not difficult to understand that... the scary part, and the part that I will do no more than mention is WHY??? What are they hoping to accomplish here? Are their end goals something that this country needs, or even wants??

Let me conclude with this, I am NOT against support of our private, family farms... quite the opposite, I support it for ALL family owned farms... I AM against corporate greed as being evidenced by the "Big 5" aforementioned and their control of a government organization. I am against wasteful spending at all government levels...



I do believe that the demise of the family farm is imminent and perhaps, inevitable, as tragic as that would be. The average owner of the private farm in this country is now over 60 years old... and as these people retire, too many

of their farms are being sold and too many converted to housing developments. The largest single owner of private farm land in this country today is Mr. Bill Gates of Microsoft fame... with holdings of over 240,000 acres. Why? Why is he doing this?

If these private farms disappear, what is left? Already we have great difficulty buying foods that are good for us... it is virtually impossible to buy a tomato that tastes like a tomato... and the meat provided us is an atrocity... but that is another story for another time...