

## Senate Ag Committee Holds Hearing on MCA Priority

By Missouri Cattlemen's Assoc.  
Contributed

The United States Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry recently conducted a hearing, "Examining Markets, Transparency, and Prices from Cattle Producer to Consumer," with the intent to examine challenges facing the beef cattle market, one of Missouri Cattlemen's Association's top policy priorities.

"There is a widening gap between those giant players and the small and medium-sized processors that many local farmers and ranchers rely on," said Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., chairwoman of the Senate Agriculture Committee.

Justin Tupper, a South Dakota cow-calf producer and manager of the St Onge Livestock Auction, testified, arguing that packers have too much control over each aspect of the supply chain, leaving the producers to fend for themselves.

"The only way you can have true price discovery is to have a second bidder," Tupper said. "If we had more competition out there and they could not hold captive supply, then when we have high boxed beef prices, we

would see the direct benefit of that."

Mary Hendrickson, a sociology professor at the University of Missouri, said that recent events showed the true volatility of our food supply chain and that we must be better equipped.

"Everybody keeps saying these are black swan events, but they happened, and we weren't really prepared for them," Hendrickson said.

Producers and industry leaders know there is a long road ahead but are cautiously optimistic by the conversations surrounding the issue.

"We are encouraged to see this issue finally coming to the forefront as we are ready to push forward meaningful, long-term structural changes in the beef cattle markets. The goal is robust price discovery and market transparency that will afford all segments of this industry the opportunity for profitability, and many of this hearing's testimonies called for the same," MCA President-Elect Bruce Mershon said. "We appreciate the participation of committee members and the continued efforts of our own Sen. Josh Hawley."

## Pickin' Blackberries

By Mike Hanrahan  
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July is blackberry picking time in Missouri. Most varieties of wild blackberries in our state ripen in July, and they are abundant in wooded areas and along rural roads. Be prepared for competition however since they are a favorite of many species of wildlife.

There are at least 375 varieties of blackberries and in the past were an important dietary item. Native Americans relished the berries as did many people throughout history. They were sought after by the early colonists.

The preserved body of a 2,500 year old woman, now referred to as "Haraldskaer Woman", was found in a Danish bog. On examination, wild blackberries were found in her stomach contents.

As expected, blackberries are a deep blackish-purple when ripe. They are delicious fresh from the patch with light sugar, on ice cream, in pies and cobblers, jellies and

jams. They are a good source of dietary fiber, Vitamin C and K, and the tiny seeds are rich in Omega 3 and 6.

Blackberries are a perennial plant, so when a patch is located it will come back year after year. However, wild blackberry plants are loaded with wicked little thorns, making a long-sleeve shirt a necessity. There is a little pain involved, but the harvest. In England, blackberry plants often form fences, keeping in livestock unwilling to brave the brambles.

Picking wild blackberries will bring the picker in contact with such pests as ticks and mosquitoes, so sprays and proper clothing are important.

For those who enjoy wildlife, there will be opportunities to see a number of animals. More than once I have been startled by a baby fawn exploding from cover when I came too close. On one occasion a doe and two small fawns stepped out of the berry patch only a short distance away. One of the fawns came

running my direction, not seeing me until it raced past. Suddenly separated from its mother, fear and anxiety was written all over its face. It was actually comical but the stranded fawn was soon reunited with its mother.

If you are able, picking wild blackberries is not an unpleasant task. I always focus on the results of a nice blackberry pie covered with ice cream. It doesn't get much better than that!

Go out and give berry-picking a try. It is not easy, but the rewards are bountiful.



## KEEP MISSOURI FARMING TRACTOR CRUISE

### Eighth-Annual Tractor Cruise Registration Now Open

By Missouri Farm Bureau  
Contributed

JEFFERSON CITY, MO – Missouri Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture is holding its eighth-annual Keep Missouri Farming Tractor Cruise on July 17, 2021. Tractors will travel through Atchison County on a 38-mile loop. The event will begin and end at Liles Enterprises, 31792 State Highway W, Fairfax, MO 64446.

"The Foundation Tractor Cruise is one of the best events of the year," said Jason Kurtz, MOFB Board of Directors District 1. "With everything that has gone on in the past year, we all need a day to get out, enjoy the sunshine, and see our friends and neighbors. Like last year, we have opened the cruise to any age tractor. Anyone with a tractor can join the cruise and help to support agriculture and leadership opportunities."

The tractor cruise will begin at 10 a.m. Entry fees are \$35 for open-station tractors

and \$50 for air-conditioned cab tractors and includes a Missouri Farm Bureau gift, an event photo, lunch and snacks. The cruise will again include a poker run for participants. Registration opens at 8:30 a.m.

Tractors do not have to be historic to participate. All tractors are welcome, with one exception; due to Missouri Highway Patrol regulations, tractors with duals are not permitted.

Spectators can view the tractors up close at the lunch stop at the Tarkio Community Center at noon. A pork lunch will be available to non-participants for \$8 per adult and \$4 per child.

The Missouri Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture was established in 1996 to provide a dedicated funding source for agricultural education and leadership development programs.

Registration information, sponsorship information, and official rules are available at [mofb.org/events](http://mofb.org/events).

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