

**My name is Greg Niewendorp, and I am a cattle farmer in East Jordan, Michigan where I have farmed for 18 years.**

Our family purchased this 160-acre abandoned farm, at 4185 Beishlag Road, East Jordan, Michigan, 49727, in 1989. It had been out of agricultural production for a number of years. The farm had no infrastructure when we moved on, just an old barn and an old house, both built in 1924. The land comprised about sixty acres in open land, infected with spotted nap weed, and about a hundred acres in neglected hardwoods that had been clear cut in the 1940s. There is now a new barn and a refurbished home where the old buildings sat. The one hundred acres of timber has been logged three times in the last eleven years, and only low quality “worst first,” i.e. pulp, chip wood and bolt wood timber, has been removed. The woodlots are now diverse with new growth and wildlife habitat, the beginning of a stately, park-like old growth forest. The current and future plans for harvesting timber are based on the concept of only removing the trees of lower quality when doing density checks, and trees need to be removed to maintain the proper amount of sunlight hitting the forest floor, causing regeneration and new growth. This type of woodland management is in direct contrast to what is typically done in land management. A logger comes on the property and “high-grades” or “cherry picks” the best and leaves the junk.

This same philosophy of improving the environment also applies to the cattle management on this farm. The cattle operation on this farm is unique. This cattle production system is a model for the current and future demand of the American people for the kind of meat and milk they want. This is a grass-based cattle operation in northern Michigan, long winters in which feed has to be stored. Through selective breeding and wise consultation, cattle bred on this farm do not need industrially processed feeds. This farm does not receive government payments, nor is it enrolled in any government programs. It is privately owned and operated. The long term management of this farm has been designed to protect the personal well-being of the family that lives on the property—a property, not a premises—and the local community.

Again, proper resource management and understanding how the natural planetary/solar cycle works is the key to succeeding on a piece of land such as this that has been abandoned, because it was not profitable in the commercial business environment that has developed in the last several decades. In a similar fashion, the open ground on this property has been developed through the use of cattle and rotational grazing and the use of natural mineral supplements to make up for the loss of minerals due to abusive agricultural practices in the past. Faced with the specific soil geology of this farm, i.e. improperly structured pH due to light sandy soil prone to acidity and a lack of calcium, I have created a specific system to properly structure the pH and keep the rumen of my cattle healthy. Through careful management and use of feed and soil supplements, such as carbonatite, a natural earth mineral from a volcanic source, sea salt, selenomethionine, and copper sulphate this poor soil has kept the livestock healthy. We are facing an increasing acidity in our soils. Cattle on grass alleviates and helps to cure the problem of acid soils.

### **God-given rights, divine rights, property rights.**

Dueteronomy (the fifth book of the Old Testament of the Bible) 8:18 says: But you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm his covenant which he swore to your fathers, as it is this day. Dueteronomy 7:13, and He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock in the land which He swore to your forefathers to give you. Dueteronomy 28:4, Blessed shall be the offspring of your body and the produce of your ground and the offspring of your beasts, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock. From First Chronicles 21:1-8, Satan rose against Israel and incited David take a census of the Israelites. David said to Joab and to the senior army officers, “Go and take a census of Israel, from Beersheeba to Dan, then come back and tell me the total.” Joab said, “May Yahweh multiply the people a hundred times. as many as they are! My lord King, are they not all servants of my lord? Why should my Lord make this inquiry? Why should guilt be brought on Israel?” But the king enforced his order on Joab, and Joab went away, covered the whole of Israel, then returned to Jerusalem. Joab gave David the figure for the census of the people: the whole of Israel numbered one million

one hundred thousand men capable of drawing sword; and Judah four hundred and seventy thousand capable of drawing sword. Joab had found the king's command so distasteful that he had taken no census of Levi or of Benjamin.

God looked with displeasure on those proceedings, and he struck Israel. Then David said to God, "I have committed a grave sin by doing this, but now I beg you to forgive your servant for this fault. I have been very foolish.

My well being is a blessing from my Creator. NAIS is a taking of my property.

Revelation 13:17 And he provides that no one should be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name.

NAIS prevents me from being able to engage in private direct sales without this mark of the beast.

Rev. 14:11-13 And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; and they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image and who receive the mark of his name. Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus. And I heard a voice from Jesus saying, "Write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on! That they may rest from their labors for their deeds follow with them.'"

It is more important for me to listen to the Word coming from God than to obey the commands of men.

Rev. 20:4 And I saw thrones and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the Word of God, and those who had not worshipped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

The hope that I have is a place where the followers of Christ will be comforted and rewarded for persevering in spite of coercion used to enforce regulatory decree.

I was forced, against my expressed will, to have my cattle tagged with Radio Frequency Identification tags (as opposed to conventional metal tags) that contain an international code and, in my belief, are the mark of the beast. This was done under the USDA run TB testing program. My animals are my private property, are my stock in trade and subsistence and in that matter an extension of my person, who I am and what I do. Therefore, for them to take on this mark is to force me to own this mark and take it on myself. A direct violation of religious beliefs.

The infringement of my right to privacy, my right to protect my means of subsistence, and, especially, my divine right to reject governmental regulations, based upon my religious convictions, are at issue here: Coercive governmental behaviour that forces compliance with the threat of fines and sentences if compliance is not achieved. This is behaviour elicited by government marketing and regulatory agencies that is offensive to the sensibility of people who, in a very private manner, direct their day-to-day business in private, relational exchanges—exchanges of items produced, not items for re-sale. It has been admitted by people in position of setting policy that the government has no jurisdiction over the issue of a private, relational, meeting of the mind in a business transaction. It is not third-party marketing. Third party marketing, the commercial sale, is the only arena where the government can justify, and has to this point, marketing regulations and inspections.

NAIS demands that my cattle be numbered, registered and monitored by the state for sale, presumably into the commercial market that I do not participate in. It would force me to participate in a regulatory program in which there are distinct prohibitions in scripture--prohibitions against participating in a system that says you cannot buy or sell unless you take the mark of the beast, meaning, I believe, the RFID tags and premises ID of the NAIS program. The registering and numbering of livestock and cattle is specifically prohibited throughout God's word.

And history shows that governments participating in this type of behaviour have always shown evidence of tyrannical behaviour, which is a heritage that we in this country have rejected that can be traced back hundreds of years. In the Supreme Court case *Wisconsin v. Yoder*, pertaining to freedom of religion, Justice Burger made reference to the monasteries in Europe during the Middle Ages as places where the light of truth was held in sacred escrow. During the darkest years when the Roman Empire was decaying, the traditions of

culture and learning became centered and kept alive in these monasteries. These monasteries became centers of rigid integrity and honesty and helped carry on the heritage we have in knowing who we are today. These monasteries became bastions of learning that would have been lost if it had not been for the devotion of the leadership that was found in the people that carried on this tradition.

We are promised by our Saviour that the gates of hell will not prevail.

**The USDA's proposed National Animal Identification System (NAIS) is being implemented, supposedly, to protect consumer health—typically the customer who buys through a third person, not a direct sale.** There are individual farmers in this country, like myself, and the number is growing, who do not depend upon current commercial trade channels. Our market is not even a hundred miles away, but in our own local communities. And if the buyer of our product is dealing directly with the producer there simply is no need for a national registry of every animal that we have on our farms. The additional expense and time demanded by the implementation of NAIS, coupled with the threat of fines and confiscation for failure of timely—within 24 hours—reporting in the changes of herd size, medical treatment, and the movement of livestock, has damaged my ability to run this farm productively, and provide for the well-being of the people who live on it and the community that depends on it. Though some of the current costs, such as RFID ear tags, that I did not want, are currently paid for by tax dollars, it is the intent of the USDA and MDA that the individual farmer ultimately bear all financial burdens of implementation of NAIS. Research into existing similar programs elsewhere, and given the current and projected costs of equipment and administrative time involved will make the NAIS program untenable for independent small farmers like myself. One study estimates the minimum cost per individual animal (this includes every individual animal of any kind) to be \$40.00 - \$100.00 per year (at current prices) plus the computer needed for reporting information to regulators, plus the costs of hand held wands to read the ear tags—or the commensurate costs in time to visually read tag numbers and report this individual information over the phone—at least while that is still permitted. Plus software upgrades every time they change the system. And so on. This does not even cover the time cost of administration, just equipment costs. It is an added expense and burden that takes significant time and resources away from my business of productive farm management and income. Further, it creates no benefit to me, only to the large commercial corporate industrial marketing system, the bureaucracy that oversees the system, and the tag and technology manufacturers. The NAIS is nothing but a ploy by commercial trade channels to impede my ability to sell to my friends and neighbors where I take the responsibility for my actions and do not depend upon third party oversight by coercive bureaucratic state and federal agencies operating under a constantly changing regulatory system that has no basis in law. It will destroy, not help, the burgeoning local food movement in which people want fresh meat and milk direct from the farm.

I cannot, in good conscience, participate in the commercial trade of my cattle with this system in place. This affects not only my ability to trade, but the loss to the community, including other producers, of my quality of beef and livestock.

**Environmentally, this farm has gone from being heavily shaded woodlot with very little diversity and understory,** and pastures with very little grass, infested with spotted napweed and other plants of little benefit to supporting red-blooded animals, to an environment of diversity and greatly increased fertility and grass production harvested by ruminant animals. There has been a proliferation of wild diversity at all levels. The ecology of this farm has been greatly enhanced.

If, or when, NAIS is fully implemented, conditions here will be as they are currently in the British Isles, the European Union, and Australia, where the burden of the cost will be placed on the producer and, as they have been in the places mentioned, the great majority of small farmers, who like myself are the most environmentally friendly farmers, will be driven out of business.