

Columns

Take back control of your health!

Last week, I explained how we are likely the third generation of Americans allowing our employer-sponsored health-care programs to dictate what is a “covered” or “non-covered” expense. Because our current system doesn’t “cover” most healthy lifestyle activities, healthcare has become the largest single driver of our US economy.

Today, almost 1 in every 5 dollars spent in the US is on healthcare. Recent studies have suggested that up to 90% of our current US medical expenses can be traced back to a lifestyle problem. Big Pharma, Big Medicine, Big Insurance, Big Food and Big Government have all combined forces to continue this trend to create more profits for their share-

holders. We spend more than any other first world country on healthcare and get the worst results.

I don’t blame or condemn corporations for making money. But I do blame and condemn them for not focusing on the root cause of disease, but instead, focusing on symptom relief while not correcting the root cause of our health conditions. This continues to be our current healthcare business model.

About 1920, medical schools changed focus to only look at disease and not health. So, for more than 100 years, promoting and living a healthy lifestyle wasn’t the focus at all. Medical schools did research and studies only on disease states and never focused on

Real Life Wellness

By Dr. Bill Hemmer



the positive effects living a healthy lifestyle had on these problems. They were only interested in symptom relief, not curing the disease.

Then in 1940, came penicillin. This wonder drug saved millions of people from death from infection. It fueled the fire of Big Pharma’s idea of “one pill for one ill”. The race was on to find drugs to de-

crease every symptom of the human condition. These drugs fit their new model perfectly. Provide symptom control while leaving the underlying problem to fester and come up again later.

We’ve all seen the commercials saying, “when diet and exercise isn’t enough” take this medication. This gives us all an easy out. It’s basically say-

ing, “living a healthy lifestyle is hard, just cover the symptoms with this medication and hope it goes away”. But what if you focused enough attention on the pillars of a healthy lifestyle? Would it be enough to turn your health around?

The best examples of lifestyle-based diseases are the three most common diseases in the US today: Heart disease, Diabetes Type 2 and Obesity. These three diseases have all been proven to be successfully addressed without ever stepping foot into a doctor’s office. But where is the push to teach you what you need to know to take care of these problems yourself? Which “covered” services in your insurance plan will provide you with the tools to take care of that?

But what if everyone lived a quality lifestyle and didn’t get sick? Would all their marketing dollars go to waste? This is why Big Pharma has consistently downplayed the effects of living a healthy lifestyle on the big three lifestyle-based diseases and continue to give us the easy out by taking the drugs instead of doing the work to build and live a healthy lifestyle.

It’s not bad us. We have all just been put into a world where profit has been placed over building a healthy population. But the time has come to use our economic clout to build a new model, based on healthy lifestyle creation that will make our current sickness care model obsolete.

More on that next week.

A recipe to help green beans, and one that can’t be ‘beet’

This week I have two vegetable recipes to share with you. The first one comes from Linda Overbeck of Alhambra. She says she found this recipe online and that is how she will use canned green beans from now on. She added that the next time she makes it, she will use more of the onion and garlic powders. I have never been fond of canned green beans, but this recipe intrigues me. I think I will give it a try soon.

Let’s Make Green Beans Taste Better

Submitted by Linda Overbeck

Serves 6-8
2 - 14.5 oz cans green beans
4 (or more) slices of bacon
2 Tbsp butter
1 tsp onion powder

1 tsp garlic powder
1/2 tsp salt
1/2 tsp pepper

Cook bacon, drain excess grease. Cut into small strips and set aside. Drain half the liquid from both cans of green beans. Put everything into a large pan or skillet. Heat on medium until the beans start to simmer. Reduce the heat to medium-low and allow to simmer uncovered until almost all of the liquid has evaporated. Stir occasionally. Should take about 5 minutes for the liquid to evaporate.

This next recipe is one I tried and we loved it! I really like beets, but always just heated up canned beets. This recipe takes a bit more effort and time than canned beets but is well worth it.

Roasted Beets

makes 4 servings
1 lb. beets (about 3 medium), peeled
4 tsp olive oil
1/2 tsp kosher salt
3 to 5 sprigs rosemary

Cut each beet into 6 wedges. Place in a shallow dish, toss with olive oil and salt. Place a sheet of foil onto a baking sheet. Arrange beets in a single layer in the center of the foil. Top with rosemary sprigs. Fold foil over, seal tightly. Bake at 400 degrees for 1 hour.

When I made this, the beets stained my fingers for a short while. If you have disposable plastic gloves, you may want to wear them while peeling the beets. Also, when I made this, I happen to have fresh rosemary sprigs on hand and used them. Next time I make this, I

Let’s Cook

By Linda Hoskins



may use a bit of crushed dried rosemary instead.

If you haven’t been eating beets, here are a few reasons to start. Besides the bright pop of color it adds to your plate, beets have lots of nutrients but few calories. Beets contain a bit of almost all the vitamins and minerals your body needs. Beets could aid in keeping

blood pressure in check and may aid in fighting inflammation.

In ancient times, Romans considered beetroot to be an aphrodisiac. If you are one those who can’t stand beets, you are in good company. It’s been reported that Albert Einstein and the Obamas hate beets! And did you know beets

can be used in baking cake or brownies? In Australia, pickled beets are commonly put on hamburgers instead of pickles. Hmm, wonder if this trend will show up in the US.

Beet juice is sometimes used as a hangover cure because it’s filled with nutritional benefits that eliminate toxins from alcohol consumption. One more piece of beet trivia: the largest beet in the world was grown by a Dutchman. It weighed over 156 pounds!

If you have a recipe to share, or a funny story about a cooking mishap, please send it to letscook!@heraldpubs.com or mail to Mascoutah Herald, PO Box C, Mascoutah IL 62258. Thanks and Happy Cooking!

Farm bill critical to keeping America’s food supply affordable

By Richard Guebert Jr.

With winter weather on the horizon, farmers across the state are gearing up for another productive spring planting season. Once the frost melts and the soil temperatures rise, it will be time to hit the fields, but for many farmers high prices for fertilizer, fuel and other critical tools remain a challenge.

Like consumers, farmers are feeling the pain of ongoing inflation. The ripple effects of the war in Ukraine and supply chain issues pose significant

hurdles for farmers. Heading into the spring season and farm bill negotiations, these difficulties remain top of mind at Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB).

In early February, the United States Department of Agriculture’s latest Farm Sector Income Forecast report indicated that U.S. net farm income will fall nearly 16% from the previous year while production costs are expected to increase more than 4%. That’s on top of an already record increase in production costs in 2022.

While fuel and fertilizer prices are expected to soften, other costs related to marketing, storage and transportation are expected to increase 11%, and labor by 7%. Rising interest rates and farm sector costs are another concern as the USDA projects farm sector debt will increase \$31.9 billion to a record \$535 billion.

General inflation is a long-term issue squeezing the pocketbooks of families across America, but the farm income forecast is a reminder that farmers are not benefiting

from higher prices at the grocery store.

While some commodity prices are rising, farmers are grappling with additional circumstances, such as drought, avian influenza and supply and labor costs. After accounting for business expenses, farmers’ share of the food dollar is only 7.4 cents.

That is why the farm bill is so important for everyone, not just farmers. Farm bill programs provide farmers with critical support to mitigate natural disasters and other crises. Other programs secure America’s domestic food supply, which keeps our agricultural economy strong while providing consumers with affordable, high-quality products at the grocery store.

The farm bill also addresses hunger through nutrition programs, which serve our most vulnerable populations and ensure that everyone has access to affordable, fresh and



Guebert

healthy food. Conservation is another key focus of the farm bill, which invests in agriculture research and conservation programs to increase sustainability.

IFB is dedicated to working with our members and elected officials on both sides of the aisle to pass a farm bill that meets the needs of all agriculture segments.

Our members and leaders believe the farm bill must maintain the link between nutrition and commodity programs. IFB also supports maintaining the current crop insurance program, providing price and revenue protection for farmers, and retaining both SNAP and TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program) in the farm bill in their current form.

As we head into another eventful spring, I look forward to working with our members and elected officials to get this critical piece of legislation to the president’s desk.

Richard Guebert Jr. is president of the Illinois Farm Bureau.

This story was distributed through a cooperative project between Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Press Association. For more food and farming news, visit FarmWeekNow.com.

A step toward better elections

By Jim Baumann

We have a personal interest in legislation filed recently by Elgin Democratic state Rep. Anna Moeller.

You do, too.

Moeller’s bill would require candidates for political office to include email addresses on petitions filed with their statement of candidacy. Already, candidates provide a standard mailing address. This legislation would move that requirement into the 21st century.

For us in the news media, that means assured access to candidates, so reporters can cover their campaigns more accurately and thoroughly and media outlets can reach them for basic information, such as candidate questionnaires, that voters use to be more informed about their selections.

That increased quantity of information is certainly valuable for you as a voter, and the increased access can allow you to interact with campaigns in ways that not only provide details about candidates’ po-

sitions but also enable candidates to interact with you in ways that help them refine and clarify their message.

As originally filed, HB3965 applies to candidates in statewide and county primaries, but Moeller told us she plans an amendment that will extend the requirement to municipal, school and township elections as well.

This will add an important dimension to the bill. Candidates for local office sometimes are not as media savvy as those seeking higher positions, who often have more campaign experience or even professional staffs. Even in some local cases in which candidates have provided contact information, clerks have refused to release it without a Freedom of Information Act request.

Requiring candidates to include an email address will clarify the process and better enable the news media to treat all candidates equally. The requirement is not controversial,

and Moeller says she already has support lined up to sponsor the measure in the Senate should it make it through the House.

We’re counting on lawmakers from both chambers to get on board and sign on as co-sponsors as the legislation moves through the General Assembly.

In a series of editorials last December on little-discussed topics that could improve our election system, the Daily Herald emphasized the value of this simple and practical adjustment to candidates’ filing requirements.

It’s encouraging to find responsive lawmakers who recognize that that value extends not just to the agencies that cover local and statewide political campaigns, but also and most importantly to the voters who rely on that coverage and who need to be able to interact with candidates and their campaigns.

Jim Baumann is executive editor of the Daily Herald.