

Hello, I am Alan P. Welcome to Browerville.

In the past many political dignitaries have been hosted here, but my memory tells me this is the second time for a hearing. The first was with Rep. Ken Otremba on dairy when dairy was in trouble because of low prices making it hard for young people to make the decision to go into farming. There was good testimony all afternoon with some stating it was difficult to upgrade equipment to stay in business or get the next generation involved.

One legislator after the hearing adjourned said whenever their farm had a cash flow problem or needed a new piece of equipment they sold a lot or 2 for housing being located next to a larger community and a major hiway it worked good for them.

But not in Todd County.

We all know what has happened to the number of dairy farmers in Minnesota. And Todd County is no different. Todd County's climate and landscape is not as conducive to the crop yields that can be expected in counties south of us.

Some of the problems that are afflicting us now as a whole county are the cause and effect of the land not generating enough income to keep pace with our city cousins. Because every acre that goes out of production or the profit from that acre that exits the county by non-resident land owners are dollars that bleed the life from the community and the county as a whole.

Here are some numbers I got from the County Assessor's Office.

We have 12,706.37 acres in poplar tree around the county. Putting that into perspective, Todd County has 28 townships. Generally a township has 36 sections each being 640 acres or 1 square mile. That's 23,040 acres per township. The 12,706.37 acres is over 1/2 of a township owned by a foreign company. Where does the money go?

No homestead agriculture has 94,187.13 acres. Homestead is defined in the dictionary by "home and land occupied and worked by a family." These lands are sometimes owned by larger landowners in the county not qualifying for homestead credit, but many are not.

The 94,187.13 acres is part of a total 497,425 agricultural acres. The 94,187 is almost 20% of the county agricultural acres. There are not recreational, seasonal, lakeshore or residential. So of the nearly 20% of non-homestead land in the county how much of the money stays in the county?

I spoke with the local FSA Office in Long Prairie on Monday and asked what percent of their correspondence goes to landowners at out of county addresses. They said they don't track that, but at least 40%, and maybe it could be over 50%.

With agricultural commodities a major part of the county's economy and the prices the farmers have been getting for the last couple of decades, it is no wonder you are here asking about poverty.

Thank you for the opportunity.