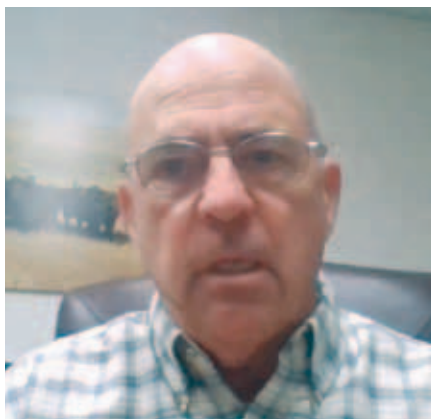


Mike Callicrate

## Local and Regional Food Infrastructure, Not Monopoly

*Mike Callicrate is a Colorado cattleman, founder of Ranch Foods Direct, and operator of Mike's "No Bull" Blog. He made this presentation to the Schiller Institute's international conference, "The World at a Crossroad: Two Months into the New Administration," during the fourth panel on March 21, "The Challenge of Famine and Pandemics: The Coincidence of Opposites, or Mass Extinction?"*



Schiller Institute

Mike Callicrate

The impoverishment and malnourishment of a civilization is directly correlated with the consolidation and industrialization of the food supply. We saw that in the United States with all of the empty shelves during the COVID outbreak. The supply chain breakdowns, the vulnerability. We simply cannot go back to that system. The small plants like mine were able to produce at 400% of the year earlier, because our workers just stepped up and worked harder and longer.

Plus, we had a supply chain that

Hi, I'm Mike Callicrate. I'm in Colorado Springs at my food hub and meat operation, Ranch Foods Direct.

I wanted to talk about world hunger and poverty across the globe, and wanted to discuss a little bit about what kind of a food system will best serve humanity's interests. It won't be a highly-concentrated monoculture that's centrally planned by a handful of big corporations. It won't be an extraction-mining operation, because those only have a very short life in the course of human existence. It won't be technology saving us and feeding us in the future. It'll be more people on the land, producing food that we can eat, rather than food that has to be processed into something that, honestly, isn't good for our health.

So, the question is, will humanity prosper or perish?

Since COVID, what do we have, and what do we need to do to go forward? We know that more people may die from hunger than the coronavirus this year, says Oxfam. The virus has killed a lot of people, it's just rocking our economies. It's shown how vulnerable we are with an industrial food system that is using supply chains that fall apart with a disease outbreak like COVID.

So, what would serve our needs better?

I would say a more decentralized system would most certainly serve our system better; a more local, regional food system type of approach would serve our food system much better, and citizens across the globe.

didn't run out of livestock. I was able to just increase slaughter and get more meat on the shelves and take care of our community. Unlike any of the big meat packers, whose systems all failed, along with their retail partners and food service companies. They all failed to meet the needs of humanity during this COVID crisis.

### Healthy Soils, Healthy Communities

Concentration of power and wealth is the greatest threat to any free society. So, anything we do going forward to feed the world, I think has to involve local and regional food infrastructure. The greatest worry and threat to a concentrated food system is local—local food and people feeding themselves from their own communities.

So, the model that we've had now for the last 50 years, the industrial model, this is what it's done to our land. It's a mining operation. It mines the wealth from healthy soil, it destroys our land for the short-term benefit of a few big global corporations. We have to go after the big global corporations and their monopoly power over our food supply.

Look at the land loss; look at the soil loss. Franklin Roosevelt talked about a nation that destroys its soils, destroys itself. This is a picture I took from my airplane on December 24, 2013. This dirt cloud was 200 miles long, from Colorado Springs to the Kansas border. It was 12,500 feet high; it was over 4 miles across, moving south at 50 mph. Eastern Colorado continues to experi-

ence a tremendous amount of soil loss. With it, a lost ability to feed ourselves. The white color of the soil in this photograph is very indicative of the soil health in eastern Colorado. This is land that has been allowed to wash away and blow away for generations and decades. Now, you cannot grow food on this land without chemical fertilizers. Only animals can heal this land; only animals and manure from those animals can heal this land. In order to have animals back on the land, it takes people returning to the land.

So, we've got to localize, we've got to regionalize, and we've got to control the monopolies and the predators in the marketplace to allow new infrastructure to be able to succeed and to do well and provide for our needs. I think the solution to poverty and hunger is to break up the monopolies, while building local, regional food infrastructure around communities, and healthy soil.

Here are four books that I hope many of you will read,\* and support legislation, support policies that break up the monopolies and support independent business. Let people across the globe feed themselves from their own communities. That will take some major

policy changes. To take the land out of the control of the modern-day land-lords, and put people back in charge of their own food infrastructure and ability to feed themselves.

This is the Callicrate regenerative farming and ranching model. Notice it's a circular model that goes from soil back to soil. Healthy soils make healthy people, make healthy communities.

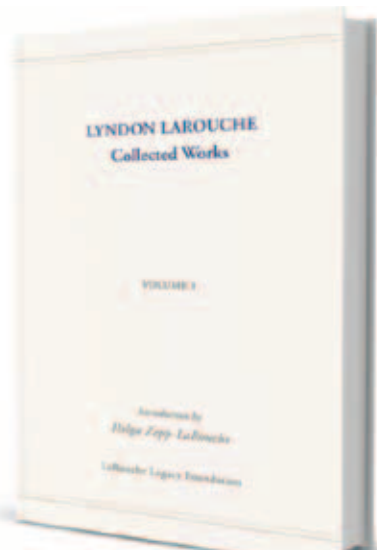
The current system is a linear system of extraction; it's a mining operation. We have to get rid of it, and we have to replace it with this more regenerative farming and ranching system that we've developed at Callicrate Cattle Company. You can go to <http://mikecallicrate.com> and check out my blog and the other things that we do.

I really appreciate the opportunity to be on today, and to discuss this with you all. Thank you.

\* *Monopolized: Life in the Age of Corporate Power*, by David Dayen; *Break 'Em Up: Recovering Our Freedom from Big Ag, Big Tech, and Big Money*, by Zephyr Teachout; *Liberty from All Masters: The New American Autocracy vs. The Will of the People*, by Barry C. Lynn; *Monopolies Suck: 7 Ways Big Corporations Rule Your Life and How to Take Back Control*, by Sally Hubbard.

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