

Senator Kevin Breene

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I wasn't always a dairy farmer. I started back in 1976 and one of the people that was a mentor to me and helped me and taught me how to farm was Aaron. Maybe you don't know that besides being a dairy farmer Aaron played professional baseball when he was younger. He tells pretty good stories about this and that and things that happened to him along the way. Well, he keeps telling these stories about me getting stuck in a puddle. That was the first year I farmed. As time went on I did get a little bit smarter. I got so I could plant my own corn and whatnot, but I still had him chopping it. So I planted a field and we were chopping and filling the truck right up, we got to a place that was kind of tight, he says, "well, Jesus crow," he says, "why the heck did you ever do it like this?"

I said, "Well, you taught me almost everything I know." I said, "I did just what you told me to do."

Yesterday, when I was walking into the statehouse, I saw my good friend Stephen Anderson, Representative Anderson. I've only been in the General Assembly for five years. Steve has been there since what? Eighty-eight, eighty-nine? He's been there a long time. We had other issues that had to do with dairy farming before the Compact. Steve Anderson was the guy who took an interest in the farming community. He's not a farmer, he's a schoolteacher. He comes from Coventry, a place 35,000 people large. It was just something that interested him. And when the Compact came along he stepped right up and helped to promote that. He would be more appropriate promoting something other than farming, other than the fact that it was something he wanted to do. He's a heck of a good guy. While at different meetings with him on the subject, discussions got heated over different issues. Because it wasn't something he was making his livelihood off of, he could have just walked out the door and said, "to heck with it." But he stayed right there for us, and I know he helped Dan Smith a lot.

Lastly I want to say thank you to everybody from all of the six states that participate in this process in both the consumer level and the industry level and every other level in between.

I was up in New York a couple of weeks ago visiting some friends and I was kind of happy when I came home because people were somewhat optimistic for the first time in several years that maybe the dairy business is getting a little bit better, finally. What that means I don't know, but hopefully we'll get a little better price than we have had in the past. The Compact certainly helps to keep us in business. As I sit in the general assembly I am the only dairy farmer out of 150 people up there. I go up there and I like to tell them most of the stuff that goes on in the statehouse I don't understand, but once in a while with things like manure spreaders and environmental issues, I do. Thank you for your time and thank you for the award.