

'Roadrunning' with VGN has been worth every minute



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This will be my second to last NCAE agricultural labor column for Great American Media Services. As they say, "all good things come to an end," and writing for this publication each month has certainly been one of the good things in my life. I am more than a little sad to leave you because writing to you each month has been among the most rewarding aspects of my work these past several years, and I believe we have made a difference for our industry.

As I announced before, I will retire from NCAE at the end of 2017. NCAE has been working for the past six months to find a successor, and I am pleased to announce that by the time you read this column, Michael Marsh will have joined us. Michael and I will

work together for the rest of 2017 to assure a smooth transition.

Those of you who attend the NCAE Ag Employer's Labor Forum in Las Vegas Nov. 29-Dec. 1 will get to meet Michael there. You can read the full press release on Michael in NCAE's website. He has a strong background in finance and in agricultural leadership, having served on the California Almond Board and as president and CEO of Western United Dairymen. Michael is originally from Wyoming, and will be relocating to Washington, D.C. from California to join NCAE.

The labor issues and other legal, regulatory and legislative topics we must battle every day just to assure that our businesses and our industry survive, are a never ending struggle. I am increasingly drawn to the words of an Emmylou Harris song, "All The Roadrunning," that talks about whether endlessly repeating the daily show is worth it or not.

The lyric is: "There's no pretending

I'm not a fool, for riding around and around – but if it's all for nothing – all the roadrunning's been in vain." I know that advocacy work on labor and other issues critical to your businesses must seem like endlessly riding in circles, and that there is always a temptation to step aside and just let the chips fall as they may.

After spending most of the past 25 years focused primarily on regulatory and legislative advocacy and education for crop protection products and agricultural employers at both state and federal levels, I know that all the roadrunning is NOT in vain. We may not chalk up big wins, but we are still in business. Without constant advocacy, constant vigilance and constant effort and support on your part, I do not believe we would still have the ability to farm and harvest on the individual independent business scale that we currently pursue.

Long story short: all the battles, all the roadrunning involved, have been

worth it, are worth it, and I cannot imagine a better group of partners to have walked the path with than each and every one of you in this readership.

You will still see my byline occasionally under the banner of the Agricultural Safety and Health Council of America (ASHCA). I will work part time as their president and CEO. I hope to see some, if not many, of you in Scottsdale, Arizona, at the end of February 2018 at ASHCA's North America Ag Safety Summit. See "Raising Safety" at www.ASHCA.org.

For more information on Michael Marsh, as well as the 2017 Las Vegas Ag Employer's Labor Forum agenda and registration, and the 2018 NCAE Annual Meeting in Washington, DC visit NCAE's website.

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