

OSTROM WORKSHOP COLLOQUIUM SERIES

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“The Origins of Economic Regulation in the United States: The Interstate Commerce and Bureau of Animal Industry Acts”



Monday, November 4, 2019

12:00–1:00 PM • Ostrom Workshop, 513 N. Park

It has been widely argued that the Interstate Commerce Act (ICA) of 1887, which established the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC), represented the first significant step in the growth of federal economic regulation. Theories of the rise of federal regulation typically focus on explaining the origins of the ICC, which was established to regulate railroads. But the ICC was neither the first, the most aggressive, nor the most important federal regulatory agency of the period; the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) was founded earlier (1884) and was far more powerful. The countervailing power and anti-competition paradigms common in framing the ICA are not useful for understanding the BAI Act. The BAI was designed to create an environment freer of contagious livestock diseases; essentially a global public good. It succeeded beyond its founders' wildest expectations.

~ TM

[Paul Rhode](#) is an economic historian working on a range of topics including the economic development of the American West and US agricultural development. He is Professor of Economics at the University of Michigan, Research Associate at the NBER, and former editor of the *Journal of Economic History*. He is co-author of *Creating Abundance: Biological Innovation in American Agricultural Development* and *Arresting Contagion: Science, Policy and Conflict over Animal Disease Control*, (both with Alan Olmstead) and *Capital in the Nineteenth Century* (with Robert Gallman).

Presentations are open to the public and are live streamed (see our website for URL and papers). You are welcome to bring your lunch. For questions, contact Allison Sturgeon (sturgeon@iu.edu; 812/855–3151).