

Senator Mike Brubaker, Chairman
Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee
457 Main Capitol Building
Senate Box 203036
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3036

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September 11, 2007

Dear Senator Brubaker,

My family and I are extremely interested in keeping raw milk legal and would like the following letter to be considered in your hearing on the production and sale of raw milk on September 18, 2007.

My wife who is 8 months pregnant, our 2.5 year old daughter, and I have been drinking raw milk for the last 4 years. We absolutely love it. We drink about 5 gallons every 10 days and never had an ounce of problems with it. We have been getting raw milk by taking turns with our neighbors driving to the farm. Currently, there are 4 families getting over 10 gallons of raw milk weekly in our neighborhood, as well as another 3 or 4 families not far from us who also drive to the farm to get the milk. We all love it but wish it were more easily accessible.

We go out of the way to get this milk primarily because of the health benefits and taste. Raw milk is wonderful, our daughter has straight teeth, is rarely sick, and looks strong and sturdy. In this day of braces, due to underdeveloped jaws, and so many broken bones there is a desperate need for real milk. The nutrients gained from raw animal products cannot be replicated by vitamins or other foods. I feel raw milk is essential to the health and well being of my family!

The current bias against raw milk by the PA health inspectors shows a small-mindedness of draconian proportions. These are farmers selling milk, not LSD, or building Meth labs! Farmers should be able to sell raw milk to the public without needing any type of permit, so long as it is sold directly to the consumer. Currently, the PA poultry law allows a farmer to be exempt from inspection for direct sales up to 20,000 birds. There is no reason why dairy farmers could not have a similar exemption for direct sales. Being a poultry producer, I am extremely careful making sure my chickens don't spoil knowing I am selling them to my community, shaking hands with the people who purchase my chickens. A dairy farmer who sells his milk raw to consumers will be especially clean, and if he is not, his customers will see it and go elsewhere.

I am also deeply concerned about accurate testing and negative press releases. All farmers should have a chance to independently test all samples, all tests need to be the most accurate possible, and all press releases should stick to the facts. Similarly, if later tests show that earlier press releases were wrong then they should be corrected! For example, a preliminary tests shows positive, then farmer bashing ensues with terrible

press releases, then the more accurate testing by independent labs show that the milk was fine. Shouldn't the health department issue an apology and a "We were wrong"?

As for the people talking about food safety, there are kids getting food borne illnesses from lettuce, peanut butter and fast food joints all the time. Meat packers "voluntarily" recall beef contaminated with e coli, while good clean healthy dairies are shut down on the basis of a faulty milk test. Why the double standard?

Let our small dairies and farms once again become the backbone of Pennsylvania, healing our families, our communities and our local economy!

Sincerely,



David, Amanda, and Eleanor Chirico

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