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**Senator Mike Brubaker  
457 Main Capitol Bldg.  
Senate Box 203036  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3036**

**The Honorable Senator Brubaker,**

**First, let me thank you for the opportunity to express my views on the issue of raw milk marketing and sales in Pennsylvania. I have had my raw milk producer permit for two years. In that time, my sales have continually grown as the demand for my raw milk increases. My family and I have a small dairy farm in Armstrong County. We have been farming this land since 1894. My parents, sister, and I farm approximately 200 acres of corn, oats, and hay. We milk 30 registered Holstein cows and have an additional 40 head of young stock. My father is 75 years old and does all of the field work. My mother, 73 years old, helps milk the cows, feeds calves, and does all of the accounting for the farm. My sister also helps on the farm, feeding and milking cows, as well as holding a full-time job off the farm at a bank. I take care of the feeding and breeding programs, manage the herd health and milking. We all put in at least 14 hours a day, 6-7 days per week, 365 days a year.**

**Pertaining to the raw milk producer permit, I can honestly say that my raw milk customers are well educated and have researched the raw milk issue thoroughly. Their reasons for purchasing my raw milk vary from taste preference to health reasons. One customer has an autistic child who functions normally when using raw milk, she claims. Another has a child with severe food allergies. This child cannot drink pasteurized milk but drinks raw milk with no problems. Another customer is unable to produce enzymes to digest her food. Since she has changed her diet to include raw milk, she no longer takes any medication. Several customers have indicated the same digestive system problems, noted that they saw more and more doctors, received many medications- none of which worked. All have related to me that using raw milk has alleviated their problems and that they are now healthy.**

While I agree that the standards for raw milk , raw milk products, and raw milk producers need to be kept high, I would like to see some modifications to allow me to provide my customers with butter, cheese, and yogurt made from my raw milk. My customers are continually asking for these products which I have the ability to make but cannot legally sell. I work very hard to provide a safe, healthy product of raw fluid milk,, and I feel I can do the same producing other raw dairy products.

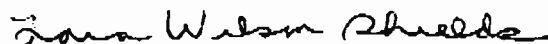
I would like to see the tuberculosis and brucellosis testing of the cattle as required by state law for raw milk producers be eliminated, as Pennsylvania's cattle are certified TB and brucellosis free. This testing is quite costly to me. Also, standardized procedures need to be established so that we would be better able to work with the PA Dept. of Agriculture inspectors. My first 1 ½ years holding a permit were very difficult when it came to dealing with inspectors, even though I had followed all the rules and regulations. Rules should be amended with regards to allowing us to market other raw milk products.

People, in general, have no idea where their food comes from. To them, it miraculously appears in the grocery store. Most have no knowledge of the people or labor that provide their food. Being able to sell raw milk and raw milk products at our farm shows our customers exactly where their food is produced. This is what our customers want. They come to our farm, visit with us, see our cows and watch the milk flow from clean, well cared for cows to their milk jug. We run a meticulously clean milking operation- we did so even before we were permitted to sell raw milk. We would do no less- our family uses that same milk on our kitchen table.

If we, as farmers, can make a profit at selling our milk raw from the farm, we will in turn, reinvest that profit in the farm and our local community. We make sure to use local businesses for farm improvements, equipment, feed, veterinarians, advertising, etc.

Thank you for holding this hearing and for the opportunity to express my views to you regarding raw milk products and producers in Pennsylvania. Allowing an expansion of this business while still holding producers to strict but fair sanitation requirements may help Pennsylvania's family farms to continue to remain viable and profitable.

Thank you,



Lara Wilson Shields