

Help farmers provide natural foods

To the editor:

I am an educated consumer with a master's degree, and PhD. candidate in nutrition.

For health reasons I choose to feed my family wholesome, natural and more traditional foods. As I compose this letter, my rights as a Pennsylvania citizen to purchase some of these foods are being restricted by the PA Department of Agriculture, among other state agencies.

I am speaking of the recent incidences of Pennsylvania farmers Mark Nolt of Newville, Levi Miller of Bird-in-Hand and other farmers who have been cited for selling raw milk and raw dairy products "without a permit."

The PA Dept. of Agriculture insists they must have a permit even though these are small operations that the law specifically exempts from this requirement. Under current Pennsylvania law, a farmer with a permit may sell raw milk. However, his other milk products, including yogurt, cream, butter and cheese, must all be pasteurized. Pasteurization is a heating process that alters milk's amino acids, reduces vitamin and mineral content and destroys all its enzymes. These are all necessary for our systems to assimilate all the bodybuilding factors that make milk one of nature's most nourishing foods.

If you buy "safe" pasteurized cheese from your local grocery store, within three weeks or so you will no doubt find that cheese to be moldy and inedible. My own personal experience with cheese made from raw milk from local farms such as those of Mr. Nolt and Mr. Miller can be safely kept in my

refrigerator for as long as six months without any mold forming. There are a lot of good, biological reasons for this, but that is proof enough for me that raw dairy is safe and preferable to highly processed dairy "foods."

Furthermore, Mr. Nolt and Mr. Miller have only sold their raw dairy products to consumers via private contracts. These, to my knowledge, are not and should not be illegal in our commonwealth. Therefore, I feel they are being unjustly harassed.

State agencies have illegally seized personal property and are creating hardships for Pennsylvania farmers who sell raw dairy products privately to consumers who willingly, and with full knowledge of any "alleged" health risks related to such products, seek to purchase them.

Additionally, these same agencies are wasting valuable resources trying to enforce archaic law. In fact, the "law" they cited to Mr. Nolt and Mr. Miller may not even exist. At best, these laws should have no application whatsoever to those of us who willingly seek out and purchase such products because of their proven healthful benefits.

I invite you to join with me in writing to your state senator and representative. Urge them to provide relief for not only Mr. Nolt and Mr. Miller, but for other hardworking small Pennsylvania farmers who provide natural, unadulterated and wholesome food products.

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