

2777.

Hello,

I am a raw milk consumer and I respectfully request that you reject proposed regulation #2777 Department of Agriculture 2-160: Milk Sanitation. I am an intelligent, discriminating consumer and do not need protection from my farmer-neighbor or local market or store. If they provide an unsatisfactory product or fail to appropriately correct a problem they will be out of business quickly. At that level, State regulation does not and cannot provide a higher level policing; every consumer polices that supplier with every transaction and has direct enforcement options. Where we need government involvement is where the suppliers or markets are no longer our neighbors but rather corporations created by the State. Food safety is not size neutral. Larger operations are more complex, problems have much more far-reaching impacts and we have no direct meaningful recourse if there is a problem. The regulation needs to focus on those operations.

Although some regulations on this latter group are necessary, the regulation could be much simpler if they were performance standards, requiring that the end product achieves a desired result. How that result is achieved is the producers' responsibility, not the State's. That would result in the State's role being to test for compliance, a function that could easily be contracted out, rather than inserting itself in micromanaging the operation.

Food safety has become a major issue in this country, and I feel that the main threat is corporate agri-business. Small farmers are the safest place for me to buy food for my family. I have the utmost confidence in the products that I buy from my local farmers. I can talk to them about how they produce their food or feed their animals, and generally I have a sense that they truly love what they do. With a giant factory farm, not only is it next to impossible to get information about their practices; it is a given that they are in it for the profits, not a love of farming.

Again, I view the proposed regulation as excessive, and in some cases onerous and unnecessary. These flaws warrant that the proposed regulation be rejected.

Thank you.

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