

2777

Cooper, Kathy

From: Kim and Ann Seeley [milkyway1@frontiernet.net]
Sent: Tuesday, October 05, 2010 9:05 AM
To: IRRC
Subject: proposed dairy regulations
Attachments: statement to PDA and IRRRC1010.docx

RECEIVED
IRRC

2010 OCT -5 A 9 20

Dear IRRRC,
attached are my comments concerning the Dairy regulations. thank you for your efforts.

kim seeley

Dear Fellow Pennsylvanians,

RECEIVED
IRRC

I am Kim Seeley, a third generation dairy farmer, representing Milky Way Farms, a Pennsylvania dairy permit holder since 1962. We are among the oldest State permitted, dairy producer/farms in the state. My family dairy farm has worked cooperatively with the Department of Agriculture for many years. I have been an advocate for food safety and have defended regulatory actions whenever the regulations, partnered sound Science, and common sense.

I appreciate the efforts being made to “update” our supposedly deficient Milk sanitation laws. However, I would like to call attention to some inadequacies in the development of these new dairy regulations, which I have read thoroughly, as well as all the testimony from last year. After reading the introductory Questions asked by the IRRC concerning why these regulatory changes are being requested, I am disappointed with the accuracy of the answers given, by the representatives for the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA).

In questions (8), (11), (13), and (14), (15-20) the answers are one of the following: incomplete, inaccurate, overstated, understated, or speculative. As a full time dairy farmer and milk permit holder, I feel that PDA has not reached out to the farm sector with openness and truthful reflection about the consequences of these decisions. Let me be specific.

After reading Part (8) A., PDA offers that there have been many changes within the Dairy industry since 1985 which warrant these new regulations. As a dairy farmer the most significant change has been the loss of so many of my fellow dairy farmers. Many of the changes called for under these regulations appear to be linked only to the advice of the FDA and the USDA, for the movement of milk out of our state by the National Interstate Milk shippers Association. Does our state not have the capacity to stand up and defend our existing protocols, if they have served our state well and protected our citizens’ food safety for many years?

In part (13), the statement by PDA: “The foregoing benefits are not readily quantifiable” (which closes the paragraph), admits there are no benefits to Pennsylvania residents, dairy producers, and permit holders. This whole section is incredibly false. The positive benefits to stake-holders, are undefined and no tangible returns have been presented. Yes large, already monopolized Dairy Processors will benefit from uniform FDA regulations, which was not mentioned by PDA. As far as the overstated benefits for most of us small processors and raw milk permit holders there will be none. We ultimately, will be hurt financially by these changes.

In question (14) where PDA should have given the IRRC, and the citizens of Pennsylvania the scientific proof, none is given.

In (15-20) the costs and impacts for producer/processors have been understated or incompletely calculated. I feel that PDA should have reached out to some of the long time, surviving farmer/processors, for actual financial statistics to base these assumptions on. Our States’ dairy industry is in crisis right now, and these regulations are aimed at some of the few producers who have actually

started having some success. Farmers are at a breaking point where we are ready to publicly stand up and fight against any further unfair, over- regulation.

As the rest of these regulatory changes are spelled out in this document, it is obvious to a seasoned dairy farmer/processor of 35+ years, they have been written with a bias against the small family dairy farms and small processors from Pennsylvania. The changes regarding monthly testing, milk bottle definitions, and additional facility renovations, will all be a hardship for farmers and provide no additional benefit to customers.

This regulatory overhaul has been poorly conceived from the beginning. As a long time, regulation abiding permit holder, it would be hard for me to take any further regulatory oversight or even have respect for PDA if these pass. This whole process has been flawed with misrepresentation of the facts, and lack of communication between PDA and Pennsylvania's overworked, family dairy farmers.

Today I ask the IRRC to serve the citizens of Pennsylvania, and especially the dairy families of this state, and to stop these proposed regulations.

Sincerely,

Kim Seeley

Milky Way Farms

President of the Board of Directors/PASA