

Testimony of Tom Maurer

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My name is Tom Maurer. I am a retired farmer, a food choice activist and have been drinking raw milk for over 15 years. Obviously I survived that risky behavior.

There is this idea that regulations produce safe food. If that were true, the US should have no problems, as we have the most regulated food system on the planet. Yet, we have millions of eggs, tons of beef, truckloads of produce, and other products recalled with sufficient frequency that people are concerned but not surprised. This is because food regulations are not always about safety. They are often about control for the benefit of a few.

We do not need regulation #2777 Department of Agriculture 2-160: Milk Sanitation, particularly those sections dealing with raw milk. Raw milk is purchased by customers that are closely connected to the farmers producing this food. Consequently, there is a continuous policing and feedback process that assures that customers receive a safe, nutritious product that is produced in a manner acceptable to them. Farmers will not stay in business long if they fail to produce a safe product or meet their customers' needs. Food safety is far more important to us than it could ever be to any bureaucrat. Government regulations cannot add to that process or provide a higher degree of safety. They can however, hamper it, which the proposed regulation does. Is that its purpose?

The State allows the sale of tobacco with minimal restraints despite the known public health problems it causes. It is also rushing into natural gas extraction knowing the environmental and public health issues that have resulted in other places. Yet the state seems determined to make the production of raw milk, a product used for generations, as difficult as possible to produce, under the guise of public health and safety. Could it be that if raw milk were heavily taxed so the State received substantial revenue as it does from tobacco or as it anticipates from gas extraction, that it would look far more favorably on raw milk and raw milk products?

My food is important to me and I have the right to purchase the food I choose from whom I choose. This is not a privilege granted by government. It's time for regulations to be based on facts and reality, not special interest profits. You have a small segment of the farming population that is succeeding at meeting the needs and desires of its customers. Why not nurture it rather than harass it as the raw milk portion of the proposed regulation does?

I respectfully request that proposed regulation #2777 Department of Agriculture 2-160: Milk Sanitation, be withdrawn or rejected.