

Testimony to be presented to the House Ag. Committee in regards to the Raw Milk Bill proposed by Rural Vt.

From: Laini Fondiller

Lazy Lady Farm

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Please pass this written testimony to the Chair of the House Ag. committee.

Thank you!

1) Lazy Lady feels that Rural Vt has been disingenuous with the legislators in asking for relaxed regulations because the farm is small. 2) I was on the rural Vt. board from 1994-1999. 3) During that time, from 1996-1997, Rural Vt helped me get my cheese making license by petitioning the legislature and by providing me with a pro bono lawyer to initiate the ruling from the legislature to the dept. of ag. 4) Lazy Lady Farm at that time milked 12 goats by hand and was making cheese in the kitchen. We wanted to be licensed and regulated in order to grow the business but the current interpretations of the licensing at the time did not allow small scale processing. We had a minimal amount of electricity that was being made by a few solar panels. How water was made with a solar panel and a 1850's style laundry wood stove. I had no money to my name and no means to borrow. I did have passion and a will. 5) With an agreement by the dept of ag through the lawyer, I was allowed to build a small 10 x 14 foot room off the side of the house. It had a poured cement floor, washable walls, s.s. sinks, formica counter tops. I still milked by hand and made cheese after each milking as I had no means to cool the milk. I still heated the water with the above mentioned methods. We spent \$5000. The state even allowed me to build a home made pasteurizer from a 5 gallon stainless steel pot that could be hitched up to a recorder and a stirring device that was a drill attached to the wall with a hand made long drill bit that reached into the pot and was heated on a gas stove. The milk was cooled down by placing it in a sink full of cold water and stirred by hand. 6) Soon after getting my license was able to get into several co-ops and shortly after that I met up with Provision's Int'. I won a national award for my cheese through the ACS a few months after getting my license. The rest is history 7) We have since grown and now have a full sized cheese plant. We milk 40 registered Alpines. We have 1 full time employee and 3 part time (their choice) employees. We milk with machines and have several large solar arrays and a wind turbine. We now produce 15,000 lbs of cheese per year. In conclusion.....I repeat that Rural Vt is being disingenuous about the start up cost for a small operation is prohibitive. The dept of ag, as you can see above, was very flexible with my cheese operation. The plant was small in the beginning but it met all the regulations.