



House Natural Resources Committee:

April 11, 2018

I am writing this letter to support the incredible effort the dairy farmers of Vermont have demonstrated over NOT JUST the last 2 years, but 20 years plus that I have lived in Vermont on improving their land and the waterways around them.

I am a dairy nutritionist for Cargill Feed and Nutrition. I have been doing this for 35 years in western New York and now in Vermont my whole career. I would like to explain my story from the perspective of how we, as nutritionists, have evolved around the science of feeding a cow as well as listening to the public about antibiotic and sulfur use in grains and feeds. Among the many evolutions has been the reduction of phosphorus in balancing a healthy diet for dairy cows.

When I first started, we use to balance diets at 0.5-0.6% phosphorus levels on a concentration level. This would equate to 100-110 grams/cow (.22-.24 lbs.). Over the years, we have challenged this as well as many other aspects of dairy nutrition. Today, we balance diets at 0.35-0.4% phosphorus!! This equates to a 30% reduction in total phosphorus consumption by a cow!!! This has been in place for 15 years!!!

We do NOT add any phosphorus in mineral form, such as mono ammonium phosphate or dicalcium phosphate to the grain, unless the forages supplied are low in it!! All phosphorus use is accounted for in sample assays of forages and the natural phosphorus in the grains used. The results have been showing up in forage sample assays in the form of LESS phosphorus content. Our Vermont cows have remained very healthy.

The lower phosphorus levels in forages are also greatly attributed to the agronomists who work with dairy farmers and have switched the fertilizer recipes to reduce or not use any added phosphorus to the fertilizers ...Phosphorus is added when needed only....

Once again, this practice has been going on for many years and NOT because some study claims dairy farms had to reduce phosphorus loads.

In summary, it really hurts me to see all the negative publicity and especially FALSE and unscientific information being published against the farmers. I know for a fact that the farming community cares deeply about animal welfare as well as their land. So please let's rally around them and support them for all the incredible improvements they've accomplished that the public is not aware of!!!

Sincerely,
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