

Testimony on Agritourism      Beth Kennett

Introduction: Thank you for allowing me to meet you today and discuss Vermont agritourism

Beth and her husband Bob have operated Liberty Hill Farm since 1979. Beth has operated a farm vacation business, providing lodging and meals for guests from around the world since 1984.

Beth served as the founding Chair of VT Farms! Association, the statewide agritourism association, since 1996. Beth over the years has represented the agritourism community on national, regional and statewide boards including President of Farmstay US, LLC; Agricultural Marketing Resource Center (AgMRC) Advisory Council, National Agritourism Professionals Association; VT Farm Service Agency State Committee, UVM delegate for the Council on Agriculture, Research and Education, VT Travel Information Council, Eastern States Exposition VT trustee, UVM Extension Advisory board, VT Dairy Promotion Council, chair of the Joint Research committee for dairy, and a delegate/ spokesperson for Agrimark/Cabot Creamery Cooperative. She currently represents the agricultural community on the VT Travel Information Council, VT Chamber of Commerce Hospitality committee, CT River Joint Commission, the CT River Watershed Farmers Alliance, and the Vermont Working Lands Enterprise Board.

Beth was honored to represent the VT tourism industry with Senator Leahy's trade mission to Ireland in 1998. She has been a spokesperson for agritourism as rural economic development at conferences and workshops regionally, nationally and internationally. She was honored as the VT Innkeeper of the Year in 2013. Beth is the 2018 inductee to the VT Agricultural Hall of Farm Ag Innovator's award.

Beth has been a strong advocate for the agritourism movement and its economic impact for farm families and their communities. Agritourism provides an opportunity for farmers to engage with their neighbors, their community, and the broader consumer population creating dialogue about food production, sustainability, environmental stewardship, and economic issues for rural economies. When Beth first invited guests to their farm in 1984 it was before the farm to table, local food, face of the farmer messages were popular. Agritourism has become a worldwide phenomenon with Vermont an engaged part of the movement. Agritourism provides an opportunity for farm families to diversify their income and add value to their commodity. Vermont agritourism enterprises are in every corner of the state and represent every commodity possible; maple, dairy, sheep, forestry products, fruits and vegetables and every scale of business model from small to large, organic and conventional. The agricultural landscape has changed in the past 35 years however, the central message that Vermont agriculture is a key component of our communities, economically, environmentally and culturally is still vital.

I would be honored to answer any questions now or later:

Beth Kennett Email: [beth@libertyhillfarm.com](mailto:beth@libertyhillfarm.com) Phone: 802-767-3926 [www.libertyhillfarm.com](http://www.libertyhillfarm.com)