

## TESTIMONY FOR AG LABOR STUDY COMMITTEE

October 11, 2024

Room 10, Vermont Statehouse

Thank you very much for allowing me time to speak with all of you today. For the record, my name is Jackie Folsom and I'm currently president of Vermont Farm Bureau.

I know we have several other witnesses so I won't take up much time. I'd just like to mention the concerns of Farm Bureau and what we hope you can consider going forward.

Vermont Farm Bureau supports:

1. Maintaining the exclusion for ag laborers to unionize in Vermont State Statute;

If the exclusion is not maintained, we support:

1. A no strike clause included in Vermont Statutes for ag laborers due to concerns with food security and animal health issues;
2. All farms with 2 or more employees should be included so as not to appear targeting large dairy farms;
3. Requiring a specific definition with Vermont Statutes for each of the following: employee (how to count, H2a, seasonal, family), farm (size), ag laborer (migrant, seasonal, H2a, family)
4. A separate Labor Relations Board made up of members with an agricultural background.

We are concerned with the push to enroll all dairy farms in the Milk with Dignity Program, as currently only farms shipping to the St. Albans plant (which are Dairy Farmers of American members) can participate in this program. This would also exclude any organic dairy farms shipping to their cooperatives. Also, we would like to remind the Committee that there is no ability to purchase directly any milk labeled Milk with Dignity; this product from enrolled farms is comingled with all milk sent to the DFA/St Albans plant, despite having only specific farms receiving a premium for special effort on behalf of their industry.

Thank you for your time and I will take any questions or turn it over to the next witness.

Jackie Folsom, President

Vermont Farm Bureau