

My name is Katie Rigg I live in Addison county, the largest agricultural county in Vermont. I was born here and have lived here my entire life of more than 55 years.

My great grandfather was a dairy farmer in Bridport in the 1800's, my grandfather was born on that farm in the early 1900's, my mother was born on that farm in the 1940's, my aunt and uncle carried on that farm. My father's family had a neighboring dairy farm. My aunts and uncles and neighbors had dairy farms. I spent endless days at these various farms. And then I married a dairy farmer whose French Canadian parents owned his farm since immigrating here in the 1930's. I ran that dairy farm with my husband and mother in law until the time that we sold it in 1994. I have continued my love of agriculture by working in nature, I have owned my own gardening business for more than 15 years. I continue to live in the middle of thousands of acres of farmland and farms that surround me in Addison county.

I tell you these things in hopes that it instills upon you my perspective and unique understanding of the operations and practices that go on at most farms and why.

I am sure that some of what I'll share here may be new information to those with little knowledge of farming, but farmers would consider most of it common sense.

I am testifying to support the ban on hunting with bait piles but I do not believe that agricultural practices should be exempt. To exempt that leaves a huge loophole that only unethical hunters, not the farmers, will take advantage of.

We have certainly seen our fair share of bait piles left by unethical hunters near waterways less than a mile from Lake Champlain. These piles have included pieces and parts of deer, fish, pheasants...in fact the pheasants were strewn up and down the roadside and in the ditches along the road. We've seen pig heads and guts from pigs that were slaughtered and we've even seen them dump their compost there to lure animals to hunt them. We have a lovely view from our home and can see these unethical hunters down the road from our house pulling off the side of the road. In a farm field, they back in and dump these animal renderings for easy road hunting. I never witnessed this growing up here but I grew up in a time when men went out in the woods to hunt, not baiting predators along roadsides for an easy shot. The hunting culture has gotten a lot worse and H.132 will help clean up Vermont's hunting image.

Knowing what I do about farming, which is quite a lot, my opinion on rendering piles on farms is this: farmers live on a shoestring budget and every product and byproduct is valuable. Cows no longer producing the milk that they need to be producing generally get sent to slaughter. God forbid you have an unexpected dead cow, you call the rendering truck, they come and get her, **I don't know any farmer who wants a cow that weighs over a thousand pounds rotting anywhere on his farm for obvious sanitary reasons, as well as a farmer knows that would call in unwanted predators.** Because, again, the animals are your livelihood, you keep them safe at all costs. If a calf dies, it's possible that a calf may get disposed of on the farm as it's a much smaller animal, I've seen calves disposed of in manure ponds as they decompose in the manure, and that is more sanitary than a pile of one ton carcasses. If youngstock is not being raised on the farm, all calves are sold at auction markets twice a week by the pound. It makes no practical sense for dairy farmers to have piles of dead animals hanging around—their business is to have healthy, top producing animals.

Then there are beef, pork, chicken, lamb farmers....the ones who are slaughtering animals for their business. They are required to dispose of their animal renderings in a completely different way that is regulated differently. What I do know about a slaughter operation is that those renderings are not dumped in piles somewhere. But even if they were, hunters should not be able to hunt off of those piles.

This leaves me to wrap up my reasons for opposing the agricultural exemption from the proposed bill. We believe that if there are piles of dead animals on a farm, that hunting from that pile should not be allowed. We believe that allowing this on farms will give the hunters who like dumping bait piles a place for a loophole. **What we have witnessed is that hunters request permission from the local farmers to access their land for hunting. The farmer may grant permission [often to employees or neighbors], and then the hunters do whatever they want on that land including dumping dead animals. Farmers are too busy farming to be babysitting hunters and worrying about what they may be doing that isn't quite kosher.**

By allowing an exemption for agricultural practices, you are playing into the hands of the biggest culprits of bad behavior: predator hunters. The bill does not change how farmers

handle their deceased animals, but it should not exempt hunting at these sites because that will make this bill meaningless.