

From: Denise Statz <denisejsstatz@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 20, 2019 8:54 AM
To: Rep. Geran Tarr <Rep.Geran.Tarr@akleg.gov>
Subject: Our Support of HB16

Representative Tarr,

Please accept this e-mail in lieu of a formal letter in support of HB16 (Local Food Procurement and Labeling).

Our interest in this topic is as relates to the production and sale of value added dairy products (cheese, yogurt, ricotta, kefir etc) on behalf of the people we are permitted to supply milk to under a contractual relationship in which an individual purchases a "share" in our milk cows.

This bill brings Alaska into line with other states that recognize the value of authenticating the desire and ability of farmers to enhance their market and expand the availability of high quality, nutrient dense, artisan foods.

Because we, as producers, want to insure the safe handling of all products for consumption by our neighbors and clients, and because the commercial dairy industry in Alaska is on the chopping block as a result of the threatened loss of the position responsible for dairy inspection, I would like to suggest one further consideration.

Perhaps those of us that want to participate in the value added piece afforded by this legislation could receive certification, much as other food handlers do, in cooperation with the State DEC or the University of Alaska Cooperative Extension Service. A class in safe handling of dairy products, cheese production, labeling and other topics pertinent to processing could be a required piece of the process and could, in conjunction with milk testing or herd testing, result in a revenue stream for the State/University. It might not be huge, Representative Tarr, but at this juncture the idea of anyone coming forward to help offset some of the fiscal shortfall might meet with a positive nod in our favor.

If this e-mail is too broad or you want a single statement in support of your timely bill, please let me know.

Our best to you, and our gratitude for your continued support of the agricultural community.

Loren and Denise Statz,
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