

Delta Meat & Sausage, Inc.  
P.O. Box 350  
Delta Junction, Alaska 99737

April 20, 2022

To: Senate Health & Social Services

Re: SB242/HB 415

Dear Committee Members:

I would like to submit written testimony to a certain portion of the proposed "Alaska Food Freedom Act", which is in regards to "meat shares" of farm slaughtered and processed Animals.

Our family has been involved in Alaska Agriculture for over 40 plus years. We were actually recognized by the State Fair Association in 2017 as Farm Family of the year presented by Gov. Bill Walker. We also were one of the first entities to build a private State Inspected Slaughter and packing house in the Interior. The Alaska legislature deemed inspection was too costly so in 1999 they cut out inspection in the budget and subsequently USDA assumed the reins.

This bill is intended to make farm direct "meat shares" more easily obtainable to the consumer under the guise of direct farm marketing. This bill should be labeled "Buyer Beware". There is nothing in it that would let the State have the ability to have oversight on the sanitation or practice of farm shares.

Alaska already allows a Farm direct Sale, in which the sale of the live animal has to be agreed and purchased by one party prior to slaughter, and either taken away for further processing, or to a custom exempt processing facility. The farmer cannot legally process the animal, unless he is registered as a USDA custom exempt operator. There is Federal Meat Laws in place that State government can't overstep.

If I am reading the proposed bill correctly, there are parts of it that don't make sense. It would allow an individual to sell his home slaughtered animal at a farmers market? How is that to work if the ownership of the animal was to be established prior to slaughter?

What you are potentially allowing is "many direct consumer" shares or "sales" of farm slaughtered and processed animals without any form of criteria except "in accordance with an animal share, subject to an animal share. What the hell does that mean? As long as they print a label out of some lame herd health and brief description, and no claim of liability?

An averaged sized beef, would yield apx. 350 – 400 pounds of marketable meat. Would this bill allow 300 plus people to own “shares” of this cow to be sold as individual packages? With no State Compliance or oversight to cow share records?

In regards to herd health. We slaughter, and have seen animals that have had cancer, others with swollen lymph nodes, liver and spleen abscesses, TB and parasites. There are animals with bellies full of retained water, or urine backed up from blocked kidneys. How about a cow that has prolapsed with retained placenta and is potentially septic. We are required to remove the spinal column on beef over 30 month of age for mad cow disease. We see all of these potential things that go wrong and the end consumer would never have a clue to what we see in a processing facility that would be tested or railed out and condemned.

We are required to cool down and chill the carcass to minimize bacterial growth. We have zero tolerance for hair, feces and iniesta. Does the consumer even know what is going into his hamburger if there is no basis or outlines for sanitary procedures, hot water requirements, well water testing for bacteria and carcass testing for e.coli?

I understand what you’re trying to achieve is food security at no matter what cost it involves. I believe the department of law needs to take a look at the bill and see if it is overstepping Federal Law. I believe DEC should be concerned about food safety whether it be at a restaurant, grocery store or from a farm sale. It really seems like anytime the State gets involved regarding agriculture it seems to have a bad outcome.

I would like to remind you that if the legislature wasn’t hell bent on getting rid of a packing plant a few years back, we would still have the stability of a backup plant to slaughter animals. I have asked a few of our legislators just how much money has been spent on a “gas line” that we have never seen yet?

MMM&S at times ran a loss of \$150K. Yet the legislature couldn’t see the State providing the stability to the agricultural community to keeping this facility for the valley and Kenai area open? Believe it or not the State ultimately put our food system in the biggest insecurity at the time they sold MMM&S. After the private below market sale and botched attempt for an individual to operate the plant, there has been another entity with a vested interest in agriculture that stepped in to take ownership.

Check with your department of law or Dr. Gerlach, the State Veterinarian, regarding the direct sale of live farm animals to a single party. It is NOT in the best interest of food security to allow “meat shares” without set criteria or quantity and that are potentially in conflict with Federal Regulation.

Sincerely,

Jeannie Pinkelman  
Plant Manager  
Delta Meat & Sausage, Inc.

