

NEUTRAL TESTIMONY on HB 1244 - RAW MILK BILL

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I operate a small raw milk goat dairy in Oliver County; selling milk and cheese via a share program. The demand for raw goat milk is high. I have a waiting list of customers and often refer people to other producers. I don't deliver so my customers come to the farm - some from 100 miles away because this milk is a major source of nutrition for a person with dietary allergies or other conditions.

I fully support the sale of raw milk and milk products directly from producer to consumers.

National trends are for states to loosen restrictions on such sales; though the methods vary widely. Interestingly, as easier access to raw milk increases, the incidence of reported foodborne illness has decreased. There's virtually no reported outbreaks in the last couple of years. Raw milk producers are doing a great job providing a safe, wholesome product our customers want.

The reason I'm not fully supporting this bill is that it is very limited in scope.

- First - HB 1244 **only applies to cow milk**. I suspect North Dakota has more goat producers of raw milk than cow. (*But the cow producers probably sell more gallons than our goat people.*) There are dairy sheep in our state; though I'm not aware of any of them selling shares right now.
- Second - the bill **requires a license**. By putting the raw milk producer under the license statute, it also **triggers Administrative Rule 7-03.2-04**.
<https://www.legis.nd.gov/information/acdata/pdf/7-03.2-04.pdf>

Here's a link to the Department's brochure on for milk production:

<https://www.nd.gov/ndda/sites/default/files/resource/Summary%20of%20Requirements%20for%20Grade%20A%20Milk%20Production%20for%20ND%20Dairy%20Producers.pdf>

Unless the Department of Ag changes its rules (*not required in the legislation*), **this bill potentially puts these producers under the same guidelines for facilities as a Grade A Dairy**. Check them for yourself. It requires an impervious floor (basically concrete) with a drain, walls that can be hosed down, etc.

If your raw milk dairy is in a current or former Grade A facility, you'll be in great shape. Some cow herd share producers also sell to a processor and clearly, this legislation will help them. That's why I don't oppose this bill.

I doubt there's a single goat or sheep dairy that would qualify under this standard and many of the cow dairies currently selling raw milk via shares **won't either**. Many of us milk by hand into buckets or machine milk into cans and then transport the milk to the house for filtering and cooling. We pride ourselves in being clean and careful. Further - we drink our product so we know it's good. We educate our customers so they understand the milk has to be kept cold - even during transport.

In my opinion the **best part of this bill is that it leaves herd shares intact**. We have the best herd share law in the nation. Several members of this committee took part in writing that law. Thank you!

If anyone has questions, feel free to contact me. Thank you for your time.