

HB 1244
ND House Ag Committee
January 29, 2021

Hello Chairman Johnson and Members of the House Ag Committee,

My name is Kenton Holle, from Mandan, ND. I am a third-generation dairy farmer from Morton County. January 1, my wife and I began the final stages of transferring our dairy farm to our oldest son and his family. At some point, I will be a retired dairy farmer (if there is such a thing) but more importantly providing for our family's next generations to milk cows in Morton county!

HB 1244 is very troubling for the dairy industry. I want to provide three insights why this is so troubling:

1. There is already the cow share program in ND that allows consumers to purchase raw milk.
2. Public Health concerns.
3. Impact on the state's dairy producers.

One thing very important about any conversation related to milk is that "MILK IS MILK!". By that I mean, that no matter what label it carries; raw, organic, all natural, a store brand, whole milk, reduced fat milk or any of the Brands that you can find in the dairy case; all milk contains 9 essential vitamins and nutrients. Plain and simple as that!

The other noteworthy thing is that this legislation will not make the consumption of raw milk safe. That is worth saying again **no legislation will make the consumption of raw milk safe!**

1. With the cow share program that already exists in North Dakota a consumer who wishes to risk consuming raw milk can make a deal with a dairy farmer to purchase a share of his cows and get a share of the milk. With that program in place, there is no need for further legislation.
2. Item b. on line 3 of page 2, the sponsors have identified the “Milk-borne disease” so by that admission they know the public health risk that raw milk presents. This is a quote from National Public Radio program: “The Salt”- *The CDC has been monitoring this move toward a broader legislation and recently reported a corresponding increase in the number of illnesses attributed to raw milk: “UP FOUR FOLD” from years past.* The possibility of human illness from **RAW MILK** is real.
3. Looking at this bill as a dairy farmer, I have questions and concerns about the inspections of raw milk and raw milk products. Inspecting raw milk would be limited to sight, taste and smell. In relation to the Milk-borne disease within the raw milk or raw milk products, the inspection of those would be completed through testing.
These questions arise: 1) who will do the sampling 2) where will the testing be done 3) who is responsible for the costs relating to raw milk and raw milk product inspections and samplings.
Paragraphs 2,3 & 4 of page two, brings up concerns that only can be cleared up through our State Department of Agriculture and the State Department of Health.

Paragraph 5 of page two; is asking to exempt raw milk sellers from requirements that must be met by producers that are selling raw milk to be pasteurized. If the raw milk producers want to be in the business of selling raw milk, they should have to abide by the same rules as those selling and buying milk for pasteurization.

Our farm ships milk to Land O Lakes. If a Land O Lakes producer sells raw milk to anyone other than Land O Lakes, they are in violation of membership agreement and would no longer be a Land O Lakes producer!! North Dakota has dairy producers who sell milk to DFA Coop and to AMPI Coop they also have similar requirements.

These past months we have all witnessed health risk that have been to a certain extent out of our control. The health risk of consuming raw milk certainly is in the control of this committee. Our state can keep this health concern to a minimum by NOT allowing this bill into law. For those who are concerned about the freedom to purchase raw milk, go buy a cow share and they can get the cow and the milk too!

In conclusion, the side effects of an illness from raw milk consumption would be a negative reflection on wholesome dairy products AND on the diligent efforts of our states' Dairy Farmers who are providing a safe dairy product! A bad experience either first hand or through fake news and social media hype can have a long reaching impact on the health of the public and the success of the States' Dairy Industry.

HB 1244 is a BAD IDEA! I humbly request that this bill leave this committee with a DO NOT PASS!

Thank you,
Kenton W. Holle