

March 15, 2023

MEMORANDUM FOR ND SENATE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

FROM: Julie Goeres – Pretty Rock Farm – Raw Milk Producer

SUBJECT: HB1515 – DO PASS



To the Honorable Chair and members of the Senate Agriculture Committee,

My name is Julie Goeres, and I, with my family, own and operate a farm in Pretty Rock Township in Grant County, North Dakota. We currently offer raw goat milk under Herdshare agreements.

I would like to offer my testimony on House Bill 1515, relating to the sale of raw milk directly to the consumer.

I drink raw milk and have had no incident of illness. Just the opposite, my health has improved. I have had allergies since I was a child. Every summer, hay fever would start, and I would be miserable. Upon drinking raw milk consistently, I have not had the dreaded itchy eyes, runny nose and scratchy throat that would afflict me while putting up hay to feed our goats.

Regarding the safety of raw milk, raw milk obtained from healthy animals within sanitary conditions, cooled quickly and stored in 35-39-degree Fahrenheit conditions is a low-risk, nutrient-dense and delicious food. In its unadulterated and full-fat form, raw milk has pro-biotics, enzymes and vitamins that have not been altered by pasteurization which the body can then easily digest and receive the full nutritional value of the milk.

I have several customers who receive milk from me every two weeks. They use this milk to feed their families, including babies and small children. They understand the nature of raw milk. There has been no incidence of illness due to raw milk reported by my customers.

If the Committee wishes to dig further, there is more research and information on the safety and value of raw milk provided by the Raw Milk Institute at www.rawmilk institute.com.

Our farm has invested in a facility on our property for producing raw goat milk. It has been designed to ensure sanitary conditions are maintained before, during and after the milk has been harvested. All milking goats have their udder inspected and temperature taken before milk collection starts at every milking. If their temperature is outside the health standards or their udder feels hot or hard, that milk is kept separate and does not go to humans. Our herd is tested annually by a licensed veterinarian for zoonotic diseases, and we test our milk monthly for Coliforms, bacteria count, and antibiotics. We keep our milking goats separate from other animals and any sick goats are removed to a separate facility away from the milking facility. We ensure that the milk is stored between 35-39-degrees. Our cleaning procedures and equipment used allow us to see and touch all areas where milk has been.

All this is done without any government oversight or requirement. We do this, because it is what is needed to produce the best product for our customers. We did not need a government agency to regulate how to produce low-risk raw milk.

Our farm is highly invested in the quality of our milk as we see our customers every two weeks and will know right away if our milk is not meeting their expectations or causing them issues. We have sought out and received training on dairy goat husbandry, milk collection and handling procedures without government inducement.

Our customers can contact me directly if any issues arise. We enjoy feeding our community and helping them to achieve good health. Our customers want access to local food, and we want to serve them directly with a low-risk, premium product.

I am in favor of HB 1515 as raw milk can be produced in a safe manner; I will be able to serve more customers that did not wish to purchase ownership in our herd to obtain raw milk; and our small farm will be able to produce additional income due to increased market access.

I greatly appreciate the time and attention this Committee and its members are giving to the raw milk issue and recommend a DO PASS on HB 1515.

Respectfully,

Julie N Goeres
Pretty Rock Farm
Elgin, ND