

Farm to Family--A Taste of Small Farm America
National Small Farm and Ranch day of advocacy and legislative reception
September 26, 2018
Notes for advocates

Who we are:

We are a collective force of individuals and organizations joined together to share our knowledge of how family farms ensure the quality of what we eat, restore our ecosystems, and enrich our communities.

What we are doing:

This day of advocacy is the first step in creating a large, national, collective conversation to educate Congress on how open access to locally sourced foods preserves the legacy and financial health of family farms, the environmental integrity of our lands, and the quality of what we eat.

Our goals for this event:

1. Get additional House and Senate sponsors on the Massie-Pingree PRIME Act H.R. 2657
2. Increase Congressional support for raw milk in interstate transportation--support for the Smucker-Pingree letter
3. Create a national force of constituent leaders through advocacy training and organizational support.
4. Inspire and empower our participants to use their voices and expertise to support policies in favor of food choice and food freedom, regenerative agriculture, urban farming/agriculture, application of permaculture principles, and maintaining federal support for conservation efforts

Talking points for constituents:

Consumer Choices/Individuals rights (raw milk and custom processed meats)

As consumers, we should have the right to peacefully choose the foods of our choice from the producers of our choice. This is all about small, localized food systems which are being pushed out of existence by larger industrial players. We want to maintain viable choices.

1. Barriers to access prevent me from getting the foods I want and need for my family.
2. Access to raw milk is often not adequate within state lines. We need to have the choice to purchase from farms nearer to us even if they are across state lines. We do not want to become criminals for making this choice or create a difficult situation for our farmers.
3. People in cultural minority populations often rely on the foods of their heritage. By criminalizing raw milk, we are destroying people's ability consume the foods that are culturally significant.
4. The current regulations on meat processing make locally produced meat from small farms more expensive. This is biased against people in low socio-economic populations. We need to support the PRIME Act, [H.R. 2657](#) introduced by [Rep. Massie and Rep. Pingree](#) and the Senate companion bill [S. 1232](#) introduced by Sen. King and Sen. Paul.
5. Custom slaughterhouses are an important link in the farm-to-table chain. Currently, farmers can only use custom slaughter houses for meats if they sell the whole animal before slaughter--either by the whole, half or quarter part. **If it is safe to eat if I pay for it all at once, it is still safe to eat if I pay for it by the cut.**
6. The regulations for produce growers make it extremely difficult for small growers to comply and sell their product. The small vegetable producers pay exponentially more than do large growers. It is up to 2000% more expensive for small farms to comply than large, industrial farms.

Farmer Livelihood and Economic Impacts

Barriers to sell my products to the customers who want it prevent me from making a living wage.

1. By complicating and adding layers to the farmers, we prevent farmers from making a living wage on their farming ventures. **Many farmers now also have to have off-farm jobs to support their farms and families.**
2. Farmers utilize every moment to improve their farm or produce food. If they have access to a local slaughterhouse, they should be able to offer the same meat they eat to their community for sale.

Environmental Impacts

Keeping land in restorative farming has a huge environmental impact that we cannot ignore.

1. **Meats:** Farmers who practice regenerative agriculture practices need to have choices when it comes to selling their products to the consumers who are asking for them. Small slaughter facilities are often closer to the farms needing them.
2. **Dairy:** When it comes to raw milk distribution, where raw milk is already legal, **nothing about the milk changes when it crosses state lines.** This is another example of arbitrary regulations that stifle small farms, economic growth, and turn a peaceful act into a criminal act with draconian repercussions for small, family farms and the consumers who depend on them.
3. End result with increasing burdens is that **we lose farmers and we lose incentives to farm.** This has a huge environmental and social impact.
4. By restricting small, local production, processing and distribution, we have a breakdown of systems--including our eco-systems.

Urban Agriculture

As we become more urbanized, we must consider how our urban communities can be self-sufficient and help restore our soils.

1. Urban agriculture offers a way for urban communities to produce food independently and offers these communities control over their own self-sufficiency.
2. Providing green space in urban settings gives communities higher quality of life.
3. Creating and designating specific spaces for urban farms gives community members multi-use spaces.