

Good morning Chairman Thomas and members of the Agriculture committee.

My name is Andrew Holle. I am here as a dairy farmer representing the Milk Producers Association of North Dakota. My family and I milk 700 cows south of Mandan for about the last 20+ years, producing some of the highest quality milk in our plant.

I am here to give neutral support for bill HB 1515. Providing a safe, high quality, nutritional product has always been the most important part to being a dairy farmer. That being said, Pasteurization has allowed us to create a scale of economics to produce, distribute and store milk more efficiently and distribute it to places that otherwise would not get milk if it wasn't pasteurized creating long shelf life and even storing it at room temperature through ultra pasteurization. Pasteurization has done many beneficial things but it has also reduced some of the natural healing and beneficial qualities that raw milk can bring to a person's diet. I just had a conversation yesterday with Dr. Don Hastings a retired practicing vet and a researcher and he was telling me that 20 years ago he was working Dr.s and getting raw milk in the hands of people struggling with arthritis and it helped a lot without drugs! There are many, many other health benefits.

I believe the sale of raw milk should be allowed providing that we have a way to regulate the producers to make sure they maintain high quality standards for cleanliness and milk quality. The last thing we want is for someone to get be misinformed about the risk associated with raw milk so we need to have correct labeling and posted signs in the area of sale of raw milk, explain about what it is, risks and how to correctly store it.

I like the direct sales from farm to consumer. We are eliminating the middleman, creating a little extra income for the farmer but yet you are allowing the people to see what the farm looks like and then they can determine if they want purchase the milk from that farm. There's a lot in how a farm looks gets carried into how much they take care of their animals and what kind of quality comes out of them.

I think we have an opportunity to provide a niche market for a dying industry in our state. We need to be able to sell raw milk to the people that want it but as a safe and reliable product. I think a Raw Milk Certification granted by the Ag department with requirements that they see fit much like the Grade A permit that we have now would be a great start.

I hope this bill turns into something great that we can all be proud of in saying that we helped to distribute raw milk to the people that want it in a safe and reliable system.

Thank You,

Andrew Holle