

As so many of you know, VICFA is an important voice speaking out for small farmers. Now, there is a developing situation that needs your urgent attention. Please read the notice below and plan to help TAKE ACTION to protect the rights of small farmers.

*****URGENT*****

There is a meeting happening AUGUST 2, 2012

SPEAK OUT ABOUT FAUQUIER COUNTY



By now, most of the citizens of Fauquier County have probably heard of the plight of a single farmer in Paris, Virginia who has been wrongfully and unjustly cited by the County Zoning Administrator for violating the Fauquier County Zoning Ordinance for failure to obtain an administrative "farm sales" permit. Keep in mind that the County's requirements for farm sales were established after the County had already issued a business license to the Paris farmer for a retail farm store. In addition, the County has cited the farmer for holding special and/or temporary events without a special permit or special exception and without a site plan approval. These "events" as alleged by Fauquier County include a pumpkin carving event, a child's birthday party, and a wine tasting. This is outrageous. The Paris farmer is doing only what many, many other farms in Fauquier County do every day - nothing more. Yet this is the only farm in Fauquier County that has been cited for failing to have a "farm sales" permit, and there isn't a farm in the entire County that has such a permit.

Is this one farm being singled out? Yes. Are their property rights and constitutional rights at stake? Yes. But don't think for a moment that this is just about this one farmer. If the Zoning Administrator's position is upheld, there will be a real and significant negative impact on all farmers in Fauquier County.

The Zoning Administrator initially argued that it was illegal to sell farm products out of your own barn. Once the laughing died down, the Zoning Administrator did a 180-degree turn and decided that you could sell farm products out of your own barn, but only "items grown on site". Then, in yet another shift, the Zoning Administrator has admitted that "value-added agricultural products" can be sold by farmers, but now asserts that the sale of value-added agricultural products made off-site is illegal, and that the sale of any product that is not "agricultural" is illegal, no matter how common, no matter how minimal, and no matter how long you have done it without any problems. So if you sell these things on your farm, and the Board of Zoning Appeals agrees with the Zoning Administrator, you will be in violation of the Fauquier County Zoning Ordinance, and you will be subject to significant fines and possibly criminal enforcement action if you do not seek, and successfully obtain, these zoning approvals.

If you are selling jams made for your farm off-site, or jams from other farms, that will be illegal. If you are selling alpaca items made off-site, that will be illegal. If you are selling

commercially bottled soda or water, that will be illegal. If you are selling local artwork, that will be illegal. If you are selling essential oils or candles or herbal spa products that are made for you off-site, or that are made by others off-site, that will be illegal. If you are selling snow cones or commercial ice cream, that will be illegal. If you sell black and green tea produced off-site along with herbal tea produced on site, that will be illegal. If you sell accessories to the agricultural products that you sell - things as small as tea strainers or corncob picks or country cookbooks - all of this will now be illegal. This applies to activities on your farm as well as just to the things you sell. If you live in a subdivision, you can have a birthday party, a prayer group, a Boy Scout troop meeting or a Tupperware party, without any kind of zoning approval. If you are a farmer, you cannot do any of these things without a zoning approval, according to the Zoning Administrator. If the Board of Zoning Appeals agrees with the Zoning Administrator, the County's position is that you will be breaking the law if you have a birthday party on your farm, or if you sell jam that is produced and bottled for you off-site, or if you sell Cokes at a pick-your-own orchard. Yes, that sounds crazy, and it IS crazy - but it is true.

This is not about one farmer. Don't believe that for a second, because once this ruling is upheld, it applies to everyone. This is about all farmers, and it will hurt all farmers, make no mistake. As Henry Kissinger said, "If you control the food supply, you control the people." This overly zealous regulation, and this unfair and illegal targeting of a single farmer, threaten the viability of small local farmers throughout Fauquier County, as well as our liberty.

TAKE ACTION NOW!

Stop the Land Use Assault on Farmers in Fauquier County!

Thursday, August 2, 2012

1:00 PM to 3:30 PM (SST)

Warrenton, VA