



VICFA | Voice

Our Mission: *To promote and preserve unregulated direct farmer-to-consumer trade that fosters availability of locally grown or home-produced food products*

November 2011

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USDA Agrees to Extend Deadline for Public Comments on New Animal ID Rule

Non-Profits Representing Farmers and Ranchers Appealed to Sec. Vilsack, Applaud Decision

By Judith McGeary

On October 7, 2011, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that it was extending the deadline for public comments on its proposed rule for mandatory animal traceability, following a request by forty-nine organizations for a deadline extension.

The organizations sent a letter to Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack requesting an extension to allow sufficient time for the people who will be affected, to analyze the rule and submit comments.

“We have significant concerns about the substance of the rule, and we appreciate the USDA providing more time for public comment,” stated Judith McGeary, Executive Director of the Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance and vice-chair of the USDA Secretary’s Advisory Committee on Animal Health. “Our farmers are already struggling with the poor economy and terrible weather conditions in many parts of the country, and they needed additional time to be provide comment to the agency about the impact this proposed rule will have.”

While the USDA already has traceability requirements as part of existing animal disease control programs, the proposed rule goes much further to require animal tracking even absent clear and documented disease threats. The proposed rule has raised significant concerns among family farm and ranch advocates, who accuse the agency of pushing a program to benefit corporate agribusiness interests rather than animal health.

“The USDA keeps saying that this is an animal health program, but it has failed to provide valid animal health reasons for it,” argued Bill Bullard, CEO of R-CALF USA. “The real push for this program comes from the giant meat packing corporations who want international standards to help their export markets.” Farm advocates have suggested that meatpacking companies that wish to export meat should enhance the current voluntary programs that compensate farmers and ranchers for the extra paperwork and costs involved with complying.

The USDA draft rule greatly expands what animals must be identified, including young feeder cattle, which are processed at a young age and never enter the breeding herd.

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“While any animal can become sick, there is no evidence that tracking feeder cattle will do anything to address animal disease issues in this country,” continued Ms. McGeary. “To the contrary, requiring the large numbers of feeder cattle to be tagged and accompanied by paperwork could actually harm our ability to respond to animal diseases by swamping the system with unnecessary stacks of paper.”

While expressing appreciation for the extension to the comment period, the groups continue to argue that the agency needs to reconsider the substance of the rule as well.

“For the sake of all Americans, the USDA should put the interests of family farmers ahead of the meatpacking lobby,” stated Mark A. Kastel, Senior Farm Policy Analyst at The Cornucopia Institute. ■

Note: VICFA was one of the organizations who provided a signature as part of the campaign to allow more time for public comments. VICFA remains against mandatory animal traceability. For more information, contact Christine Solem at: (434) 973-6505

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The Naro Cinema Presents VICFA

by Lois Smith

VICFA was invited to speak at a showing of the movie *Farmageddon* in Norfolk, Virginia, at the Naro Movie House. VICFA's president, Wayne Bolton and vice president, Lois Smith made the trek. Amongst the old timey,



retro decorations throughout the theater, our VICFA president spoke about the farm freedoms that were a part of everyday life throughout his youth.

Who could have imagined that there would be a movie that depicted people being arrested and fined for providing real food?

I am sure that through our recent VICFA newsletters and Action Alerts, you have heard about most of what *Farmageddon* represents; but when it is put together in one showing, it leave little doubt surrounding the importance of our organization. The film also leaves no doubt that the government is unfriendly to small farmers and works under the disguise of Food Safety.

Wayne Bolton eloquently told the crowd that he did not need a third party telling him that he did a good job. Instead, his customers relay this message to him on a regular basis! Enough said! ■

For more information on *Farmageddon*, visit:
<http://farmageddonmovie.com/>



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VICFA Notes

Come to our Nov. Meeting

The November Meeting will be held in Farmville, VA on Nov 13 2011.

We will share in a potluck lunch at **12:00** pm, followed by our general business meeting from 1:00 - 3:00 pm. VICFA membership meetings are open to the public. Please bring a dish and a big helping of enthusiasm to share. Broaden our reach - invite a friend or neighbor to join you.

Sunday, November 13, 2011

8459 Abilene Road

Farmville, VA

hosted by Richard Altice

DIRECTIONS:

From Charlottesville: Take VA-20 S/Scottsville Rd. Turn right onto US-15 S/N Madison Rd. Keep left at the fork, follow signs for US-15 S/US-460 E/Keysville/Petersburg and merge onto US-15 S/US-460 E. Take the U.S. 15 Business N S/US-15 S ramp on the left to Farmville/Keysville. Turn right onto US-15 S. Turn right onto Co Rd 665. Take the 2nd left onto Abilene Rd. Destination will be on the left.

From Richmond: Merge onto VA-195 W Toll road. Slight left onto VA-146 W (signs for Powhite Pkwy/VA-150/US-60/VA-288) Toll road. Merge onto VA-76 W Partial toll road. Take the exit onto VA-288 S toward US-360/I-95/Amelia/Chesterfield. Exit onto US-360 W/Hull Street Rd toward Amelia. Continue to follow US-360. Slight right onto VA-307 W/Holly Farms Rd. Continue to follow VA-307 W. Continue onto US-460 W. Take the US-15 S/US-15 BUS N ramp to Farmville/Keysville/VA-45. Turn left onto US-15 BUS S. Turn right onto Co Rd 665. Take the 2nd left onto Abilene Rd. Destination will be on the left.

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VICFA

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VICFA

Virginia Independent Consumers and Farmers Association
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Christine Solem, Emily Turtlewoman, Martha Boneta

Website: www.VICFA.org

E-group: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/VICFA>.

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