



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*

December 2010

In This Issue:

S-510 Food Safety Bill

GMO Watch: FDA Plans to Approve Frankenfish

VICFA Notes

S-510 Food Safety Bill

By Bev Hill

A saga has played out around the Food Safety Modernization Act (S.510). Unanimously approved by Committee in November 2009, the bill has been delayed numerous times. From disagreement over the Tester-Hagan amendment to exempt small-scale local producers, along with an amendment adding a ban on BPA plastics. A “Manager’s Package” version of the bill was released on August 13, 2010, which is a revised version of the bill that replaces the version passed by the Committee. This is what the full Senate will vote on. Neither the Tester nor the Feinstein amendments were included in the Manager’s Package.

On the same day, a massive factory farm in Wright County, Iowa began a nationwide recall of its eggs. As the recall grew to almost *half a billion* eggs, and the news hit the mainstream press, FDA and groups claiming to speak for consumers, told the media that the egg recall proved that the Senate should pass S.510 as quickly as possible.

The FDA already has authority to inspect facilities like this and simply chose not to, despite a history of environmental violations by this precise farm. Instead, it spent its resources (and taxpayer money) on things such as an armed raid on the Rawesome food club in California.

S.510 only would have given the FDA mandatory recall authority, rather than relying on a voluntary recall. The Wright County company did not hesitate in ordering its own recall. This latest salmonella outbreak is a symptom of a much larger problem: *the consolidation of our food supply in the hands of a few large companies.* **An outbreak of this size could not have occurred in a local and regionalized food system.** S.510 will strengthen the forces that have led to this dangerous consolidation of our food supply.

It will give the FDA more power over farmers: telling them how to grow food or making every jam maker comply with mind-numbing paperwork requirements. It also includes a provision that facilities must pay for their own re-inspection. This is a financial incentive for FDA to perform repeat inspections of facilities to raise money or to financially penalize a producer the agency doesn’t like.

S.510 does not address the causes of the food safety problems. Although it calls for increased inspections and more paperwork, it dodges the issue of the source of the bacterial

continued on page 2...

continued from page 1...

contamination: manure, particularly manure from grain-fed cattle and intensive confined feeding operations.



FDA inspection of the Wright county farm (belatedly conducted *after* the recall) revealed a sickening image of hundreds of thousands of chickens exiting in the most unsanitary conditions imaginable. Documented instances were: hens were climbing on top of the piles of manure to reach the feed in the cages; manure, piled up to 8 feet high in multiple locations, forcing doors outward which allowed

rodents access. **Neither S.510 nor any other proposal to Congress or the FDA even tries to reduce the growth of intensive confined feeding operations that create the perfect conditions for bacterial contamination.**

The bill does nothing to curtail Big Ag's influence over the FDA, so the agency will almost certainly continue to target small producers rather than the real culprits in food contamination. As small farmers and local food producers are driven out of business, consumers will be deprived of their choices to obtain safe and healthy local foods from producers they know and trust.

Congress returns on November 15 and it faces many issues. S-510 is high on the priority list, but it is impossible to predict whether there will be a vote on it before the end of the year.

The fight to include the Tester-Hagan amendments is not over, and even if the bill passes, we will continue to have opportunities to fight for our local food producers during the rule-making process.

Please call your Senators and tell them to amend or oppose S.510. You can find your Senators' contact information by going to www.Senate.gov or by calling the Capitol Switchboard at 202-224-3121.

Urge them to SUPPORT the Tester-Hagan amendment if S.510 comes to the floor. ■

The above is excerpted from Farm and Ranch Freedom newsletter. For more information go to: <http://farmandranchfreedom.org/>

Bev Hill, environmental food activist, has more information about sustainable farming, food & your health & the importance of supporting your local farmers on her website: <http://www.goodfood4all.com>

GMO Watch: FDA Plans to Approve Frankenfish

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced on August 25, 2010, that it will potentially approve the long-shelved AquaAdvantage transgenic salmon as *the first genetically engineered (GE) animal intended for human consumption*. The salmon, developed by AquaBounty Technologies, is genetically engineered to produce growth hormones year-round, creating a fish the company claims grows at twice the normal rate. This is a groundbreaking issue not only because of the direct repercussions of approving GE salmon, but because:

- The FDA is approving GE Salmon as an animal drug to LIMIT public participation – and PUBLIC DISCLOSURE (independent studies)
- FDA has an interest in showing ONLY positive information (like with other GMOs)
- This will set a precedent for approval of other genetically engineered animals for food.
- GE soy and corn crops have created a huge concentration of power in the hands of the companies that own the seed patents, and we don't need to see the same thing happen with livestock!

There have been no long-term studies on the human health risks associated with eating GE animals but some scientific research raises cause for alarm. Several studies of GE crops have shown that they can cause allergic reactions, as well as liver and kidney damage in animals. In addition, GE fish may be more susceptible to disease than normal fish currently grown in "fish farms", leading to even higher levels of antibiotics being fed, threatening the health of those who eat them and the continued efficacy of these antibiotics to treat human disease.

In addition, GE salmon pose a threat to wild salmon populations. Each year, millions of farmed salmon escape from open-water net pens, outcompeting wild populations for resources and straining ecosystems. Since the GE salmon are engineered to grow bigger faster, they could overpower wild salmon. Research published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences notes that a release of just sixty GE fish into a wild population of 60,000 could lead to the extinction of the wild population in less than 40 fish generations.

To make matters worse, the agency is likely to follow its previous policy on other GE foods and allow this fish to be sold without labeling, leaving consumers without a way to make an informed choice about the food we eat. ■

VICFA Notes

Come to Our December Meeting and Learn How to Make Cheese!

The December Meeting will be held at the home of Anne, Dan, and Elizabeth Buteau in Shipman, Virginia. Come to the meeting on December 12, 2010. Please note that our regular meeting hours are now in effect. We will share in a potluck lunch at 12:00 noon, followed by our general business meeting from 1:00 - 3:00 pm. Our December meeting will include a demonstration on "Easy Cheesemaking". 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, December 12, 2010

at the home of Anne, Dan and Elizabeth Buteau
6556 James River Road (Rt 56)
Shipman, Va 22971
Phone: (434) 263-4946

FROM THE CHARLOTTESVILLE AREA:

South on Rt 29 towards Lynchburg. Go about 30 miles to Lovingson and turn left at the traffic lights (the 3rd Lovingson exit). Turn right on James River Road/Rt 56 East. Go about 7 1/2 miles on this road and you come to our house on the left hand side, mailbox number: 6556, just before an old big white barn. (When you come down a mountain with 25 mph curves you are about 3/4 mile from our house.)

FROM THE LYNCHBURG AREA:

North on Rt 29, pass through Amherst, Colleen (Look for Blue Ridge Medical Center on right/Big Ice Cream Cone on the left). Go another 1 1/2 miles, turn right towards Shipman/OakRidge on Rt 653. Go to T junction (by the Corner Market) and turn right on James River Road/Rt 56 east. We are approximately 4 miles from this point, on the left, next to the big white barns. Mailbox number: 6556

FROM THE FARMVILLE AREA:

Go west on Rt 60. Go through Buckingham. Turn right on Rt 56. Cross the James River and we are 6 1/2 miles from there on the right. Mailbox number: 6556, next to big white barn.

Better Food Begins Here*



- **Certified Organic, Soy-Free Feeds**
- **OMRI Approved Fertilizers • Humates**
- **Mineral Supplements**

Monthly Delivery to Much of Virginia
Call Kevin, Steve or Keith at 888-699-7088
www.countrysidenatural.com

* Ask your grower or producer if they use
Countryside Natural Products.

Advertise in VICFA Voice!

Classified Ad rate per month, prepaid:

\$5 first 25 words, \$ 0.20 per word thereafter.

Display Ad rate per month, prepaid:

PAGE SIZE	1 MONTH	6 MONTHS	12MO.
Full page (size - 8"x10.5")	\$100	\$95	\$90
1/2 page (sizes - 8"x5.25" or 4"x10.5")	\$50	\$47.50	\$45
1/4 page (size - 4"x5.25")	\$25	\$23.75	\$22.50
1/8 page (size - 4"x2.5")	\$12.50	\$11.88	\$11.25

VOLUNTEER:

If you would like to volunteer to be on VICFA's
Board of Directors, please call Wayne Bolton at:
804-380-5909

VICFA

PO Box 6838
Charlottesville, VA 22906

VICFA

Virginia Independent Consumers and Farmers Association
President, Wayne Bolton
Vice President, Lois Smith
Treasurer, Alexa Boker
Secretary, Anne Buteau

Members At Large: Richard Altice, Suzi Croes, Bev Hill,
Christine Solem

Website: www.VICFA.org

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

Editorial Review: Lois Smith, Bev Hill, Anne Buteau
Proof Reader: Alexa Boker
Contributing Columnist: Bev Hill
Designer: Shannon Sankar

VICFA Voice is published monthly by a volunteer staff.
Copyright © 2010. All rights reserved. Distributed free
to all members and select mailing list. No part of this
publication may be used without written permission of
the publisher. Contribute to this publication via email to
editor@VICFA.net or by mail to Editor, VICFA, PO
Box 6838, Charlottesville VA 22906.

Share this newsletter with a friend - encourage others to join VICFA!

Annual membership is \$25.00.

Please make check payable to VICFA and send to PO Box 6838, Charlottesville, VA 22906.

MEMBERSHIP FORM (please print clearly)

* Required fields

*Date _____
*First Name _____ *Last Name _____
Company /Farm Name _____
*Address _____
*City _____ *State _____ *Zip _____
County _____ Congressional District _____
*Phone (_____) _____ - _____
E-mail _____
Website _____

Producers, please list the products that you sell:

*Do you want to be listed in the Membership Directory? Yes No

Note. Your directory listing will contain all of the above information unless you indicate otherwise below.

How did you hear about VICFA?

Comments: