



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*

July 2010

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Notes from VICFA Annual Membership Meeting

June 13, 2010

The Annual Membership Meeting was held at the home of Joel and Theresa Salatin on a hot Sunday in June. Members were asked to register their presence in order to establish a quorum and to distribute the meeting agenda along with minutes from the May 2010 meeting. Members arrived with dishes laden with homemade food for lunch. The attendance was great and it was wonderful to see that some members brought their families and farm helpers.

Once a quorum was established and the agenda approved, the meeting was postponed in favor of lunch. When the meeting resumed Wayne Bolton, gave the President's report, recounting the activities of the previous year and thanking various members for their participation.

Vice President, Lois Smith, unable to attend, sent her report which covered four significant items that were initiated in 2009: the establishment of a Communications Committee that spearheaded the creation of a new newsletter and website, centralization of the membership information to improve dues collection, a review of the by-laws and distribution of proposed changes, and the study of Roberts Rules of Order; all of which should improve the infrastructure of the association.

Treasurer Alexa Boker so ably fulfilled the mandate of the by-laws, providing an audit of the finances for the 2009-2010 fiscal year and presenting a budget for fiscal year 2010-2011. The budget was approved as presented.

Communications Committee members, Rowena Morrel, Newsletter editor and Carlos Arostegui, website manager, gave reports. Both urged members to contribute information to these avenues of member communication and requested member information to be given to them in writing.

Willard Lutz presented the report of the Qualifications Committee concerning the officers and board members to serve in 2010-2011. Individuals selected had been queried in advance to establish their willingness to serve. The slate was unanimously approved as presented.

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Got Milk?

By Leni Sorensen

Heads up, folks. You can buy and consume foods with all the high fructose corn syrup and chemical additives you want but you don't dare buy unpasteurized milk from a friend! My thoughts on this topic were sparked by a recent Virginia Farm Bureau newsletter that has an article on the vanishing Virginia dairy farm. The tone is one of sad resignation and the causes named are – boo hoo - the reduction in milk drinking and those troublesome environmental restrictions on pastures and manure relating to the impact on the Chesapeake Bay. Oh yeah, and the current prices paid to farmers for milk.

There's not a hint of the way processed milk has lost its flavor as more and more it has been routinely pasteurized to ultra high levels; this omission may possibly be because the author has never tasted real milk. There's no mention of the way the true 'small' dairies have been pushed out of business. By small I mean families that milked 8, 20, 50 cows not the big boys milking 250, 500, or 1000 cows. It has become the smug assumption that the small guys just needed to get the hell out if they couldn't compete with the big boys. The idea that the small operator might be best situated to sell to their local market never seems to have occurred to anyone (but the small guys themselves, I suppose). And certainly there was nothing even hinting at people who milk one or two cows, sharing the milk with family and friends. From the agri-biz perspective no one (sane) milks their own family cow, no one can make any useful income from making cheese or selling milk from an 8-to-50-cow herd.

For eight years in South Dakota I hand milked two Jersey and one magnificent Guernsey cows. The way the rules work in South Dakota is that anyone can sell anything from their farm if the customer comes to them. Over the years I sold pigs, lambs, chickens, eggs, butter, yogurt, and milk to friends, neighbors, and customers as far away as Sioux Falls 47 miles to the south. And of course my family also ate all those homegrown foods we raised.

Did I feel 'safe' eating and selling those items? Yes! For a relatively small cost my cows were tested for brucellosis annually. With only four dairy cows I was not concerned with staphylococcus or any of the bacteria issues often mentioned when large operations and vast collections of manure are discussed; I felt the same comfort with our 50 laying hens and the annual 500 free-range fryers. We raised 10 sows, four stock cows, and twelve sheep for meat and wool. There was grass pasture, room for the animals to roam, and easy composting of all the manure for application to garden and field. At any given time I knew no fewer than ten families who milked anywhere from two to 30 cows, sold milk in the neighborhood or to the cheese company. No harm, no foul.

When we moved to Virginia one of the first things I did was to buy another milk cow, a sweet small Jersey. I made friends with a local man who was milking four cows and had been selling milk to his friends for years. I was made welcome into a community of milkers, gardeners, and family food producers. But when I told them of my South Dakota experience they were astounded. Almost as astounded as I was to discover that without acres of stainless steel and regiments of inspectors I could not sell any thing except eggs or honey here in Virginia!

How did all these good old boy, proud Virginia 'small farmers' let the oligarchs in the General Assembly ram that down their throats? The big boys have red herringed the issue by convincing the politicians that somehow it is the small guys who are the threat. Oh, no we don't pollute the Bay with our multi-1000 cows in hip-deep mud loafing pens! Representative Blah, why don't you spend your time legislating the beady-eyed policing of farmer's markets. What? Joel Salatin butchers chickens in front of the actual customer? OH MY GOD! Git 'em! Don't worry about Tyson's or Perdue or the Hispanic workers working those nauseating assembly lines in the chicken slaughterhouses. That's the part that pisses me off – all the smug economic agendas by the big boys and the equally smug capitulation by the agri-biz media.

So my response to the Virginia Farm Bureau point

of view is that if you are not willing to support the real small guys you can't complain when the larger guys are under the gun. You can't falsely accuse home milkers of potentially spreading milk-borne diseases while ignoring or downplaying the bacterial results of huge muddy feedlots, or hundreds of cows who have never seen a green pasture being milked in multi shifts a day.

The result; I use as little 'store' milk as I can, and probably lots of people make that same choice. Or we are willing to pay a premium for milk from dairies we feel are more humane, or smaller, or Mom and Pop, or organic or whatever values make us feel good. My decision is that I fully intend to raise another milk cow so I can taste the incredible flavor of real milk once again and to share it with my grandchildren.

While most people are not ever going to milk their own cow everybody should have the choice to buy whatever milk they want from whom ever they want. Damn, you can buy and feed to your children every kind of soda pop, or candy; you can buy mass-ground, crappy, cheap (possibly contaminated) hamburger, or Pop Tarts, or hotdogs I wouldn't feed to my cat, or greasy mass produced cheese, and boxes of salt filled Hamburger Helper, and don't forget drive-through fast food garbage, crap, crap, crap. BUT you can't go to a friend's barn and buy a quart of fresh real milk!

Leni Sorensen is a culinary historian, gardener and teacher of rural life skills. Check her blog www.indigohousehistory.com for the second installment in the story of her life with cows.

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Send all ads electronically to editor@vicfa.net. Specify the number of times to run the ad. Include your contact information in case of questions. Mail your check and a copy of your ad with your contact information to Editor, VICFA, PO Box 6838, Charlottesville, VA 22906.

Deadline for receipt of Display and Classified Ads is the 15th of the month for inclusion in the following month's issue.

Send questions concerning Display Ads to Advertise@vicfa.net

Fore Warned IS Fore Armed

By Bev Hill

#1 Drug Banned In 160 Countries Used In Your Meat!

Ractopamine - also known as Paylean and Optaflexx is a drug which is banned in 160 countries but is found in 45% of pigs, 30% of beef and also used in turkeys.

Administered just before slaughter, it causes unnatural weight gain. It does not magically go away, and is IN THE MEAT YOU EAT if you buy food from your local grocery store. This drug is also marked by the FDA "Not for use in humans" yet we are eating it! It is used just before slaughter to promote protein formulation in animals. Reports from farmers to the manufacturer, Elanco, say it causes animals to become very sick with vomiting, 'downer' syndrome, tremors and hyperactivity being reported.

The manufacturer has stated that it is a 'green' drug, capable of allowing the pork producing industry to be able to maintain animal levels at the same rate while increasing weight of these animals, thus reducing cropland needed to produce as much pork.

The FDA approved this drug, saying no testing for residues was necessary, nor was a 'withdrawal time' (non-feeding to allow it to pass from the animal's system) needed. It was also said to be safe in all indicated uses and that there are 'safe' levels in edible animal tissues. If you buy meat in the grocery store - you are eating this drug. Think about that Thanksgiving turkey which has been fattened up ... JUST for YOU! Everything an animal eats before slaughter, you will eat, too!

This is why we need to be able to get our meat from small farmers who do not use drugs of any kind!

References:

<http://www.all-creatures.org/health/additive.html>

<http://www.lavidalocavore.org/diary/3207/elanco-markets-unsafe-animal-drug-as-green>

<http://www.fda.gov/downloads/AnimalVeterinary/Products/ApprovedAnimalDrugProducts/FOIADrugSummaries/ucm061376.pdf>

#2 ADHD & Pesticides

This is NO surprise. A possible link between ADHD and pesticides has been found. Organophosphate pesticides are nerve toxins and work on the nervous system of an insect. In large doses, the same actions would happen in a human being. But, we humans are exposed to these compounds on a much smaller scale. From womb to grave, depending on environmental factors such as where we live (agricultural areas being the highest or high applications of pesticides around the home and yard) to what we eat (organic or not) are cumulative. These toxins are stored in fat and brain. It is no wonder why so many children today are experiencing ADHD.

Pesticides are excitotoxins causing the neurons in the brain to misfire. ADHD is one of the resulting conditions. Pesticides are just one class of excitotoxins, and many artificial foods contain ingredients which cause ADHD.

This is just another reason to end pesticide exposure and return to organic eating. By visiting your local farmer's market, and buying locally produced food, you can limit your pesticide exposure.

References:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organophosphate>,

<http://www.panna.org/ops/>

<http://www.sailhome.org/Concerns/BodyBurden/Burdens/Organophosphate.html#pesticides>

Stay in touch. Bev Hill will be a regular columnist in VICFA Voice. Recently elected to the VICFA Board of Directors, she is a self proclaimed "environmental food activist". Her mission is to educate people about what is in the foods we eat and to promote local foods and farmers. Check out her web site for more good information:

www.goodfood4all.com.

Stay Informed

By Dawn Story

GAPs Harmonization Initiative:

The GAPs (Good Agricultural Practices) Harmonization Initiative is an effort to unify standards for all sizes and scopes of farms, commodities, locations and production practices. This link will provide you with background on the initiative:

http://www.fao.org/prods/gap/index_en.htm

For a chance to speak your mind on the GAP initiative, go to: <http://ngfn.org/resources/food-safety/gap-harmonization-an-invitation-to-the-table>

FDA Accepting Comments on Food Safety & Handling:

The Food and Drug Administration has extended the comment period for its produce handling guideline to July 23. Michelle Smith, the FDA GAP project leader specifically suggested that this opportunity can give aggregators a chance to state whether they have a particular view regarding on-farm food safety and how responsibility for food safety can and should be handled by aggregators. To submit your comments directly, visit this [regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) page or here:

<http://www.regulations.gov/search/Regshome.html#documentDetail?R=0900006480aab8f1>

Speak your piece on Senate Bill S.510, the Food Safety & Modernization Act

Everyone is encouraged to speak their piece on these issues, as S.510 will be voted upon this summer. This bill will greatly affect small and mid-sized farms, local food, value-added food production and community food systems as a whole, as well as consumers' access to food they choose to eat.

Here is an action alert from the Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance that summarizes the situation. VICFA encourages you to read and participate in this Action Alert.

Action Alert: Save Local Food Sources!

Food safety is heating up again and we need your help! Although passage of S.510, the Food Safety and Modernization Act, has been delayed, there is now a concerted effort to bring it to the floor for a vote. As we've alerted you before, as it is currently written, S.510 will actually make our food less safe.

S.510 will strengthen the forces that have led to the consolidation of our food supply in the hands of a few industrial food producers, while harming small producers who give consumers the choice to buy fresh, healthy, local foods.

Although it's still not clear exactly when S.510 will come to a vote, there is increasing pressure to move the bill and to exclude the amendments proposed by Senator Tester to protect local food sources.

PLEASE CONTACT YOUR SENATORS NOW

to urge them to amend or oppose the bill!

Mark Warner, 202-224-2023

and

Jim Webb, 202-244-4024

S.510 will unnecessarily burden both farmers and small-scale food processors, ultimately depriving consumers of the choice to buy from producers they know and trust.

TAKE ACTION: Call both of your Senators, Mark Warner, 202-224-2023 and Jim Webb, 202-244-4024. Tell the staffer that you want the Senator to amend or oppose S. 510. If you get their voice mail instead of the staff, leave the following message:

“Hi, my name is _____ and I live in _____. I'm very concerned that S.510, the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act, imposes unfair and burdensome regulations on local food sources, which are very important to me. I urge the Senator to support the Tester-Hagan Amendments to exclude small facilities and direct marketing farms from the most burdensome provisions of the bill. Please call me back at _____.”

Find Talking Points on page 6...

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TALKING POINTS: Over 150 organizations have signed a letter of support for the Tester-Hagan amendments to exempt small-scale and local producers from the more burdensome provisions of the bill. You can borrow some talking points from the letter (posted at <http://farmandranchfreedom.org/sff/Amend-S510-June-7.pdf>) or use the ones below:

1. **The major food borne illness outbreaks and recalls have all been caused by the large, industrial food system.** Small, local food producers have not contributed to the highly publicized outbreaks. Yet S.510 subjects the small, local food system to the same, broad federal regulatory oversight that would apply to the industrial food system.
2. **Increased regulations and record-keeping obligations could destroy small businesses that bring food to local communities.** In particular, the reliance on hazard analysis and risk-based preventative controls, a concept similar to “HACCP”, will harm small food producers. HACCP has already proven to be an overwhelming burden for a significant number of small, regional meat processors across the country. Applying a HACCP-type system to small, local foods processors could drive them out of business, reducing consumers’ options to buy fresh, local foods.
3. **FDA does not belong on the farm.** S.510 calls for FDA regulation of how farms grow and harvest produce. Given the agency’s track record, it is likely that the regulations will discriminate against small, organic, and diversified farms. Although language calling for “flexibility” may be included, but there are no enforceable limits or protections for small diversified and organic farms from inappropriate and burdensome federal rules.
4. **Food safety and security both come from a diversified, vibrant local food system.** Local foods give consumers the choice to buy from producers they know, creating a transparent, accountable food system without federal government oversight. State and local laws, which are often size-specific rather than one-size-fits-all, are more appropriate for local food producers.

continued from page 1...

President—Wayne Bolton
Vice President—Lois Smith
Secretary—Anne Buteau
Treasurer—Alexa Boker

Members at Large: Carlos Arostegui, Suzi Croes, Bev Hill, Rowena Morrel, Christine Solem

Proposed changes to the by-laws, previously printed in the May 2010 newsletter, were presented along with an additional proposal presented at the annual membership meeting. The changes were adopted. A copy of the by-laws will be available on-line when the construction of the new Members’ Area is complete.

Other business included reports by various members on public relations and fund raising efforts being made on behalf of VICFA. Carlos Arostegui solicited participation for a planned one day pickle sale. Anne Buteau planned a Farm Day to be held on June 20 that includes 13 farms in Virginia. She had also manned a booth at the City Market Dots Day in Charlottesville to promote VICFA. Dick Stevens asked for volunteers to help at the 2 day Summer Solstice Festival in Amherst. Other public relations events were discussed including the State Fair, September 23rd -October 3rd. Volunteers will be needed for each day.

It was an enthusiastic gathering where members and their families lingered to visit. We extend our thanks to Joel and Theresa for their hospitality.

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Come to our July Meeting in Sperryville

Sunday, July 11th

at the home of

Mike Biniek and Susan Hoffman

353 F.T. Valley Road

Sperryville, VA 22740

Phone: (540) 967-3304

From Richmond: Take Route 64 west to 15 north to Gordonsville. Then take 231 north. Belle Meade is 15 miles north of Madison on the left.

From Charlottesville: Take Route 29 north to Madison. Take route 231 north. Belle Meade is 15 miles north of Madison on the left.

COOK'S CORNER

Yes, We Can!

by Rowena Morrel

Trips to the grocery store were rare occasions when I was a child. For the most part, we were self-sufficient. We grew corn for grinding into meal and trading for some wheat to make bread. We raised our meat: lamb, pork, beef, and chicken and harvested wild game. Our pond provided fresh water fish. We had milk, butter and cheese made from our own herd. For the most part, we bought sugar, coffee, tea, salt and pepper. It sounds ideal. Looking back on it now, I wax nostalgic, but it was a lot of work! Most of our time was spent preserving our food supply—drying, curing, smoking and canning. It was a necessity, more than a shield against uncertainty.

Summers were spent preserving the fruits and vegetables. We had a cannery in our basement, a wood cook stove, big water bath cookers and 2 large pressure cookers, along with nearly a thousand glass jars, which were sterilized and used from year to year. One of my grandmother's wishes was to be able to use a community cannery (popular in the 40's and 50's) that she had heard about, but timely transportation was a problem and we already had our own facility. To use a community cannery would have been a real luxury.

Through the years, I saw the demise of these community canneries, often housed in county school kitchens. Today, Keezletown Cannery in Rockingham County, Shenandoah Valley, is one of the oldest in the country and the last one in Virginia. Operated by the county since 1940, the program was discontinued when the budget got tight and interest waned. As a piece of local history Horizon Learning Foundation saved it to be a living museum, carrying on the knowledge of the canning process and to function as a facility for other non-profits to make money with preserved foods.

Royce "RT" and Trudy Hammer run the cannery and have a lifetime of experience helping novice canners put up 'most everything'. Exact canning instructions are ingredient specific and they know the specifics to assure you of a successful and safe end product. Call ahead and discuss the best advance preparation instructions. It is advisable to bring your own helpers for peeling, mashing and packing.

You can use the facility to put up a dozen cans or hundreds. The cannery has everything you'll need. It keeps the mess out of your kitchen, you have complete control of what goes into your cans and jars, and it saves a great deal of time. Not only is it time-saving but it's neighborly, too—everybody pitches in while you wait your turn.

Other things to bring along: your recipes and ingredients such as sugar, salt, spices, etc. You can choose to bring your own jars or purchase their cans. Boxes are needed to carry home your preserved food. Mornings begin at 8am Tuesday and Thursday, now through December. Starting in 2010, the Cannery asks that people call in advance to schedule their canning on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This will help them staff the facility more efficiently.

Produce must arrive by 9am to complete the task by the end of the day and the cannery closes when the day's work is done. You are expected to help clean up before you leave and take all of your production and wares with you.

Sourcing is another matter. I clearly recall that my grandmother thought there were only enough green beans in the pantry when we had canned 150 quarts. I just paid \$2.50 for a pound of green beans at the farmers market. If you don't have your own garden, buying produce to can may be prohibitive. However, you might approach friends who have gardens, plan to pool your resources and can together. As growers, consider offering discounts for bulk purchases, particularly at the end of a season.

Physical Location: 1688 Indian Trail Road (behind the Redeemer Classical School)

Mailing Address: 3586 Horizons Way, Harrisonburg, VA 22802

Email: TheCannery@horizonsva.com

Phone: 540-269-4407 (During Cannery Hours Only - Tuesdays and Thursdays 8am-until the day's canning is finished. Starting in 2010, please call the Cannery in advance to schedule an appointment for Tuesday or Thursday. Or 540-298-1056 or 540-830-1386 or 800-729-9230

Operating Season: From the first Monday in July until the second Friday of December.

Rowena Morrel is the creator and editor of In The Kitchen Magazine.

VICFA

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VICFA

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

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Rowena Morrel, Christine Solem

Website: www.VICFA.org

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

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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.

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