

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*

October 2010

In This Issue:

[VICFA Participates in the Heritage Harvest Festival](#)

[Voting on the S510 Food Safety Bill](#)

[VICFA Notes](#)

My Goat Cheese Giveaway

By John Coles of Satyrfield Farm

After John died on April 4th I piled any mail for him that was not of immediate concern on his desk. In June I finally found the time to sort through it and was startled to see that an article written by John had been published in the summer 2010 edition of "The Natural Farmer", a publication of the northeast Organic Farming Association. John had written the article for a website in 2009 and they had gotten it from that website. John tirelessly devoted his life to the challenge of achieving unregulated direct farmer to consumer trade. I was so happy to see that his message still lived.

- Foreword by Christine Solem

How My Troubles With The Law Began

In January 2005, Virginia began to require permits for all mammalian milk (including goat milk), except for one species, Homo sapiens. Is someone going to make cheese from mouse milk?

For a farm to comply with this regulation it would cost approximately \$50,000, the pasteurizer alone would cost \$10,000. Our operation is very small. When selling directly to the final consumer (not through restaurants or stores), a farm store, farmers market and a home kitchen is all that is needed.

An Unwarranted Attack on a Wholesome Product

Most of the cheese that I make is a fresh soft cheese from our raw goats' milk. I don't believe in pasteurizing milk to drink or to make it into cheese or other cultured milk products. The reason is that it is nutritionally superior with the natural enzymes and lactic acid bacteria intact. Adding a culture to pasteurized milk does replace the missing bacteria, however, I consider the pasteurization process an adulteration of my product. As an artisan cheesemaker, I believe in



JOHN COLES 1938-2010

continued on page 2...

continued from page 1...

working with nature and keeping my cheese as natural and whole as possible. Most of my customers want my cheese because it is not pasteurized.

Farmers Need to Become Schooled in the Law to Survive

Our farmers' market begins in April, so we had 3 months to decide how we were going to make our cheese available to our customers and not get in trouble with the Virginia Department of Agriculture. Fortunately, the Virginia Secretary of Agriculture (a former legislative delegate friendly to our cause) stated in writing that we could legally give our cheese away.

This is the fifth year that we have been giving away the cheese. We do accept donations which are not for the cheese (this is very important and why it works), but, in our case, donations are for lobbying on small farm issues and court costs. We have been in and out of court since 1980 and are currently in court on a NAIS (National Animal Identification System) related issue. Other farmers giving away their cheese would have different reasons for accepting donations, but never tie the donations to the cheese.

Other Farmers are Joining Us in the Great Raw Cheese Give-Away

Caleb Russell, son of Kathryn Russell of Majesty Farm is giving away fresh cow milk cheese at The Charlottesville City Market, the same market where I am a vendor. This is his first year. He accepts donations for a barn that burned down last year.

At our farmers' market I give away between 40 and 100 lbs of cheese in pound and one half pound containers. Since giving it away is not a sale, technically, I don't have to pay the 6% stall fee. I do sell vegetables and some composted goat manure. I pay the stall fee for what I can legally sell.

I make as much or more money in donations than I made prior to January 2005 when I was selling the cheese. Most of my customers understand the significance of what I am doing and are very generous.

As I mentioned, this is the fifth season I have been giving away the cheese at the Saturday market. At least 2 people each market day tell me how much they appreciate what I am doing. The cheese giveaway is awkward, but the praise makes it all the easier to do. Once in a while a person will take the cheese and donate nothing. But this is balanced by a rare \$50.00 or \$100.00 bill. It is all part of the game I play with the State Agriculture Department.

Agribusiness Pushes for One-Size-Fits All Rules

Unfortunately, thanks to the cow dairy lobby, Virginia does not allow exemptions to the permitting law for selling directly to the final consumer. We need a two-tiered regulatory system. One-

page 2

size-fits-all regulations preclude the existence of the small farm. If your farmers market takes a percentage of your sales be sure you are not just giving away cheese. You can keep the peace with your market manager if you are selling fruits, vegetables, etc. That way, you can make sales and report a stall fee.

Don't be intimidated by the authorities. Unless raw milk and milk products are controlled substances in your state, you can legally give it away. Feel free to contact us if you have any questions. ■

Christine Solem is the owner of Satyrfield Farm, which she operated with John Coles, in Albemarle County, Virginia. Christine has been farming for 35 years. John farmed for 30 years. Never in the history of their farm has their food caused any reported illnesses. The story of his problems with food safety legislation and the cheese giveaway were front page news in the *Washington Post* on October 20, 2007.

John was a member of the Virginia Independent Farmers and Consumers Association and the Weston A. Price Foundation. Contact Christine Solem by mail at 1836 Polo Grounds Road, Charlottesville, VA 22911 or by phone at 434-973-6505.

VICFA At The Heritage Harvest Festival

On September 11, 2010, VICFA was pleased to participate at the Heritage Harvest Festival with a sale of pickles and an active display of our VICFA mission.



The law states that non-profits can have one-day food sales without government inspection. VICFA legally sold pickles on the lawn of Monticello, the home of Thomas Jefferson, at the Heritage Harvest Festival. Customers commented that they could not believe how great homemade pickles tasted!

Thank you to everyone who donated pickles for this successful event.

VICFA Notes

Voting on the S510 Safety Bill To Happen Soon



The S510 food safety bill is coming up for a vote. Please call your senators (contact information available on our website at www.vicfa.org) to ask them to amend the S510 bill with the Tester-Hagan amendments

When you contact your senators, use your own words and let your senators know how much it means to you to be able to buy directly from the farmer. Let them know that there needs to be a two tier system, One for big Ag, *and* one for your neighbor farmer.

Come to Our October Meeting!

The October Meeting will be held at the Virginia Garden Farmers Market in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Come to the meeting on October 10, 2010. The business meeting is from 1:00 – 2:00 followed by a general meeting from 2:00 – 4:00. We will share a pot luck lunch following the business meeting and before the general meeting. 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, October 10, 2010

at the Virginia Garden Farmers Market
3640 Dam Neck Road
Virginia Beach, VA 23453

FROM WESTERN VIRGINIA:

US-460 E toward Petersburg, merge onto I-85 N/US-460 E toward I-95 N/Petersburg/Norfolk, take the I-95 S/US-460 E exit 68 toward Rocky Mt,NC/Norfolk, take the US-460-BR E/County Sr.exit on the left toward Norfolk, merge onto US-460 E, merge onto US-13 N/US-460 E/US-58 E toward VA-10 W/Newport News/Norfolk/VA Beach, merge onto I-664 S/Hampton Roads Belt toward I-264 E/Portsmouth/I-64/Norfolk/US-13 N/VA Beach, merge onto I-64 W/Hampton Roads Belt via exit 15B toward Chesapeake/VA Beach, take the Indian River Rd. east exit 286B, merge onto Indian River Rd., stay straight onto Ferrell Pkwy., turn slight left onto VA-165 S/Princess Anne Rd., turn left onto Dam Neck Rd., make a u-turn at Landstown Ct. onto Dam Neck Rd., Virginia Beach farmers Market, 3649 Dam Neck Rd. is on the right.

FROM NORTHERN VIRGINIA:

I-95 south to Richmond, merge onto I-295 S via exit 84A on the left toward Rocky Mt,NC/Richmond Int'l Airport, merge onto I-64 via exit 28A toward Norfolk/VA Beach, take the Newtown Rd. exit exit 284B, merge onto I-264 E/Norfolk-VA Beach Expy., take the Independence Blvd. exit 17A toward Princess Anne, merge onto VA-410E, turn right onto Dam Neck Rd., Virginia Beach Farmers Market, 3640 Dam Neck Rd. is on the right.

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.

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: