



# 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*

March 2011

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## Staking the Vampire: Letter to Senator Ticer

*By Christine Solem*

I have been a citizen lobbyist in the Virginia General Assembly for small farm interests since 1992. Never before have I found it necessary to insist on killing one of the bills that I had previously supported, after it had just cleared a big hurdle: namely, passing out of committee (the amended bill passed out of committee 9 to 6). I believe the letter below to Senator Ticer explains what happened. Of course not all details are included, and if anyone is further interested, they may contact me: (434) 973-6505.

It is very disheartening for everyone who put time and effort towards passage of this bill (especially the legislative breakfast), and then have it end up like this. We put our trust in the process that we would have a fair hearing and at least have the bill voted on up or down in an open, straight-forward and truthful manner. This did not happen. How then can anyone dare complain that people are so cynical?

Senator Patricia Ticer, Chair  
Senate Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources Committee  
General Assembly Building  
Richmond, Virginia

*Re: SB 920, Staking the Vampire*

Dear Senator Ticer:

We felt that some explanation to your committee was in order with respect to the passing by of SB 920, The pickle bill, on the Senate floor, Feb.8, 2011. This was done by the Patron at our request for the following reasons:

1. The Substitute accepted by the Committee on Monday Feb. 7, and Submitted by Senator Hanger (for agribusiness) which required the taking of a course, submission of recipes, reports, testing and on and on, was just as oppressive in one as the required inspection (which our bill would have eliminated) was in another way.

2. As agribusiness testified, the operations they are already inspecting are complying with  
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the requirements that they wished to add to our bill. The truth is, agribusiness, through VDACS, is misapplying the federal regulations on acidified foods and taking advantage of these people when there is in fact no clear regulation out there for home processors at all. They are using our bill as a vehicle to make these requirements law. This is obviously the case as persons making pickles would be under these requirements irrespective of the fact that the inspection were to be removed. This type of maneuvering is unconscionable, thus our simple little bill turned into a blood thirsty vampire that had to be staked.

## **VIRGINIA LEGISLATORS ARE TOO TIMID**

Virginia General Assembly legislators wilt under the glare of agribusiness with all their money and power. However, agribusiness power is eroded, Recall after recall have driven people to demand access to local food. This is a movement that will not go away! The food industry is so bad off that Congress passed a sweeping food safety bill (SB510) in 2010 in an attempt to further regulate the industry. Yet, exemptions were provided in the bill for farmers selling direct to consumers and for local food producers. The word is out—local food is safer! Our SB920 was a food safety bill!

The above points and others never came out in Committee as our Patron was too timid to upset agribusiness and let me speak (He knew I tell it like it is). I am just as guilty as I should have overridden him and spoken anyway. I was afraid of being rude. However, as long as nothing is intended personally, there is nothing wrong with being rude if that's what it take to be heard.

We handed out copies of the movie, Food Inc., which exposes the problems in the food industry, to all members of to Virginia General Assembly last March. This is a mainstream movie, seen by many and nominated for an academy award as best documentary in 2010. This film was, and continues to be an eye-opener for many members of the general public. If anyone hasn't had a chance to view this movie yet, it is not too late.

The people increasingly want local food and they do not want regulations so oppressive with respect to its production so as to restrict their access to this food. Virginia legislators need to be brave enough to override agribusiness in this regard. Agribusiness may have money and power, but the people have the facts and the truth on their side, And, the people count. Ask anyone in Egypt.

Sincerely,  
Christine Solem

Cc: All Member of the senate committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources; Governor Bob McDonnell; Lieutenant Governor Bill Bolling; Todd Haymore, Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry; Matt Lohr, Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services; William Howell, Speaker of the House; Harvey Morgan, Chair, House Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources Committee; Other interested parties. ■

## **Proposed Regulations to REQUIRE Animal Identification of ALL Agricultural Animals**

Virginia has proposed regulations to require identification of all agricultural animals entering Virginia. This includes poultry.

There will be a public hearing on **March 24, 2011** at 10:00 a.m. in the 2nd floor Board Room, of the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, located at:

102 Governor Street • Richmond, Virginia.

*The deadline for public comment is April 1, 2011.*

Contact: Dr. Dan Kovich, Staff Veterinarian,  
Animal Care and Health Policy  
Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services  
P.O. Box 1163  
Richmond, VA 23218

Telephone: (804)786-2483 • FAX: (804) 371-2380  
TTY: (800) 828-1120 • email: dan.kovich@vdacs.virginia.gov.

## **Legislative Breakfast**

*By Richard Altice*

Alarms went off early for VICA volunteers on the morning of Jan. 18, as they arose from their beds to gather breakfast goods to be served to members of the General Assembly and their staff in Richmond. After a lengthy trip for some, a table in room 7 W was over flowing with home grown, home made breakfast items including deviled eggs, souffle, sausage gravy, biscuits, scrapple, bacon, coffee, cheese, raw milk, pickles and canned fruits. There was even some tasty chocolate from Pott's Chocolate, [pottschocolate.com](http://pottschocolate.com) of Meherrin, Va. The array was mind boggling, as seen in the faces of those about to partake of the scrumptious choices.

Wayne Bolton, Lois Smith and daughter, Suzi Croes and daughter, Susan Verbeek and daughter, Callie and Dan Walker, Guy Freesen, Barbara Hill, Richard Altice and Emily Turtlewoman brought the food either prepared by themselves or picked up from members unable to attend. The Legislative breakfast is an opportunity to show the General Assembly members and their staff the the incredible difference in taste between homegrown freshly prepared food and mass produced foods. The event was also part of the lobbying effort in support of SB920, our Kitchen Bill for 2011 to exempt home kitchens from burdensome state regulations for production of certain foods.

As senators, delegates and staff moved through the serving line VICFA members talked to them about what VICFA represents

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and about SB920, while receiving many compliments on the wonderful choices on the breakfast table. After 2 1/2 hours had passed, nearly 300 people had been served, all now aware of the delights of local food.

After breakfast was over, the table was cleared and food stuffs safely put aside. Small groups of VICFA members were formed who went to speak with their senator and those on the Senate Agriculture Committee. Leftover pickles from our pickle sale day at the Heritage Harvest Festival at Monticello were given to representatives in the hope of maybe gaining more support for SB920!

At the end of the day, thanks and gratitude to Delegate Jim Edmunds and his helpful staff for securing the room for us, and also to those VICFA members who made, brought or donated food for this event. Without your effort this event would not have been the success that it was. Thankyou each and everyone, and we look forward to more member participation at next year's lobby day. ■

## VICFA Notes

### Come to Our March Meeting

The March Meeting will be held at the home of Tiffany Stuart. Come to the meeting on March 13, 2011. We will share in a potluck lunch at 1:00 pm, followed by our general business meeting from 2:00 - 4:00 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, March 13, 2011**

at the home of Tiffany Stuart

**3417 Partlow Road**

**Partlow, VA 22534**

#### FROM THE CHARLOTTESVILLE AREA:

Merge onto I-64 E. Take exit 143 for VA-208, toward Louisa/Ferri Cliff. Turn left at VA-208 E/Courthouse Rd. Turn right at VA-208 E/VA-22 E/E Main St Continue to follow VA-208 E/VA-22 E. Turn left at E 1st St. Continue onto Fredericks Hall Rd/State Route 618. Slight right to stay on Fredericks Hall Rd/State Route 618. Continue onto Bumpass Rd/State Route 601. Turn left to stay on Bumpass Rd/State Route 601. Continue to follow Bumpass Rd. Continue onto Beaver Dam Rd/State Route 715. Turn left at Green Bay Rd/State Route 658. Continue onto Co Rd 658/Mt Olive Rd. Turn left at VA-738/Partlow Rd. Destination will be on the left.

#### FROM THE RICHMOND AREA:

Take the I-195 N ramp to I-95/I-64 Toll road. Merge onto VA-195 W Toll road. Continue onto I-195 N. Keep right at the fork, follow signs for I-64 E/I-95/Washington/Norfolk. Keep left at the fork and merge onto I-95 N. Take the exit toward VA-207 W/Rogers Clark Blvd. Turn left at VA-207 W/Rogers Clark Blvd. Continue onto VA-658 N/Jericho Rd. Turn left to stay on VA-658 N/Jericho Rd. Turn left at VA-639 E/Ladysmith Rd/State Route 603. Continue to follow VA-639 E/Ladysmith Rd. Slight right at VA-738/Partlow Rd. Destination will be on the left.

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### FARMERS MARKET REPORT

Remember: VICFA proudly sponsors the Farmers Market Report each week on V93 (92.9 FM radio, broadcasting from Farmville, VA)

# VICFA

PO Box 6838  
Charlottesville, VA 22906

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## VICFA

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

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

Website: [www.VICFA.org](http://www.VICFA.org)

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

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Box 6838, Charlottesville VA 22906.

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## 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)

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