



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*

April 2012

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Getting It or Faking It? Are More People (and Legislators) Starting To Understand The Farm-To-Consumer Food Movement Or Are They Just Leading Us On?

By: Suzi Croes

“Why do we have to lobby for the right to buy directly from whom we choose?” It may seem a bit superficial to be fighting for pickle sales, but what about the right of the individual? What about deciding who gets to choose what you would consume and where you decide to spend your dollar? Interestingly, it is the thought of those dollars that seems to have finally caught the attention of VDACS. In a recent article appearing in *The Freelance Star*, VDACS announced the “Ten Dollar Buy Local Challenge”, citing a study by the Virginia Extension Cooperative, which stated that \$10 spent weekly per household, would inject \$1.65 billion into Virginia local economy. This was a move that was reportedly backed by Virginia Farm Bureau Federation, the Virginia Cooperative Extension, Buy Fresh Buy Local-Virginia, and the Virginia Food System Councils Members. I am pleased with more interest in local foods, and I am thrilled that so many are in support. However, it is puzzling that some of the very same groups that have been in opposition to direct farm to consumer trade are listed.

This monetary projection is not news to VICFA members. It has been one of the lobbying points since the first year that we pushed for unregulated pickles to be added to the 2008 Kitchen Bill. Farmer’s markets have expanded greatly with the advent of uninspected kitchen sales of baked goods, jams and jellies, which has provided the opportunity for additional commerce and options for consumers. With Big Ag pushing to market overseas, I can see how keeping a lid on America’s discontent with our present food system would be in their best interest. It’s hard to compete with fresh baked bread. A healthy farm-to-consumer local economy, unencumbered by regulatory statutes intended for large production, is the highest choice of direct, free market trade; and it is a money maker.

The face of today’s Agriculture is changing. More people are moving from consuming to producing their own food. According to a 2011 VDACS report, small farms are on

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the rise in Virginia by more than 30 percent; this is partly due to a growing interest in where our food is grown, and in the health concerns of the public. With so many food recalls, this trend will continue to grow as more people become aware of large production farming practices, and the benefits of the nutrient denseness of home produced foods. It is clear that consumers are becoming more aware of the healthy benefits of purchasing fresh, locally-farmed food; and the demand for more diversity in the local sector is being felt by legislators. This year's rejection of the proposed addition of pickles to the 2008 Kitchen Bill (which was put in by a private citizen) should have been a wake up call to legislators. It remains to be seen if our government really is in support of this local food movement and is willing to open up to people's choice, not just saving face. ■

— A Tale Of Two Situations

By: Lois Smith

It was the best of times. It was the worst of times. These seem to be my sentiments after attending the Board of Agriculture VDACS meeting. Imagine my surprise to hear Commissioner Matt Lohr announce to the board that the Governor McDonnell administration is making trade agreements with China, and trying to do so with India, since these countries have billions of citizens and America has only 300 million. I guess when you think of it in dollars, America is not a great market for corporate agriculture. That is, of course, when corporate agriculture's goal is to grow a massive amount of food per acre, regardless of whether or not it's healthy!

"We have to feed the world" is what bio-tech food corporations cry; and our government is yelling with them. What a racket they are making on every multi-level of thought that this statement can make.

Commissioner Lohr reported that tariffs are expected to go from 50% to 0%, which will give America an even playing (trading) field among the global thinking.

I wish that local farmers and consumers could get an even playing field here in America, too. I wish that regulation did not favor institutionalized agriculture. Then, perhaps small farmers could make a living, and consumers could remain healthy.

I need to mention that recent reports claim that autism is now present in 1 out of 88 children. This is criminal! Could food matter? Big Ag says no. So long as your

belly is full, that is all that seems to matter.

On a positive note, Commissioner Lohr says that they will be looking at pickle regulation to see if they can make the regulation less strenuous for the average pickle producer. VICFA has asked for a meeting so that we could have some input on the new regulations; and thankfully, we were granted that opportunity.

Please remember to keep this in your prayers, because it seems that it will surely require an Act of God to get a favorable and fair regulation established for the small pickle producer! ■

Member Selected For Us Team!

Anne Buteau is a long time VICFA member who lives with her husband Dan, a carpenter, daughter Elizabeth (8) and a bunch of animals, in Nelson County, Virginia. Anne is a past Vice President, Secretary, and Board Member of VICFA. She had been a full time Natural Hoofcare Provider to equines in central Virginia since 2000, which eventually resulted in a herniated disc in December of 2010. With Anne's injury, Dan had to quickly learn how to milk. Luckily, he took to it well!

Anne has given many hours of driving, lobbying, testifying and service to VICFA over the years, but has recently stepped down her level of activism to concentrate on a once in a lifetime opportunity. She will be back in the thick of it next winter!

Since enduring her back injury, Anne has recovered to ride sufficiently well and completed a 30 mile ride in October of 2011. Now, Anne has been selected for the US team in the sport of TREC and in September, will go to the World Champoinships in Portugal. TREC is a test of orienteering on horseback and horsemanship skills. As she can only trim feet part time, her income is limited, and she is looking for donations/sponsorship towards the cost of the trip. She has a website where there is more information. She would be happy to give thanks to donors/advertisers. Information can be found online at www.hoofhelp.net.

A donation in any amount would be gratefully received. Donations can be mailed to Anne Buteau, PO Box 133, Shipman, VA 22971, or made online via the PayPal button on the website.



VICFA Notes

We will not meet in April, 2012

Come to our May 2012 Meeting

The May Meeting will be held in Partlow, VA on May 6, 2012.

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME HOURS ARE NOW IN EFFECT

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, May 6, 2012
hosted by Rose Lawhorne
107 Oak Crest Drive
Partlow, Virginia 22534

DIRECTIONS:

From Charlottesville Area: From I-64 East; Take the VA-208 exit, EXIT 143, toward Louisa/Ferncliff. Turn left onto VA-208/Courthouse Rd. After approx. 9 miles, Turn right onto E Main St/US-33/VA-208/VA-22. Continue to follow VA-208/VA-22. After about 5.6 miles, Turn left onto E 1st St/US-522/VA-208. (E 1st St is 0.4 miles past Poplar Ave) Big Johns Pizza is on the corner. Take the 1st left onto Louisa Ave/US-522/VA-208. Mineral Volunteer Fire Dept is on the corner. Turn right onto New Bridge Rd/VA-208. Continue to follow VA-208. VA-208 is just past Mansfield Rd. After approx. 7.3 miles, Turn right onto Lewiston Rd. After about 3.9 miles, Turn left onto Dickerson Rd. (If you reach Morning Glory Dr you've gone about 0.5 miles too far). In 1.6 miles, Turn left to stay on Dickerson Rd. In 2.3 miles, Dickerson Rd becomes Duerson Ln. In 1.9 miles, Turn left onto Partlow Rd. Take the 1st left onto Oak Crest Dr. 107 OAK CREST DR is on the left.

From Northern Virginia/Richmond Area: Take I-95 Exit 118. Go toward McDonald's and straight through the light at Route 1; go approximately 5 miles to the light at Pizzaro's Store. Turn Left on to Partlow Road. Go approximately 5 miles and then Turn Right on Oak Crest Drive.

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VICFA

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VICFA

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Christine Solem, Emily Turtlewoman

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