

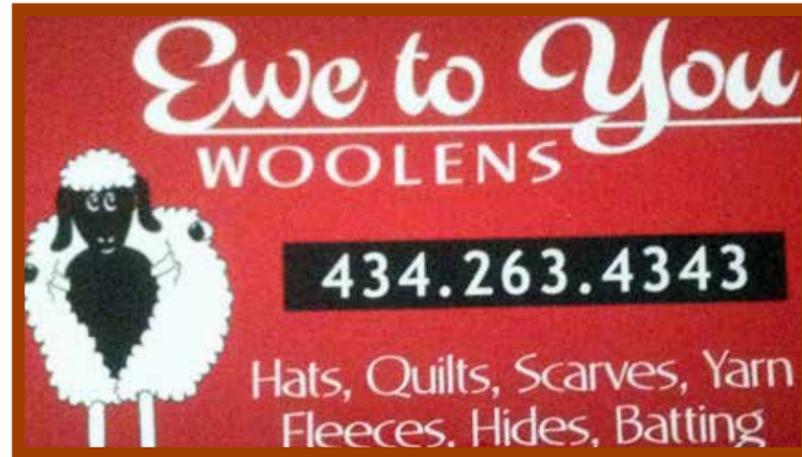
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VICFA

Virginia Independent Consumers and Farmers Association
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 Vice President, Richard Altice
 Treasurer, Jay Smith
 Secretary, Christine Solem
 Members At Large: Richard Bean, Wayne Bolton, Suzi Croes,
 Ed Ely, Susan Verbeeck
 Website: www.VICFA.org
 Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/19160169000/>

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*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: _____

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Our Mission: To promote and preserve unregulated direct farmer-to-consumer trade that fosters availability of locally grown or home-produced food products

February 2014

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Please note that we will not meet in February. Please plan to join us for our March meeting.

Lobby Day - January 23, 2014

By Suzi Croes

Thursday, January 23 was a bitterly cold day as we all drove in to Richmond Virginia General Assembly for Lobby Day. The weather did not seem to deter the lobbying one bit! The General Assembly was just as busy as usual as VICFA members Lois Smith, Richard Altice, Joe Turner and Suzi Croes turned out to lobby HJ170.

HJ 170 is an amendment to the Virginia Constitution. The simplicity of the amendment will give a legislative voice to the consumer when it comes to the procurement of the foods of their choice. As a state constitutional amendment it will have precedence over the state legislative statutes.

This is the first year for HJ 170 and though no constitutional amendments will be heard this year the lobbying efforts will go a long way to getting this passed as we continue our efforts in the future. The representatives and aides we spoke to seemed to recognize that with all the farm freedom bills being filed this year this is definitely a concern and looked favorably on HJ 170.

They also mentioned that others had been lobbying earlier in the week and that a number of calls and emails had been received in favor of HJ 170.

At this time Christine Solem is not satisfied with the current language "off the farm" and feels that the wording should be changed to "at the farm". She is working on those changes now.

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 170
 Offered January 16, 2014

Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of Virginia by adding in Article I a section numbered 16-A, relating to the right to acquire farm-produced food.

Patron-- Cline

Amend the Constitution of Virginia by adding in Article I a section numbered 16-A as follows:
 ARTICLE I
 BILL OF RIGHTS

Section 16-A. Right to acquire farm-produced food.

That the people shall have a right to acquire, for their own consumption, farm-produced food directly off the farm from the farmer who produced it, subject only to such reasonable regulations and restrictions as the General Assembly may authorize by general law. ■



HB 135: Death & Resurrection

By Bernadette Barber

HB 135, the Virginia Food Freedom Act was introduced by Delegate Rob Bell to the Agriculture Sub-committee on January 20th, 2014 in a packed conference room at the General Assembly. Delegate Bell gave a strong delivery. Joel Salatin spoke in favor of the bill as well as new VICFA member Randall Anderson who spoke very eloquently about it. Dwayne McIntyre a farmer from southwest VA drove 6 and a half hours to speak for 2 minutes, paring down the small farm issues to basic “freedoms”. Another testimony came from Matthew French, owner of French Family Farms, who carpooled with Dwayne. Matthew slept his five hours as he had just got off working a shift at a Pepsi plant. He told the sub committee he wanted “to make bacon” from the hogs he raises on his 250 acre farm. Kimberly Hartke spoke for Weston A. Price Foundation and Farm to Consumer Legal Defense. I did not speak, as they only allowed 5 persons for testimony, but did bring a petition with over fifty-five hundred signatures, garnered within four days, calling for the passage of the Virginia Food Freedom Act.

The opposition brought out what Christine Solem called the “medium guns”; they included a *15 member coalition of organizations against the bill forth by Agribusiness Council. Farm Bureau was not only included, but also had Trey Davis speak in opposition. Aimee Perron Seibert, the lobbyist for the Virginia Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics stated that, “Raw milk carried a serious health risk to pregnant mothers and children” citing the AAP’s December 16, 2013, raw milk press release. The testimony from a veterinarian from the Agribusiness council and multigenerational cattle operation claimed laughably that people will be stringing dead cows up on the side of the road from tractor buckets carving off bad meat to an unsuspecting public.

Anthony Bavuso of Seaford Oyster company videotaped the whole meeting for us and put it on you tube in 21 segments, the first 13 have to do with HB 135. We owe a debt of gratitude to him. He has been in a fight with York County about selling the oysters he grows in his own “backyard” of leased river bottom.

Danny Marshal, the chairman of the Ag committee, asked Deputy Secretary Travis Hill to look into the matter of the regulatory burdens that small producers face. At the close of the sub-committee hearing of HB 135 I took the opportunity to discuss the issues with him and the creation of a work group to bring forth the obstacles we face.

Ruby Brabo, a King George County Supervisor who is a supporter of HB 135, joined the discussion. She had brought with her a

constituent Farmer and asked Deputy Secretary Hill a number of questions and gave him a litany of facts supporting the safety and economic boon to a local economy that the passage of HB 135 could create.

Kelly Pawlik also spoke with the Deputy Secretary-she had been censured by the Department of Agriculture for selling soups from her home in Fredericksburg.

Since then, a task force has been created to address the issues and will be meeting in April in Charlottesville. We are still in the game, and hope to have a compromise bill for introduction in 2015 as well as federal legislation to be introduced by VA Congressmen to address the Federal Meat Inspection program so we can “sell our bacon”!

A nice story on the Food freedom Act can be found on this website: <http://cottagefoods.org/laws/usa/virginia/>

A continued petition on Peers.org is fueling the next part of the campaign. Please sign it and encourage others to sign on as well.

More Information:

<http://campaigns.peers.org/petitions/pass-the-virginia-food-freedom-act>

*15 Members of the “Coalition”

(American Academy of Pediatrics, Cooperative Milk Producers Association, Dairy Farmers of America, Maryland-Virginia Milk Producers Association, Medical Society of Virginia, Virginia Agribusiness Council, Virginia Cattleman’s Association, Virginia Farm Bureau, Virginia food and Beverage Association, State Dairymen’s Association, Virginia Poultry Federation, Retail Merchants Association, Seafood Council, Veterinary Medical Association, and The Wholesale Distributors Association) ■

Update on The Boneta Bill, HB 268 / SB51

It is so nice to see a Bill go through that has so much citizen support. HB 268 introduced in the House of Delegates by Delegate Orrock passed the House 73 to 23 in favor of the bill. It had been rolled into Senator Stuarts SB 51 and has successfully traveled through the Senate legislative process. On February 5, 2014, it passed the Senate’s third and final vote with 32 to 7 in favor of the bill! The Boneta Bill will have a great impact on local agricultural commerce. Here is the full text.

SENATE BILL NO. 51 - AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources on January 30, 2014) (Patron Prior to Substitute--Senator Stuart)

A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 15.2-2288.6, relating to local regulation of activities at agricultural operations.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 15.2-2288.6 as follows: § 15.2-2288.6. Agricultural operations; local regulation of certain activities.

A. No locality shall regulate the carrying out of any of the following activities at an agricultural operation, as defined in § 3.2-300, unless there is a substantial impact on the health, safety, or general welfare of the public:

1. Agritourism activities as defined in § 3.2-6400;

continued from page 2

2. The sale of agricultural or silvicultural products, or the sale of agricultural-related or silvicultural-related items incidental to the agricultural operation;

3. The preparation, processing, or sale of food products in compliance with subdivisions A 3, 4, and 5 of § 3.2-5130 or related state laws and regulations; or

4. Other activities or events that are usual and customary at Virginia agricultural operations.

Any local restriction placed on an activity listed in this subsection shall be reasonable and shall take into account the economic impact of the restriction on the agricultural operation and the agricultural nature of the activity.

B. No locality shall require a special exception, administrative permit not required by state law, or special use permit for any activity listed in subsection A on property that is zoned as an agricultural district or classification unless there is a substantial impact on the health, safety, or general welfare of the public.

C. Except regarding the sound generated by outdoor amplified music, no local ordinance regulating the sound generated by any activity listed in subsection A shall be more restrictive than the general noise ordinance of the locality. In permitting outdoor amplified music at an agricultural operation, the locality shall consider the effect on adjoining property owners and nearby residents.

D. Nothing in this section shall be construed to affect the provisions of Chapter 3 (§ 3.2-300 et seq.) of Title 3.2 or to restrict the authority of any locality under Title 58.1. The provisions of this section shall not apply to any entity licensed in accordance with Chapter 2 (§ 4.1-200 et seq.) of Title 4.1.

2. That the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services shall continue the On-Farm Activities Working Group. ■

SB 48 - Update on Fracking Permits

By Suzi Croes

Senator Richard H. Stuart’s bill which will prohibit oil and gas drilling in the groundwater areas of the coastal plains of Virginia is a first step to setting some guidelines to preserve and protect the surrounding aquifers for possible contamination from drilling, particularly Fracking. The bill has a strong start passing the Senate 28 to 12 on February 5, 2014. SB 48 still has to pass the House of Delegates so is not out of the woods yet. We will be tracking and update as it progresses through the House.

SB 48 Eastern Virginia Groundwater Management Area; prohibition on oil and gas drilling.

Richard H. Stuart
Summary as introduced:

Prohibition on oil and gas drilling. Prohibits the drilling for oil and gas in the Eastern Virginia Groundwater Management Area. When the General Assembly enacted the Groundwater Management Act in 1973, it declared that the continued, unrestricted usage of groundwater is contributing and will contribute to pollution and the shortage of groundwater, thereby jeopardizing the public welfare, safety, and health. The Act recognized that the state has the right to the reasonable control of all groundwater resources in order

to conserve, protect, and beneficially utilize the groundwater of the Commonwealth. The bill would apply to groundwater and the associated aquifers in the coastal plain of Virginia. The bill would also require the Department of Environmental Quality to adopt regulations protecting surface and ground water resources before the Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy issues a drilling permit in those areas of Tidewater where such activity is allowed. ■

For the full text please visit:

<http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?141+ful+SB48SI>

VICFA Notes

VICFA



VIRGINIA INDEPENDENT CONSUMERS
& FARMERS ASSOCIATION

Due to forecast of inclement weather, VICFA will not meet in February. Please plan to join us for our March 2014 meeting:

March 16th 2014 at 1:00pm



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