

VICFA Board Members

Questions or comments about VICFA?
We want to hear from you!
Get in contact with a board member!

Lois Smith, President: 804-366-6051

Richard Altice, Vice-President: 434-223-4204

Christine Solem, Secretary: 434-973-6505

Jay Smith, Treasurer: 804-366-6051

MEMBERS AT LARGE:

Sean Ferro: sferro7706@email.vccs.edu

Susan Veebeck: growingracefarm@gmail.com

Josiah Tillett: jtillettt@liberty.edu • 434-329-1510

Suzi Croes: 540-419-6571

Ann Buteau: 434-263-4946

How to find your Legislator...

<http://whosmy.viriniageneralassembly.gov/>

VICFA

Virginia Independent Consumers and Farmers Association
President, Lois Smith • cvcrls@mindspring.com • (804) 366-6051
Vice President, Richard Altice
Treasurer, Jay Smith
Secretary, Christine Solem
Members At Large: Josiah Tillett, Suzi Croes, Sean Ferro
Anne Buteau, Susan Veebeck
Website: www.VICFA.org
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/19160169000/>

Editorial Review: Suzi Croes - 540-419-6571
Proof Reader: Susan Veebeck and Shannon Sankar
Contributing Columnists: Alyssa Tillett, Bernadette Barber, Suzi Croes
Designer: Shannon Sankar
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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) * 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:

Old Orchard Farm Presents

"So you want a Family Cow?"



**Saturday
March 5, 2016**

at Old Orchard Farm
6556 James River Road • Shipman, VA

Have you thought about getting a milk cow? Have you ever been up close to a real cow with horns? Where do you start? What do you need? Would you like to find out?

This workshop will provide an introduction to small scale family cow keeping, including hands on time with livestock. We want to share our experiences with you, to help you avoid some of the pitfalls that lie on the road to successful cow ownership, and demonstrate what can be achieved with limited time and money.

For more information and registration for this VICFA fundraising workshop, please email:

annebuteau@yahoo.com or call: (434) 263-4946



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

January 2016

In This Issue:

A New Year

Alyssa Tillett discusses the current movement happening in today's society and encourages us to remain united in VICFA's goals for 2016.

2016 Announcements

Important issues happening this year. Be sure to keep informed and take action to protect your rights!

Collusion

Bernadette Barber warns us not to be fooled by public relation campaigns and lip service. Know what is happening behind the scenes of Farm Bureau and what it all really means for the "small farmer".

VICFA Notes:

Announcements

- January Meeting Information
- VICFA Board Members: Contact Information

Getting Ready for 2016

By Alyssa Tillett



There is a movement happening across the U.S. right now. A movement of people realizing how important a farmer is. It has taken years for people to finally realize the importance of eating locally. But it didn't happen overnight. There have been groups all over the nation, dedicating themselves to the local food movement. Educating the people around them. They spend

hours each day writing articles, planning events, and dedicating time and money into this cause they believed in. A successful movement needs people willing to get up and move. A political candidate doesn't win simply by sitting in a chair and complaining about his opposition and what's wrong with the country. They go out and knock on doors, print fliers, go to meetings, hold fundraisers, and educate the people. Education is key to a movement, and to educate people, you need to have people willing to give their time.

If you are reading this you are either involved with VICFA or have an interest in what VICFA does. What is so important about farm and food freedom? Food is life. Without food, there is no life. Farm freedom means that a farmer can produce food, and sell it. It is a very simple concept. For thousands of years this is how it has been, except for recently. Now farmers are told what they can and can't sell. They have to pay for inspections and licenses just to be able to sell. Where is the freedom in that? As far as food freedom goes, wouldn't you like to be able to decide for yourself what to eat and not eat? These freedoms are slowly being taken away, and that is why VICFA is working hard to restore those freedoms.

In the past few years, we have seen farmers forced to drain their fresh milk and crack their farm fresh eggs. Benjamin Franklin said: "Those who surrender freedom for security will not have, nor do they deserve, either one." We have slowly been giving up our freedoms in the name of safety. Food safety is a huge issue today. But in the name of "food safety" farmers and consumers are paying the costs. Can we really trust our government to tell us what is safe? Shouldn't that be our choice as free people of the United States of America?

I am excited to see what 2016 will bring. I am confident that together, with the help of people like you, we can make a difference when it comes to our food and farm freedoms. This is our year to fight for what is ours, take a stand, and let our voices be heard. We will tell Richmond what is important to us, defend and preserve our freedoms. Let's make 2016 a memorable one.

"Hope has two beautiful daughters: Courage and Anger. Anger at the way things are and courage to make them the way they ought to be." - Augustine of Hippo ■

2016 Announcements

HB 62

HB 62 Introduced this year again by Delegate Rick L. Morris is in the works. Last year this bill suffered defeat in the Agriculture subcommittee in spite of large public support, let's work to get this one through. Call, write, and email your legislators and tell them you support this bill.

HB 62 Milk production; exemptions from certain requirements.

Introduced by: Rick L. Morris

SUMMARY AS INTRODUCED:

Exemptions from milk production requirements. Exempts persons who own three or fewer milking cows and three or fewer goats from the oversight of the Milk Commission and the Board of Agriculture and Consumer Services' requirements governing the quality, grading, and sanitary standards for milk so long as the milk their cows or goats produce is sold directly to consumers and contains a label stating that the product has not been inspected by the state and the consumer is purchasing the product at his own risk.

FULL TEXT:

<http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?161+ful+HB62>

HISTORY

• 12/04/15 House: Prefiled and ordered printed; offered 01/13/16 16100893D

• 12/04/15 House: Referred to Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources

DEFEND HEALTHY LOCAL FOOD LAWS

The TTP (Trans Pacific Partnership) on the Fast Track.

The World Trade Organization (WTO) recently held that the U.S. could be subject to up to \$1 billion in trade penalties simply because our law requires that meat be labeled with the country where it came from. According to the WTO, Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) is a "trade barrier" and Americans have no right to know where their food comes from.

Within days, Congress bowed to the threat from the WTO and repealed Country of Origin Labeling on beef and pork.

How many times does this have to happen before we learn a lesson? COOL, dolphin-safe tuna labels, and so much more have been attacked due to international trade agreements. Twenty of years of so-called free trade agreements have given us millions of lost jobs and an economy that benefits huge corporations at everyone else's expense.

Now, the President is asking Congress to approve the latest – and worst – deal: the Trans-Pacific Trade Partnership.

This two thousand page document would set the rules for all the countries in it – including the U.S. – on issues such as agriculture, food, intellectual property and patents, banking, and more. The agreement gives international corporations the ability to trump properly enacted domestic laws by attacking them as supposed trade barriers.

Here are just some of the highlights:

• The TPP gives importers the ability to challenge individual border inspection

decisions, second-guessing U.S. inspectors about what food is safe and not safe to let into our country. This is a serious problem, particularly since a large percentage of our seafood comes from TPP countries already – in many cases, raised with chemicals and antibiotics that are not allowed in the U.S.

• The TPP threatens any serious limitation on genetically engineered foods. Based on the information on the USDA's website, agribusiness and biotech companies will be able to use international tribunals to challenge countries that ban GMO imports, test for GMO contamination, do not promptly approve new GMO crops, or even require GMO labeling.

• The TPP undermines "Buy American" rules, even when American tax dollars are being spent. The TPP procurement chapter gives firms operating in any TPP nation equal access to U.S. government procurement contracts, rather than the government continuing to give preference to local firms to build and maintain our public roads, bridges, railways, post offices and universities.

• Thousands of new foreign companies would be able to use the TPP investor suit provisions to challenge federal, state or local laws that they claim interfere with their expected profit, bringing suit against our government in unaccountable international tribunals.

• The TPP will make it easier to relocate American jobs to low-wage countries. As Communication Workers of America president Chris Shelton observed, "It forces U.S. workers to compete with the 65-cent an hour wages of Vietnamese workers and the slave labor employed in Malaysia."

It's time for Congress to stand up for American farmers, workers, and consumers. Call your U.S. Representatives and Senators and tell them to reject the TPP!

TAKE ACTION

Please call or e-mail your U.S. Representative and both your U.S. Senators. You can find who represents you:

Online: www.house.gov • www.senate.gov

By Phone: Capital Switchboard at 202-224-3121

Information Courtesy of Farm And Ranch Freedom Alliance

For more info please visit:

<http://farmandranchfreedom.org/tpp-alert-january-6-2016/>

Collusion *Collusion: (kə-loo'zhən) NOUN - A secret agreement for a deceitful purpose.*
By Bernadette Barber

When industry controls the government, the truth is hard to see.

I believe it is important to consider how the "other" side works and to name names. If we don't see how the machine works, how can we fix it when it is broken?

Unfortunately, the machine uses live bodies with faces that seem like compassionate human beings. What they really are are minions and useful idiots. The gears and levers are paid very handsomely, some are covered with awards and "positions" of authority to gratify their egos all stamped with University accolades and Government certified titles. All in all, whether they know it or not, their position is to keep the money rolling into the coffers of large processing industries by forcing individuals to purchase their foods through grocery stores.

The trouble for them is us, the small farmers and food artisans who produce nutrient dense foods that heal bodies and souls and the

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the consumers who support the farmers and purchase their foods. It's cutting into the big boys profits, and they are not happy. So what do they do? A carefully planned out smear attack and fear mongering campaign to discredit small producers as death merchants. The real merchants of death are the ones who have the largest scale ability to do it and have done it. They just have the lawyers and ability to pay off victims' families with non-disclosure agreements.

The Machine is made up of government and industry and it's greased with the taxpayer's money (subsidies and grants.) The gears are the University appointments and advisors that wrap controlled one-sided paid "science" into a certification that ultimately dictates what is legal or not, which then determines who may make a living doing what. It's convenient for the industries. They have a literal "corner on the market" denying all others ability to process and sell the foods they have, thereby eliminating competition.

The lobbyists and the politicians have an active role in all of this, along with a revolving door with industry and government positions.

So how do we see all this? One example is Farm Bureau.

They have lovely PR, "Save our Small farms," AITC, (Ag In the Classroom), Young Farmers, Women in Ag, Real Virginia television show, activities at Meadow Event Park, events at the Amphitheater in Virginia Beach and many, many others. Their Public Relations operations know no bounds. But the real bottom line is the protection and promotion of commodity agriculture and access to government dollars at the taxpayer's expense. It's called externalized cost. They can give lip service to many pseudo- local initiatives, but they always sway interest and effect right back to supporting the big boys.

If a farmer wants to process and sell foods they have made on the farm without the government's seal of approval, Farm bureau will in no way promote it. They will actively work against it. Their insurance company will not insure it. See their action requested of the General Assembly last session. 2015_Food_Freedom

You would think Farm Bureau is out to protect the economic interests of farmers, after all, if a farmer cannot make a living on his farm he is no longer a farmer- (but he will still be a consumer- we all need to eat) No, Farm Bureau in Va is most interested in corn, wheat and soybeans – the building blocks of processed foods in America. Of course they still need some fruit and vegetable produce and prop effects of calf and lamb shows to keep the new farm looking like the idealized version the population adores, so we have the feel good county fairs and promotion of the state-controlled farmers markets. Farm Bureau denies the right of the farmer and the freedom of the people. They are definitely in collusion with the government and industry.

Reprinted with permission: <https://virginiafoodfreedom.wordpress.com/2015/11/10/collusion/>

Excerpted from a flyer sent out by Farm Bureau to Virginia legislators last year over VICFA's 2015 proposed Constitutional amendment on consumers right to acquire farm foods to choice.

*"2015 State Critical Issue • Food Freedom • Constitutional Amendment
Action Requested of General Assembly*

Virginia Farm Bureau urges legislators to:

Oppose the Food Freedom Constitutional Amendment that states: "That the people shall have a right to acquire, for their own consumption, farm produced food directly at the farm with agreement from the farmer who produced it."

Oppose the language because it would give consumers standing in court to sue for the inability to purchase certain foods and "trump" any existing statute, regulation or inspectional oversight that might be imposed on the farmer in order for them to sell their food products."

More Information:

https://www.vafarmbureau.org/Portals/Fed/documents/policy_action/2015_Food_Freedom.pdf



VICFA Notes

Don't miss our Jan. Meeting

Our next monthly meeting will be held in Beaverdam on Jan. 10, 2016

****STANDARD HOURS IN EFFECT****

VICFA would like to extend our appreciation to our host for this month's meeting. Thank you to Susan Verbeeck

We will share in a potluck lunch at **12:00** pm, followed by our general business meeting from 1:00 - 3:00 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, January 10, 2016
at 12:00 PM**

hosted by Susan Verbeeck

17145 Katy Lane • Beaverdam, VA
(804) 347-8827

DIRECTIONS:

From the Richmond Area: 1. Start at I-95 N toward I-64 W/Charlottesville/Washington. (go 22.58 miles). Take the VA-30 W exit, EXIT 98, toward Doswell/US-1. (go 0.22 miles). Turn left onto VA-30 W/Kings Dominion Blvd. (go 0.76 miles). Turn right onto US-1. (go 1.02 miles). Turn left onto Doswell Rd. (go 3.43 miles). Turn slight right onto Old Ridge Rd. (go 4.24 miles) Turn left onto Katy Ln. (go 0.87 miles). 17145 KATY LN is on the right.

From Charlottesville Area: Merge onto I-64 E via the ramp on the left toward Richmond. (go 34.78 miles). Take the US-522 exit, EXIT 159, toward Gum Spring/Goochland. (go 0.3 miles). Turn left onto US-522/Cross County Rd. (go 2.54 miles). Turn sharp right onto Owens Creek Rd. (go 1.63 miles). Turn left onto Holly Grove Dr. (go 4.66 miles). Holly Grove Dr becomes Taylors Creek Rd. (go 2.28 miles). Turn left onto Clazemont Rd. (go 3.58 miles). Turn right onto US-33/Mountain Rd. Stay straight to go onto VA-54/W Patrick Henry Rd. (go 3.72 miles). Turn left onto Scotchtown Rd. (go 0.21 miles) Turn slight left onto Coatesville Rd. (go 3.8 miles). Turn right onto Old Ridge Rd. (go 2.4 miles) Turn right onto Katy Ln. (go 0.87 miles). 17145 KATY LN is on the right.