



COMMUNITY ALLIANCE
WITH FAMILY FARMERS

March 21, 2014

The Honorable Mariko Yamada
California State Assembly
State Capitol
PO Box 942849
Sacramento CA 94249-0004

RE: AB 2505 –Raw Milk and Home Dairy Farms-- SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Yamada:

The Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) is a statewide organization that represents both farmers and non-farm urban residents who support sustainable food and farming policies. CAFF is pleased to support your AB 2505, which would provide a legal avenue for California farms to share or sell small quantities of raw milk without having to comply with all of the costly measures created for large-scale commercial dairies.

At present, state law does not allow ANY milk to be moved off of a farm without a permit from the state. However, even though raw milk sales are legal in California, it is our understanding that only three businesses have such a permit for raw milk, mainly because the requirements are too costly for small operations. CAFF participated in the Small Herd Working Group that CDFA sponsored in order to identify alternative permitting processes for small-scale raw milk producers. We were told that there may be as many as 1,000 farms that are or would be in violation of the law if they shared milk with their neighbors. A number of these farms are members of our organization.

CAFF believes AB 2505 represents a reasonable compromise to provide a legal means for small producers of milk to share or sell it on their farms without weakening public health protections. It requires regular testing of the milk and the animals, imposes sanitation rules, and dictates labeling. All of this improves on the present situation where there are no scale-appropriate guidelines and every sort of practice can be found. For this reason, we believe that this bill advances public health by creating reasonable standards that small producers can meet. As with all direct marketing, the consumer knows exactly where the milk is coming from, and, since this milk can only be sold on the farm, the consumer can also know the conditions under which it is produced.

CAFF has worked for some years to prevent the imposition of unnecessary food safety practices on family farmers growing produce. There is always an appropriate approach to food safety that is commensurate with the risk and the scale, and one size seldom fits all. We believe the same is true in dairy, where for hundreds of years family farms have shared small quantities of milk with

their neighbors or sold it to supplement their income. We believe that AB 2505 provides the missing regulatory scheme for this scale of production in California and for this reason we strongly support its passage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Runsten". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

David Runsten
Policy Director