



# Maine Farm Bureau Association

*"The Voice Of Organized Agriculture"*

March 4, 2014

Senator Vitelli, Representative Dill and members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee:

My name is Jon Olson. I am the Executive Secretary of Maine Farm Bureau, the state's largest general farm organization. Maine Farm Bureau is the unified voice in preserving and growing Maine's agriculture. Maine Farm Bureau works to ensure the future sustainability and profitability of Maine's natural resource businesses through advocacy and support regarding legislation, regulations, marketing and education and consumer awareness.

Maine Farm Bureau favors LD 1786 – An Act To Allow the Sale of Unregulated Farm-produced Dairy Products at the Site of Production.

We feel this bill will help small, beginning farmers being able to sell raw milk and dairy products at their farms without being licensed and inspected. We do agree that the inspection can be made every time a potential customer goes to the farm to purchase the product. We also agree that this product can only be sold at the farm and no where else. If these farms do become larger and needs another outlet for marketing their milk off the farm, then the farm needs to be inspected and licensed.

We suggest that the customers of the raw milk bring their own containers for the milk that is purchased. This will help ensure safety and confidence of the product being sold. The farmer should easily place a required label on the container.

There is also an issue of liability insurance for farmers selling unlicensed and un-inspected raw milk. I don't believe this insurance is available. Farmers wishing to sell raw milk products will need to be aware of this in making a decision to sell these products.

This is a risk to public health of selling raw milk products without being licensed and inspected. We feel, however, the benefits to these small farmers will out weigh these risks.

We support the passage of this bill.

Thank you for your attention to the above. I'll be pleased to answer any questions you may have.