

Gino Tosi
Senior Marketing Specialist
USDA Stop 0231-Room 2971
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Washington, DC 20250-0231



Mr. Tosi

My business, The Strafford Organic Creamery, is currently regulated as a Producer-Handler under the Northeast Federal Milk Marketing Order. I am writing to inform you that the State of Vermont is representing me in the hearing (Doc. No AO-14-A78) and that I fully support its proposal to preserve the producer-handler status and exempt plant status in federal orders.

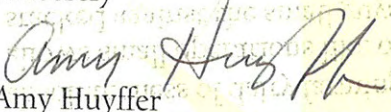
More specifically, I support the monthly volume cap of 2 million pounds of fluid milk sales distribution for producer-handlers and 450,000 pounds for exempt plants as represented by the States of Wisconsin, Vermont, Pennsylvania, New York and New Hampshire. Grandfathering and unique label considerations are not necessary and would be complex to administer. Having the flexibility to grow is very important to our business and 2 million pounds as a cap is a reasonable cap to allow for growth without unduly affecting the pool for other farmers. Having the flexibility to be a producer-handler plant is important for two reasons: 1) paper work reduction and 2) some need to purchase other milk to meet short term demands.

On a more personal note, I'd like to add that I think the Federal marketing order has made an absolute mess of dairy farming in this country. The producer-handler exemption not only allows small operations like ours a small advantage in an industry where everything, *everything*, is stacked against the small guys, but it also provides a window into how the real market forces of value, supply and demand shake out for farms selling to customers for a real price.

I am also wondering how it is for you when you go to the store to buy milk, knowing as you do that the farmers who worked so hard to produce it were likely not covering their operating costs. If you had the option, wouldn't you buy milk directly from a single farm, knowing that the farmer set his own price for his efforts? Especially if it was fresher and tasted better because that farmer could focus on making a great product, and not on filling out the marketing order paperwork?

I hope you'll strengthen the exemption by increasing the limits to allow farms like ours the opportunity for some expansion. It may be, in a few short years, that the producer-handlers are the only ones left standing and you'll need to look to them to see what works in the dairy industry if you want to get milk back on everyone's table.

Sincerely


Amy Huyffer
Strafford Organic Creamery
RockBottom Farm
Strafford, Vermont 05072