

Mr. Chairman and committee, thank you for allowing me to participate in this hearing concerning the Milk Marketing Law. My remarks will be brief and to the point.

Recently I visited a large discount club store. I grabbed a cart and headed to get my items. I noticed a flyer in the cart with a picture of a Hereford cow and her calf. I thought, that's a nice picture for the beef industry. Then to my surprise I noticed, Udderly sweet savings and June is National Dairy Month. Why am I relaying this story? We have for too long had a culture that allows information to be given to us without verifying it's accuracy or understanding what is really happening. Now for most people, they just see a cow and calf, but for dairy farmers we see a confusing inaccurate picture that portrays something that is not authentic.

What does this have to do with Amending the Milk Marketing Law of 1937. It is time to make sure that the information given to dairy farmers, which is now defined in the law, is transparent and easily understandable. We have been getting a confusing picture of what is really going on with the state mandated premium and how it is disbursed to dairy farmers. Due to this confusion and the inability to get an accurate accounting of the premium, many dairy farmers have become mistrustful of the dealers and cooperatives. I could spend time describing anecdotal evidence of dairy farmers seeking, but not getting accurate information from their milk dealer or cooperative and conversely the milk dealers and cooperatives could describe how things are being done and why it is difficult to get producers the information they need, however that is not necessary. This law can and will clear up misconceptions about where the premiums are really going.

Robert Barley and Star Rock Dairy may or may not benefit from this change, however that is not what's important. What is most important is that dairy farmers understand how the premium is being disbursed.

These changes will allow the industry to move forward in a unified manner that will build trust between dairy farmers and the milk dealers and cooperatives that market their milk. If we can work together in a unified manner to market milk and milk products in their current form as well as develop innovative products for the ever changing demands of consumers, dairy production in Pennsylvania will survive and thrive.