

## Testimony to the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

February 12, 2020

Chairman Kerschen, and members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, thanks for allowing my comments today. My name is Bob Seiler and I am testifying in support of SB 300. Since 1949, my family and I have operated a dairy in Sedgwick County near Wichita, where we milk 150 cows. The goal of our farm each day is to produce nature's most perfect food in the way that we want to consume it. Food safety is our number one priority and something we think about each and every day.

Pasteurization is an important step in providing this safe product for our consumers. In this country we take enormous steps to prevent illness and death. From encouraging the flu shot to grounding airplanes to prevent the spread of contagious diseases, we value consumer safety. Take for example the extraordinary measures the country has taken recently to limit the risk of coronavirus. Similarly, I think we should be unwilling to take a risk with raw milk.

Pasteurization is necessary to reduce pathogenic bacteria to an acceptable safe level and reduce spoilage organisms, thus extending the shelf-life of the milk and improving public health. Further, research has shown that pasteurization has little impact on the nutrition of milk, including limited impact on milkfat, protein, enzymes, vitamins or minerals.

As a Grade A dairy farm, we take many steps to ensure that our product is as safe as it can be. Each year my family renews our license with the Kansas Department of Agriculture and are assessed about 600 dollars or 1.5 cents per hundred weight. As part of this license, the KDA inspects our dairy and does monthly quality samples to make sure we are producing a quality product. If we continually fail any of these tests or inspections, we are not allowed to sell our milk. After the milk leaves our farm, it is taken to a processing plant where it is pasteurized, providing further peace of mind that our product is safe for consumption. Common sense tells me that the milk that goes to processing plants and is pasteurized is safer than raw milk.

None of these regulations currently are in place for the sale of raw milk. As a dairy producer, I recognize the importance of these tests, inspections, and added cost. I want consumers to receive the safest and highest quality product.

This bill holds all dairies in the state to the same high standard of food safety. I firmly believe that our state's dairy industry will be better because of the elimination of raw milk sales. The risks that exist from consuming raw milk are unnecessary and put the entire dairy industry and health of our communities at risk. We have the safest food supply in the world here in the United States. Let's keep it that way.

My thanks to Chairman Kerschen and the committee for their interest in a safe food supply.