

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Interim:
600 E. Railroad Avenue
Wasilla, Alaska 99654
Phone: 373-1842
Fax: (907) 373-4729



Session:
State Capitol Building
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
Phone: (907) 465-4899
Fax: (907) 465-3818

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

REPRESENTATIVE WES KELLER, R-WASILLA- CHAIR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

Cheese Regulations need more work and some exemptions

The Administrative Regulation Review Committee (ARRC) met again on Monday, March 15th to continue work on previously discussed issues including Department of Environmental Conservation proposed regulations on cheese. Of concern to the committee and the stakeholders is the effects the regulations will have on small dairies.

Committee Chair, Wes Keller proposed that prior to any more action, the Department enter into negotiated rulemaking discussions with the stakeholders. Negotiated Rule making is a process in which both sides sit down at the table and discuss their concerns and attempt to reach a compromise. The statutory process has been used several times since being created by the Legislature and has been successful in reaching agreements on regulations.

A number of small producers attended the March 8th meeting of ARRC and asked for an exemption from the regulations similar to the one adopted by the State of Oregon. At the meeting on the 15th the Committee decided to request a small producer exemption be placed in the new regulations. Representative Keller said, "The Committee believes that small dairies should not be burdened with expensive or complicated regulations, and that individuals should be free to buy fresh milk and cheese from these small farms if they wish. It is good public policy for both the small dairyman and the consumer, and where they deal directly with one another the State doesn't need to be involved." By using negotiated rule making the details of that exemption can be worked out prior to the regulations taking effect.

In its letter to DEC, the Committee made it clear that if an acceptable exemption is not adopted, that it had the power to suspend a regulation or introduce legislation to overrule the regulations. Certainly, the committee prefers that the Department and the Stakeholders reach an agreed solution without the need for legislative involvement.

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