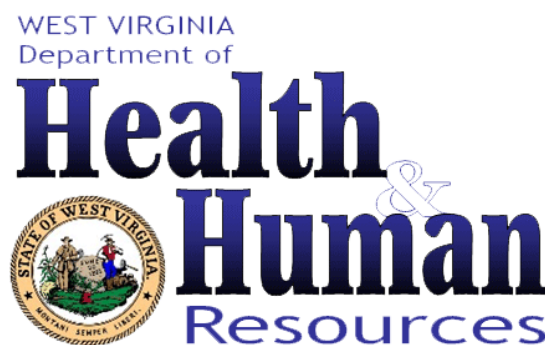


Should the West Virginia Department of Agriculture be given control of all Dairy and Farmer's Market Regulations in the state of West Virginia?



*Agriculture Issues Forum
State CDE: July 12, 2018*

Buffalo FFA Chapter
West Virginia
19005 Charleston Road
Buffalo, WV 25033
(304) 937-2661

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Related instruction occurred in the following courses at Buffalo High School. Introduction to Agriculture, Forestry, and Natural Resources, 25 students; Science of Agriculture, 20 students; Animal Production, 10 students; and Leadership, 20 students. Total: 75 students

WHY IS THE ISSUE IMPORTANT NOW?

Senate Bill 375 and Senate Bill 317 were introduced in 2018 legislative session. Senate Bill 375 removes regulatory control of West Virginia Farmer's Markets out of control of the Department of Health and Human Resources and into control of the West Virginia Department of Agriculture. On March 28, 2018, Governor Jim Justice signed this bill into law. Senate Bill 375 would transfer control of dairy regulations from the Department of Health and Human Resources to the WV Department of Agriculture. Senate Bill 317 would transfer the regulatory control of dairy products from the Department of Health and Human Resources to the Department of Agriculture. The bill has currently been changed into a study, and the bill will be reintroduced in the 2019 legislative session. Agriculture producers and consumers need to be informed about these issues to encourage their legislators to make decisions, which benefit producers and ensure food safety.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE ISSUE?

The nature of the issue is a combination of West Virginia food policy and consumer safety. Senate Bill 317 was created to transfer the regulatory control of dairy products from West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources to the West Virginia Department of Agriculture. Senate Bill 375 was created to transfer the control of farmers markets from the Department of Health and Human Resources to the Department of Agriculture. Following the 2018 legislative session, control of Farmer's Market regulations was moved out of control of the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources into the control of the West Virginia Department of Agriculture. The change of control creates the opportunity for the public to be concerned regarding issues such as botulism or biased judgement. Dairy farmers and farmer market vendors support these changes because the Department of Agriculture already has the resources available to help producers be successful. Additionally, the Department of Agriculture is already in control of regulating Grade B milk products, so producers believe it would be in their best interest to have the Department of Agriculture as the regulatory agency. Some consumers dislike this bill and are concerned, because they believe the Department of Health and Human Resources will hold producers accountable more than the WV Department of Agriculture. There is a risk of botulism, but dairy farmers believe that is a risk all consumers take when purchasing products.

WHO IS INVOLVED IN THE ISSUE?

- All West Virginia Residents – Consumers of the Farmer's Market & Dairy Products
- West Virginia Political Representatives and Parties – Voting to Pass Policies
- West Virginia Agriculture Producers
- West Virginia Department of Agriculture
- West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources
- Farmers Market Managers and Vendors
- West Virginia Regional Sanitarians
- West Virginia Food and Farm Coalition

HOW CAN THE ISSUE BE DEFINED?

The issue can be defined by one simple question: “Should the West Virginia Department of Agriculture be given the responsibility of agricultural regulations, or should the regulations remain in the control of the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources?” Dairy products are defined as products that are made up of dairy. Currently, the Department of Health and Human Resources is the regulatory agency for dairy products. The proposed bills have the regulatory agency for dairy products being the WV Department of Agriculture. In West Virginia, the use of farmers markets is growing. Farmers also known as vendors, register at a market and must pay a fee which varies county to county. The current regulations that are in place, leave both vendors at farmers markets and dairy producers confused.

WHAT IS THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE ISSUE?

The production of dairy products in West Virginia has slowly been decreasing through-out the years. The current regulatory processes have producers resulting in many questionable situations. Likewise, farmers who sell at farmers markets are experiencing another similar issue. From 2013 to 2014, the number of farmers markets grew 1.3 percent. With dairy production slowly decreasing and the demand for farmers markets rising, it is complicated to fulfill the consumer’s needs. Farmers want to be able to make a living, while consumers want to be assured their products are being inspected correctly by a qualified individual.

WHAT CAUSES THE ISSUE?

This issue is caused by having two regulatory agencies in control of very similar, sometimes the same, processes. Due to the fact the West Virginia Department of Agriculture, as well as the Department of Health and Human Resources, are both in partial control of dairy regulations and farmer's market regulations; there are many inconsistencies with each regulatory process. There are discrepancies with permit prices. There is confusion surrounding which agency is in charge of what regulation. Not only do farmers at farmers market vendors not know, the employees of each agency are confused as well. Another problem that contributes to the issue is that DHHR employees do not understand the culture of farming completely, in turn making it difficult for a farmer and DHHR employee to work together to ensure regulations are met and problems are solved. With this being said, the other side of this problem is that consumers and other individuals fear the WVDA is not equipped to ensure food safety and will be bias for farmers play a role in their regulatory process.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

- Public Health Concerns – Botulism could be present in home processed food
- Biased judgment – the Department of Agriculture may be more lenient with farmers
- The Department of Agriculture only has 4 predominant locations in the state
- DHHR will lose funding

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

- Additional revenue for producers and West Virginia economy
- Less confusion for producers on who to contact
- Streamline the regulatory process
- Job opportunities - More agricultural jobs will be available in the state
- Saving money- Less being spent on sending products out of state to be tested
- Limit the inconsistency of county to county fee

References

- Coffman, R. (2018, January 16). Local Health Department Lobbyist Interview [Telephone interview]. Dairy Distributors Permit. (n.d.). Retrieved January 14, 2018, from <https://agriculture.wv.gov/divisions/regulatoryandenvironmental/Pages/Food-Products-and-Aquaculture.aspx>.
- Marks, R. (2018, February 13). Senate Votes to Change Oversight of Farmers Markets. Retrieved February 5, 2018, from https://www.wvnews.com/news/wvnews/senate-votes-to-change-oversight-of-farmers-markets/article_f72fbb53-5be2-5ca5-a1eb-9cbf9d088407.html.
- Martel, C. (2018, February 25). West Virginia Department of Agriculture Interview [Telephone interview].
- Moss, S. (2018, January 30). West Virginia Food and Farm Coalition Interview [Personal interview]. S. 375, 115th Cong., https://www.wvlegislature.gov/Bill_Status/bills_text.cfm?billdoc=SB375SUB1.htm&yr=2017&sesstype=RS&billtype=B&houseorig=S&i=375 (2017) (enacted).
- Senate Bill No. 317, S. 317, 115th Cong., https://www.wvlegislature.gov/Bill_Status/bills_text.cfm?billdoc=SB375SUB1.htm&yr=2017&sesstype=RS&billtype=B&houseorig=S&i=375 (2017).
- Susman, T. (2018, February 25). Department of Health and Human Resources [Personal interview].
- West Virginia SB375 | 2018 | Regular Session. (2018). Retrieved January 14, 2018, from <https://legiscan.com/WV/bill/SB375/2018>.

BUFFALO FFA CHAPTER LOCAL FORUMS

To Whom:	Where	When	Number Attending
WV House Agriculture Committee	West Virginia State Capitol	February 27, 2018 8:30AM	49
WV Food and Farm Coalition	Hudson Farms	March 2, 2018 9:30AM	10
WV Conservation Agency Supervisors	NRCS-Point Pleasant Office	March 15, 2018 11:30AM	12
Kanawha County Farm Bureau	Marantha Baptist Church	March 15, 2018 6:30PM	72
Putnam County Fair Board	Eleanor Fire Department	March 22, 2018 7:00PM	18
Putnam County Commission	Putnam County Courthouse	March 26, 2018 9:00AM	20
Putnam County Chamber of Commerce	Area 34	March 26, 2018 3:00PM	8
Putnam County Development Authority	Area 34	March 27, 2018 4:30PM	12
West Virginia Commissioner of Agriculture	West Virginia State Capitol	April 3, 2018 11:00AM	3
Putnam County Farm Bureau	Putnam County Court House	April 9, 2018 6:30PM	15
Putnam County Farmers Market Association	Valley Park	April 10, 2018 6:00PM	13
Urban Agriculture Conference	West Virginia State University	May 11, 2018 4:00PM	47
Buffalo Public Meeting	Buffalo High School	June 4, 2018 6:00PM	38

TOTAL MEETINGS CONDUCTED: 13**TOTAL PEOPLE REACHED: 317**

WV House Agriculture Committee

February 27, 2018 at 8:30AM

wwlegislature.gov

Committees Agenda

Committee: House Agriculture and Natural Resources

Date: Tuesday, February 27, 2018

House Government Organization Room - 8:30 a.m.

i Meeting called to order
 ii Roll call
 iii Approval of Minutes
 Presentation from the Buffalo, WV Agriculture Chapter regarding the pros and cons of transferring Farmer's Market and milk regulations from DHHR to Department of Agriculture. Speakers are Hattie Fisher, Alisa Grady, Kelly Irvine, Madison Gillispie, Joni Smith, Kayleigh Hayzlett and Ridge Thornton. (will take around 15 minutes).
 iv Agriculture bills before Committee:
 S. B. 322, Relating to employees of

We presented to the House Agriculture Committee, because the members are the individuals who evaluate agriculture-related bills and vote, along with the other members of the house. The members of the House Ag. Committee affect how the other members of the House perceive these bills because of their knowledge of agricultural topics.



WV Food and Farm Coalition

March 2, 2018 at 9:30AM



The West Virginia Food and Farm Coalition is a stakeholder for this issue. During the 2018 legislative session, the Coalition introduced the "Pickle Bill", which failed; so, when Senate Bills 317 and 375 were introduced, the Coalition fully supported them. The Coalition helps farmers that the bills will affect.

April 25th, 2018

Ms. Danielle Grant &
 Miss Alisa Grady
 Buffalo FFA Chapter
 3680 Buffalo Road
 Buffalo, WV 25033

Dear Mrs. Grant & Ms. Grady,

The West Virginia Food & Farm Coalition would like to extend our thanks to you for bringing your FFA students to our Board of Directors meeting on March 2nd to share their presentation on the Cottage Foods bill with us. We were excited to see these bright students in action and it was clear how much research and practice had gone into their presentation. They were extremely knowledgeable and we all learned something from them.

Thanks again, and please reach out to us if your students have any questions!

Sincerely,

Spencer Moss

Spencer Moss
 Executive Director
 West Virginia Food & Farm Coalition

WV Conservation Agency Supervisors

March 15, 2018 at 11:30AM

Charles Lipscomb, Chairman
 Oscar Blatch, Vice-Chairman
 Jerean Grant

Western
 Conservation District
 2740 First Street
 Point Pleasant, WV 25550

Robert Siebel, Treasurer
 James Wilkoff, Secretary
 Donald Stephens

March 15, 2018

Danielle Grant, Advisor
 Buffalo FFA Chapter
 3680 Buffalo Road
 Buffalo, WV 25033

Dear Danielle:

The Western Conservation District Board would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your FFA students for the presentation at our March 15th meeting. They impressed 15 professionals in the field of agriculture with their presentation of Senate Bills 317 and 375.

Their knowledge, arguments, and validity were very impressive. The confidence and poise shown by the students was also notable. There were three retired FFA advisors at our meeting that had nothing but praise for your presentation.

We greatly appreciate you taking the time to bring your students to Mason County for such an informative presentation.

Sincerely,

Charles T. Lipscomb

Charles T. Lipscomb, Chairman

The West Virginia Conservation Agency Supervisors were very interested in this issue. Not only are they all consumers, but they also support the transition from one agency to the other.



Kanawha County Farm Bureau

March 15, 2018 at 6:30PM



The Kanawha County Farm Bureau members will be affected because they are farmers. Some of the farmers are dairy farmers or sell their products at farmers markets which will be impacted by the proposed bills.

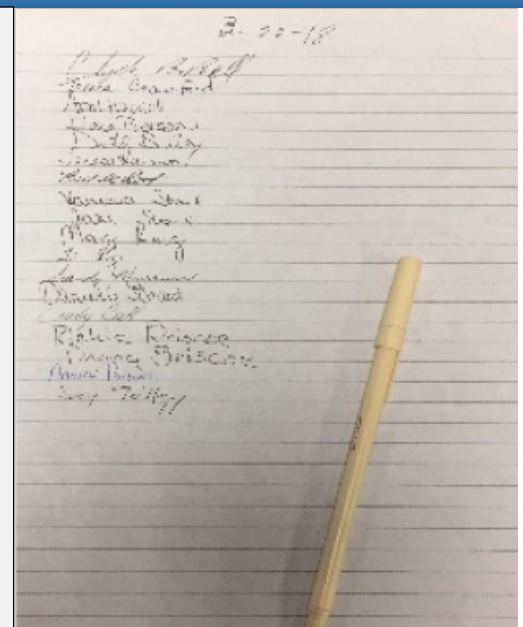


Putnam County Fair Board

March 22, 2018 at 7:00PM

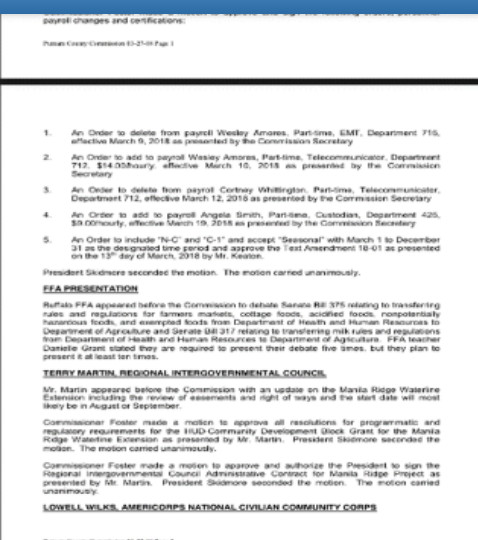


We presented to the Putnam County Fair Board. The fair board is made up of local farmers and other individuals involved in agriculture. They are all consumers who local businesses. Many have experienced the inspection process through the DHHR at the county fair.



Putnam County Commission

March 26, 2018 at 9:00AM



The Commissioners work hard to provide opportunities for economic growth in the county. If more farmer's market vendors are producing and selling products, the local economy will grow. This results in a better Putnam County.



Putnam County Chamber of Commerce March 26, 2018 at 3:00PM

5644 State Route 34, North
Post Office Box 553
Toys, WV 25369



Phone: 304-757-6510
Fax: 304-757-6562
chamber@putnamcounty.org
www.putnamcounty.org

March 26, 2018

Ms. Danielle Grant
Buffalo FFA Chapter
3680 Buffalo Road
Buffalo, WV 25033

Dear Ms. Grant,

Thank you for bringing your FFA students to the Putnam County Chamber of Commerce on March 26, 2018 to speak to our members. The members were excited to hear learn about the issue relating to farming in West Virginia. Our members enjoyed the presentation and were impressed by their knowledge of the issues. The Putnam Chamber always enjoys interacting with our Putnam County students.

If we can assist the chapter with any other programs or projects, please don't hesitate to reach out. Thank you again for taking the time to visit us.

Respectfully,


Ashley Allford, President
Putnam County Chamber of Commerce

Your Business is our Business!

The Chamber of Commerce is a group of individuals interested in expanding our economy and bringing new businesses into Putnam County. Also, they are all consumers.



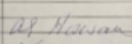
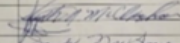
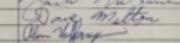
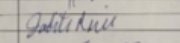
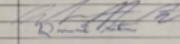
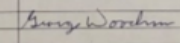
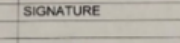
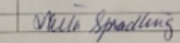
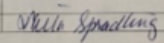
Putnam County Development Authority March 27, 2018 at 4:30PM



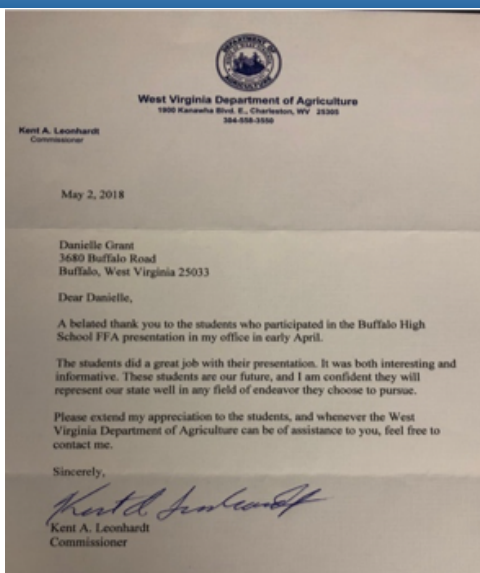
The Putnam County Development Authority is a group interested in bringing new businesses into our area and growing the economy. Their goal is to develop a better Putnam County and support growth.

Putnam County Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
March 27, 2018 4:30 p.m.

SIGN IN SHEET

BOARD MEMBER	SIGNATURE
Anders, Steve	
Bagnall, David	
Bennett, Wayne	
Foster, Ron	
Harris, Johnny	
Howard, Al	
Jeffries, Glenn	
McClanahan, Keith	
McDonie, Joe	
McLane, Jack	
Melton, Dave	
Noffsinger, Alan	
Prisk, Bonnie	
Raine, Joita	
Rhine, Bobby	
Smith, Courtlandt	
Stone, Ronald	
Tate, Doug	
Woodrum, George	
PCDA STAFF MEMBERS	SIGNATURE
Dunlap, Andrew	
Miller, Will	
Spradling, Willa	

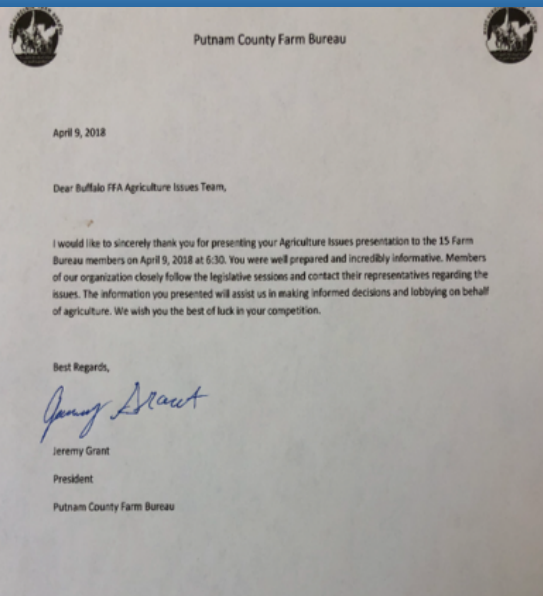
West Virginia Commissioner of Agriculture April 3, 2018 at 11:00AM



The West Virginia Commissioner of Agriculture supports both Senate Bills. As the commissioner, he is bias in supporting the West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) and believes the WVDA should have regulatory control. He is also a proud supporter of the state farmers markets.



Putnam County Farm Bureau April 9, 2018 at 6:30PM



The Putnam County Farm Bureau is made up of farmers of all ages in the county. Almost all members are affected by this issue because they are consumers, and some sell their products at farmers markets.



Putnam County Farmers Market Association April 10, 2018 at 6:00PM

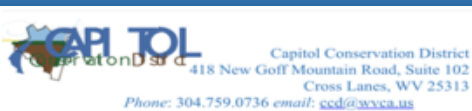


The Farmers Market Association is a stakeholder in this issue. As a Farmers Market Association, their business will be affected by the streamlining of permit and regulatory processes.

Thank you Buffalo FFA Ag. Issues Team for coming to our board meeting on April 10th. We enjoyed your presentation a great deal. We are excited to see the youth involved in agriculture and showing such initiative. The information you presented was insightful and informative. Keep up the work!

*Thank you,
Chrissy Foster
VP Putnam Farmers Market*

Urban Agriculture Conference May 11, 2018 at 4:00PM



May 25, 2018

Danielle Grant, Advisor
Buffalo FFA Chapter
3680 Buffalo Road
Buffalo, WV 25033

Dear Danielle,
On behalf of the Urban Agriculture Conference Committee I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your FFA students for presenting at the May 2018 Conference. The attendees of the conference reported they were as impressed with the challenging work the students had obviously put into preparing for the presentation West Virginia Senate Bills 317 and 375.

Some attendees stated that given views from both the farmer and the consumer of Bills 317 and 375 as presented and it gave them much to think about in this coming year. The students were well versed and had obviously put in many, many hours of research.

I also want to take a moment to congratulate you, as their advisor and mentor on a job well done. The hours are long when training and preparing for these presentations, and having a family of your own I am certain you give up a lot of personal time being so dedicated to the Buffalo FFA. I thank you for giving to your community and the future of FFA.

Sincerely,

Aimee Figgatt
District Manager,
Capitol Conservation District

The Urban Agriculture Conference is a meeting of producers and potential producers across the state of West Virginia. The proposed bills can affect these consumers in multiple ways.



Buffalo Public Meeting June 4, 2018 at 6:00PM

Buffalo Public Meeting - June 4, 2018

- 1) Caitlin Kordman
- 2) Lainey Smith
- 3) Mandi Smith
- 4) Nathan Castro
- 5) Nathan Winterstien
- 6) Katie Winterstien
- 7) Jennifer Perkins
- 8) Dylan Luskart
- 9) Brodie Fisher
- 10) Gary Francisco
- 11) Van Francisco
- 12) Michelle Blankenship
- 13) Ron Blankenship
- 14) Pamela Irvine
- 15) Kevin Irvine
- 16) Wanda Melton
- 17) Jordan Stanley
- 18) Janice Luskart
- 19) Deneil Brady
- 20) Judith Grady
- 21) Elissa Mathes

22. Eric Hoggatt
23. April Hoggatt
24. Zach Zahner
25. Chris Lukash
26. Joe Gillespie
27. Tabbie Gillespie
28. Carolyn Smith
29. Robbie Smith
30. Danielle Grant
31. Jeremy Grant
32. Ella Grant
33. Bryson Grant
- 34) Timmy Eads
- 35) Mauren Handers
36. Amy Whitworth
37. *Valley Whitworth*
38. Anthony Winders



Members of the Buffalo community are stakeholders because they are all consumers. As consumers these bills can affect them. Some of the community members are also farmers as well.

Farm Bureau Day at the WV State Capitol



To the left, are the members of the Agriculture Issues team. On this day, the team attended the Farm Bureau Day at the State Capitol. The team was able to speak to representatives of our state and lobbyists about Senate Bills 317 and 375. During this time, we gathered information to form arguments for and against the bills. This was very critical for our presentation and portfolio.