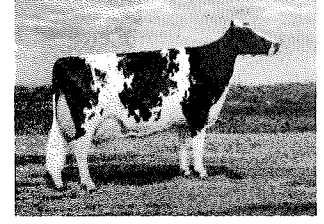


Castonguay Ayrshires LLC
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February 7, 2024

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Pluecker and Members of the Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry Committee,

I am Mary Castonguay and I am here today in support of adopting the numbers from the most recent cost of production study. My brother Peter and I own & operate Castonguay Ayrshires LLC, the last dairy farm in the Town of Livermore. We milk 72 cows on our farm and produce high quality milk for the CROPP Cooperative and our farm is very important to our small community. Our farm does business with dozens of small businesses in Livermore and the surrounding area, helping to improve our local economy. We allow our land to be hunted and to be used for recreation, like snowmobiling, increasing tourism to our area. Our farm also helps to reduce the tax burden in our town, which has seen big increases since the paper mill closed it's doors in Jay, our neighboring town.

We need the Tier Program to be able to survive in the tough economic times that are facing dairy farms. The inputs cost keep going up, but our pay price stays the same. The Tier Program helps us fill the gap between the cost of production and what we are paid. The new cost of production numbers reflect the dramatic rise in costs that we have been forced to face.

The Tier Program is very important to all dairy farms in the State, regardless of size. It is important that you adopt the most recent cost of production study numbers to help save the dairy farms in Maine.

Thank you for considering my testimony.