

Members of the Appropriations Committee thank you for the opportunity to address you today. My name is Bill Bullard. My wife Betsy and I operate Brigeen Farms in Turner, Maine, established in 1777, we are the 10th generation. We are a dairy farm that milks approximately 500 cows. Over the last 23 years we have milked from 50 to 550 cows.

As a dairy producer I would ask the committee to accept / support the ACF's budget as submitted. Part of the budget provides an economic backstop to bolster the rural Maine economy.

When I look at the dairy industry in Maine, I see economic engines throughout our state. Cow number 1032 on our farm is a great example. Her milk was sold to Oakhurst Dairy in Portland, and in return roughly \$7,500 came back to Turner for her milk in 2023. 20% of that (\$1,515) went to five multigenerational businesses based in Turner for goods & services provided. 15% (\$1,121) went to our eight full-time employees who live in Turner with their families, and additional summer jobs for students. 1.2% (\$85) went to the Turner town office for local property taxes. These figures do not account for every dollar spent in cow number 1032's hometown, but \$2,721 in our town of 5900 residents is significant.

Other businesses in Maine also benefited from 1032's milk sales. 35% (\$2,632) went to Phoenix Feeds in Augusta. 4% (\$337) went to Farm Credit in Auburn Maine in interest payments alone. 6% (\$457) went to Wishart's trucking located in Maine. 3% (\$225) went to veterinarians, Paris Farmers Union, Ness Oil, and Central Maine Dairy. Again, this is a snapshot of 1032's milk income spent in Maine and does not include every dollar added to our state's economy.

Our town of Turner has 2 dairy farms, roughly 650 cows, that keep a lot of money in circulation for a community of 5,900 people. The state of Maine has over 20,000 cows on approximately 145 dairy farms from York to Aroostook county, and the cumulative economic effect is significant. Every cow is an economic engine to the town they call home.

The ACF budget and its request regarding the dairy tier program are significant to Maine's rural economy. It provides a backstop against market fluctuations, be it global or seasonal severe weather changes, that allow farms, communities, and their service providers to forge ahead.

Thank you for your consideration,

Bill Bullard

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