

Adrienne Lee
Knox
LD 2013

Hello, my name is Adrienne Lee. My husband Ken Lamson and I own and operate New Beat Farm in Knox, Maine, Waldo County.

I am here today to urge the legislature to pass LD 2013 - An Act Relating to Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Contamination in the State

We produce Certified Organic Vegetables for sale at local farmers markets, a multi-farm CSA, restaurants, Co-ops and wholesale buyers. We have prided ourselves with growing healthy, nutritious food for our local community. We are among the growing number of farmers discovering PFAS contamination in our soils, our water and our bodies.

Since our land was not passed down to us, like many young farmers in Maine, we did not have clear records of the history of how our fields were managed before we were here. This February we learned from DEP maps that a significant portion of our growing land had a history of sludge spreading and a subsequent well water test came back with levels of PFA's 100 times higher than the safe drinking water standards the State has set for these chemicals.

In a matter of weeks our business went from forecasting for record growth for the 2022 season to insecurity about being able to pay our bills or see a clear path forward. The pride and confidence we had that we were feeding our family and our community safe and healthy food got crushed. We pulled our crops off the market and started drinking bottled water.

Our farm is in a current state of limbo, the growing season is knocking at our door and we've currently got seedlings started but we don't know if we have a place to plant them. The lack of any current guidelines for acceptable thresholds of PFA's in vegetable crops and the huge delays in getting soil and crop testing is putting our entire business at risk. While grappling with the effects of PFAS contamination in the crops we sell we are even more so grappling with the high levels of PFAS in our bloodstream, our 21 month old daughter currently being estimated to have blood serum levels of 1700ug/L(micrograms/liter) of PFOA. The average American has blood serum levels around 5ug/L PFOA.

Like most farmers who need to have a certain amount of optimism for what lies ahead, we are doing our best to hold onto some optimism about the prospects of a productive and healthy future producing food on this land. To do this though we need the support of our community and more critically the support of the State of Maine who sanctioned the spreading of PFAS laden biosolids on our soils.

First and foremost we need support for lifetime health monitoring to help ensure our bodies are healthy enough to keep farming and be productive members of our community.

To keep producing crops we will need new mitigation infrastructure on our operation and will need the financial support to do so as well as technical assistance to develop production plans tailored to our new PFAS reality.

We need to get a clear picture of where the hotspots of contamination are on our farm and to do so will need significant and costly soil and water testing.

Once we have this data we need technical expertise and research results to help us make decisions as to what crops we can safely grow and where. Having a robust research programs in the State as well as larger capacity for testing will be critical to the viability of Maine farmers faces with PFAS contamination.. With current wait times for test results and safety standards, due to lack of capacity, farm could go out of business while waiting for soil, water and crop analysis to come in.

We are driven, hard working Mainers who aren't looking for a hand out, but us Maine farmers of today shouldn't be having to shoulder the burden of decades old bad decisions made by the State and the paper industry. We need the State of Maine to step up and pull their fair share of the cost of these mistakes not only to help the farmers that so far have gone public about the PFAS contamination, but more importantly the broader group of farmers that can't afford to go public about their farms PFAS levels and risk loose every because the State hasn't set up a safety net.

Thank you for considering this bill today and we urge your to pass LD 2013.

Thank you, Adrienne Lee & Ken Lamson
New Beat Farm, Knox ME