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Representative Tranel's Prepared Testimony
Assembly Committee on Agriculture
Assembly Bills 747 and 748

January 29, 2020

I would like to thank Chairman Tauchen and the committee members for hearing Assembly Bills 747 and 748 today. Both of these bills were created based on recommendations made by the Wisconsin Dairy Task Force 2.0. It's goal was to find common sense ways to improve profitably and viability within the dairy industry during these extremely challenging economic times. I would like to thank Senator Jacque for being the senate lead sponsor of both bills and everyone who signed on in support.

Assembly Bill 747 removes the annual requirement for the rBST (synthetic bovine growth hormone) affidavit under Administrative Rule ATCP 83.02. Under current law dairy cooperatives' proprietary handlers and milk contractors must obtain a signed and notarized affidavit every 12 months or less from every producer shipping milk identified as rBST-free. Under this bill that would only have to be done one time. Most dairy cooperatives and processors in our state already require 100 percent rBST-free milk.

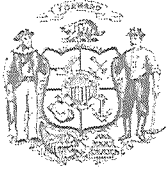
Passing this bill will help save dairy cooperatives and processors time and money by simplifying the record keeping obligations they currently need to maintain. This change also brings Wisconsin in-line with the reporting requirements in other states.

Assembly Bill 748 provides reciprocity for bulk milk weighing and sampling licenses between states. This was another issue that the Wisconsin Dairy Task Force 2.0 recommended addressing to help the states dairy industry.

Currently, licensed Bulk Milk Weighers and Samplers need to be licensed in multiple states. Eliminating this unnecessary regulatory hurdle will help reduce duplicative paper work for many milk haulers and help reduce shipping costs for farmer's products. The task force voted unanimously to recommend allowing a person who is licensed by an agricultural department of another state to take weights and samples of milk bulk tanks.

These two common sense bipartisan bills recommended by the Dairy 2.0 Task Force will help our states dairy industry become more competitive and sustainable moving forward. The bills are supported by the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation, Cooperative Network and the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association. Also, the Wisconsin Milk Haulers Association supports AB 748.

Thank you again for hearing my testimony on Assembly Bills 747 and 748, I am happy to answer any questions.



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*Testimony before the Assembly Committee on Agriculture
State Senator André Jacque
January 29, 2020*

Chairman Tauchen and Committee Members,

Thank you for holding this hearing on Assembly Bill 747, relating to using milk producer affidavits to substantiate claims that a dairy product is free of synthetic bovine growth hormone.

The Wisconsin Dairy Task Force 2.0 was created in June 2018 as a joint effort between DATCP and the UW System to study the Wisconsin dairy industry with the goal of making recommendations on the actions that would be needed to maintain a viable and profitable dairy industry in Wisconsin. It was modeled after a similar effort in 1985.

A link to the Task Force's Final Report as well as a link to the original report from 1985 can be found at https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Growing_WI/DairyTaskForce.aspx

One of the recommendations forwarded by its regulatory certainty subcommittee and approved by the Dairy Task Force 2.0 by a vote of 26-0 is the removal of the annual requirement for the rBST affidavit under Administrative Rule ATCP 83.02.

Currently dairy cooperatives' proprietary handlers and milk contractors must obtain a signed and notarized affidavit every 12 months or less from every producer shipping milk identified as rBST-free. Many dairy cooperatives and processors in Wisconsin now require 100 percent rBST-free milk. The requirement to obtain a signature every year adds cost and record-keeping challenges for the industry.

The legislature was silent on the duration of the affidavits when it enacted Wis. Stat. 97.25 in 1993 and it is inconsistent with requirements in other states. The vast majority of dairy processors require rBST-free milk in their products. The potential to lose a customer has provided the industry with the proper incentive to adequately police itself.

Assembly Bill 747 prohibits the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection from promulgating a rule that limits the duration that a signed, sworn, and notarized affidavit from a milk producer may be used to substantiate a claim that a dairy product does not contain synthetic bovine growth hormone.

Assembly Bill 747 is supported by Cooperative Network, the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation, Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association and the Dairy Business Association.

Thank you for your consideration of Assembly Bill 747.