

Mr. Chairman, members of the board, and staff:

RC 061

Thank you for the opportunity to share some info regarding dairy goats. I am speaking on behalf of AKDGA, a local affiliate of ADGA, the American Dairy Goat Association.

A few facts about dairy goats:

- They don't eat tin cans! ☺
- More goat milk is drunk worldwide than cow or any other type.
- Goat milk is more digestible than cow milk, and the closest to human milk.
- Goat milk is naturally homogenized, due to the absence of a protein found in cow milk which in addition to making the cream separate also causes allergies for many people.
- Fresh properly chilled goat milk will amaze you with its sweet flavor, and bears no resemblance whatsoever to the stuff marketed as "goat milk" on grocery store shelves.
- Many people who are allergic to store-bought cow milk are able to digest and thrive on goat milk.
- Particularly true with babies – we've personally witnessed at least four instances in which babies who had rejected every formula on the market and put in the category of "failure to thrive" do a complete turnaround once their mothers started feeding them goat milk. Although you are hearing this from me anecdotally, any of those mothers would tell you unequivocally that goat milk saved their child's life.
- Alaskans have access to raw goat milk through herd shares such as the one we operate in the Mat-Su Valley, and these individuals and families view it as a key component of their diet.

Proposal 64 has caught the attention of at least three national goat organizations, including ADGA, the Am. Goat Federation, and NAPgA, all of whom have submitted written comments in opposition to the heavy-handed approach taken by the WSF. They stand alongside the AKDGA in opposing the removal of sheep and goats from the Clean List, viewing it as an action that would deeply damage the livestock community while providing no perceptible benefit to wildlife.

ADGA is the registry of record for most dairy goat owners – we along with a majority of AK breeders register our goats, which involves a permanent tattoo and official paperwork, and we do our best to teach and mentor the people who buy goats from us to do the same. Paperwork goes with each animal sold, and all registered animals are included in a searchable national database where users can research pedigrees & genetics, production records, and other information. When considering bringing new blood to our herd we first narrow our search pattern through researching the database, and then fine-tune our decision after inquiring into herd management and health testing status.

The window of opportunity for shipping up new genetics is narrow, so anticipated purchases are usually chosen based on the dam and sire, confirmed during the gestation period and shipped within a few weeks of birth. Standard sized dairy goats gain on average a half pound per day for the first three months, so a 4-week-old goat weighing 25 pounds will fit in a 400 size kennel and cost about \$350-\$400 to ship, on top of the \$400-\$500 you spend for the kid, the \$100 for the kennel, and \$50-\$100 for the veterinary health certificate. Add in the usual travel fee charged by the breeder for transporting the kid to the airport and you're typically out \$1000-\$1200. There has been talk of import regulations, with testing required. Add another \$100 right off the bat for the test, and if results take a couple of weeks it will put that kid into a 500 kennel and add another \$100 to the cost. If multiple tests were required that kid would predictably double in size by the age of 10 weeks, and if it reaches

the cutoff size of 55 pounds airlines will refuse to fly it at all, due to IATA regulations. All of these numbers are based on our personal experience in the past few years, and I would request that these logistics be taken into account when considering any import requirements.

That being said, the Alaska Dairy Goat Association does support the statewide voluntary M. ovi testing program that is currently underway, since that data is a vital component of a legitimate and credible risk assessment. This testing has proven to be a long and detailed process, and we would ask that the Board of Game allow sufficient time to extrapolate the data into a usable report before rushing to create any type of far-reaching regulation. We have heard board members use the words "concern" and "caution" today when referring to wild sheep. That concern is warranted, but in equivalent proportion to the concern and caution that must be used when you consider what action, if any, should be taken. Never before in the history of our country have law-abiding citizens who are pursuing a farming lifestyle with traditional livestock on their own private fenced land been threatened with having that lifestyle, along with their livelihood and food supply declared to be a criminal activity, which removal from the Clean List would do.

We have heard a number of times from the Wild Sheep Foundation that they are willing to commit upwards of \$400K to offset the costs of testing and fair market value replacement should an animal come up positive for M. ovi, but have seen no evidence as yet of any financial support or offers to replace positive animals, including the cost of lost revenue for a doe in milk. As a frame of reference, an average doe will produce a gallon of milk per day over a 305-day lactation.

The Alaska Dairy Goat Ass'n. is committed to continuing to educate and encourage local sheep and goat owners to be aware of the concern of M. ovi, and take the proactive measures of 1) testing their herds, 2) maintaining their livestock within secure fencing, and 3) reporting any Dall sheep or mountain goat that might be seen outside its normal habitat. In the meantime we request that you heed the advice of the ADF&G, DOL, DEC and state vet, DNR, Division of Ag, and the AK Farm Bureau and TAKE NO ACTION on Proposal 90.

Respectfully submitted,


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Alaska Dairy Goat Ass'n.

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