



Silva's Holstein Dairy

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November 11, 2009

Dear All Class Milk Emergency Hearing Panel Members:

Please take our testimony in consideration of our dire need to have milk prices reflect cost of production.

My parents came to California in 1970 from the Acores Islands of Portugal to start their lives and to live the American dream. My dad was able to find a job as a milker with a large dairy in Los Banos, it was here that he fell in love with the dairy business and the cows that he milked everyday.

His dream was to own his own dairy someday and that dream finally came true in 1988 after many struggles for our family of five. We've seen a lot of up and downs since we started but we have never experience this sharp of a down turn.

I have been the bookkeeper for the family dairy since it began and have never seen it as bad as this year. We are hanging on by a thread and have the most debt than we have ever had in the 21 yrs of business. We have been told by our accountant and banker that we are one of the best operations in their portfolio but yet we struggle to pay the bills each month.

We have been proud in the past to be able to pay off all our bills with a few months but this time it's taking much longer and if we don't see milk prices go up soon we will be forced to use our equity to pay the bills.

Unlike many other industry we can't simply turn the cows off...they need to release the milk and we need to keep feeding them nutritious food to keep them healthy. We anxiously await the notice from our milk handler every 15th and 30th of the month to find out how much the milk check will be and lately it hasn't been good. We have had to extend our loans and fortunately have a good relationship with our bank that they have been supportive...but for how long?

We desperately urge you to pay us for what our commodity is truly worth. We provide a healthy, nutritious commodity that is essential to child development.

Our family dairy may have been started by my parents but it is also a livelihood for my brother. It is all he has ever known and takes pride in making this a business that he will someday pass on to his 4 children and beyond.

Please take a moment to hear our pleas, although we are unable to represent in person we are out here working 24/7 to provide healthy, nutrition milk to everyone. California dairies needs your support and understanding so please hear us.

Thank you for the opportunity to tell our story and if you would like further testimony please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Manuela Dias
Bookkeeper