

July 24, 2009 Action Alert

**KEEP THE FDA OFF THE FARM!  
OPPOSE HR 2749--ACTION NEEDED TODAY!!**

**The Community Alliance with Family Farmers opposes HR 2749 and urges you to contact your representative in Washington DC and ask him/her to vote against it unless it is amended.**

- **Tell them to reduce the impact on farmers and local food systems**
- **Ask them to support the efforts of Rep. Sam Farr to amend the bill to protect family farmers or else take the entire farming section (419A) out of the bill.**

A number of consumer-driven food safety bills were combined into HR 2749 (Dingell), which was voted out of Rep. Waxman's Energy and Commerce Committee on June 17. The House leadership is trying to pass this bill quickly without taking any further amendments, but they need a two-thirds vote. We can defeat this bill and force them to amend it.

HR 2749 is being touted as an FDA reform bill, but it over-reaches by regulating not only food processors and imported food, but also family farmers. It is being driven by well-meaning consumer groups in Washington DC who do not understand farming. While we agree that the FDA needs more resources and needs to do a better job inspecting food processors and imported food, we oppose HR 2749 for the following reasons:

- HR 2749 does not address the root cause of our food safety problems and does not regulate many of the commodities that have been implicated in outbreaks. For example, HR 2749 does nothing to tighten regulation of the industrial meat and animal rearing industry, one of the main sources of human pathogens and food illnesses. Meat is regulated by the USDA.
- HR 2749 does not focus the FDA on the highest risk activities, such as processed foods. It inappropriately extends FDA's authority on farms, where the USDA would be more appropriate.
- Compliance with food safety measures on family farms is best accomplished through education, not regulation. Government agencies should partner with producer groups and significant resources should be devoted to this effort, but HR 2749 does not do so.
- Food safety standards should not interfere with or undermine environmental stewardship, but that is exactly what many produce retailers and buyers are doing by imposing draconian rules on farmers. HR 2749 does not ensure that the FDA rules will incorporate these environmental concerns and promote biodiversity.
- The cost of compliance for farmers is unknown. The misplaced emphasis on regulating raw produce and day-to-day farming activities will discourage new farmers and put in peril the local food system we have been working for decades to construct.

Rep. Sam Farr (D-Monterey), Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio) and others are offering amendments in a letter that will reduce HR 2749's impacts on farmers and focus the FDA on the highest risk activities. **CAFF supports the Farr/Kaptur letter and opposes HR 2749 if their concerns are not dealt with in the bill.**

As with every contact with your Representative, it is best to write a letter in your own words and fax it to them. When time is short, as now, you can instead call their office in Washington DC. If time is really short, you can e-mail them.

All contact information: [http://www.house.gov/house/MemberWWW\\_by\\_State.shtml](http://www.house.gov/house/MemberWWW_by_State.shtml)  
Washington DC office phone number: [http://clerk.house.gov/member\\_info/mcapdir.html](http://clerk.house.gov/member_info/mcapdir.html)

You can read the text of HR 2749 and the Farr/Kaptur letter at  
[www.caff.org/policy/foodsafetyfederal.shtml](http://www.caff.org/policy/foodsafetyfederal.shtml)

If you have any questions regarding this bill, please contact CAFF's Policy Director, Dave Runsten at 530-756-8518 ext. 25 or [dave@caff.org](mailto:dave@caff.org).