

Farm-to-Consumer Legal Defense Fund to Celebrate Five Year Anniversary

Falls Church, Virginia (June 25, 2012) -- A non-profit legal defense fund dedicated to protecting the rights of small family farms reaches an important milestone this July 4th: the fifth anniversary of its founding. The Farm-to-Consumer Legal Defense Fund (FTCLDF) was born on Independence Day 2007, on a Pennsylvania Amish dairy farm. The Fund will celebrate its birthday this coming July 7th with an all-day affair at P.A. Bowen Farmstead in Brandywine, Maryland. For event details and tickets, visit: <http://www.farmtoconsumer.org/5years>

The event takes place on the newly established farm of health and nutrition advocates, Geoffrey Morell and Sally Fallon Morell. They were the among the first to realize the need for pro-bono legal counsel for farmers who practice traditional animal husbandry and who still use compost and manure rather than petrochemical fertilizers and poisonous chemicals.

It turned out to be a visionary move. As more consumers seek to make direct farm purchases, regulatory actions against farmers and food buying co-ops have increased dramatically. The Fund operates a 24/7 emergency hotline to assist farmers, co-op managers and even consumers when faced with legal trouble or hassles from regulators, food inspectors and federal agents.

The Fund is representing a number of farmers and consumers around the country in legal cases. In Wisconsin, FTCLDF filed suit on behalf of private patrons of two farms to defend their property rights and expand access to raw milk. In Michigan, FTCLDF is opposing an Invasive Species Order that threatens over two thousand family farms raising heritage breed hogs. The Fund is also helping a farmer fight zoning restrictions by citing Michigan's Right to Farm statute. In Maine, Fund attorneys are working to defend a farmer as his state tries to deny him his rights under a new food sovereignty law passed by residents of a small town. In both Washington State and Missouri, the Fund is working with two artisan cheesemakers who have been shut down by the FDA. In both cases, unreasonable demands have been made by the agency; meanwhile, the farmers are stripped of their livelihood, even though no one got sick from their products.

In a high profile food rights case involving the Rawesome food co-op in Venice Beach, California, FTCLDF serves as co-counsel for a farm volunteer who is among those being charged with conspiracy. As in many of these cases, raw dairy products figure prominently, and the Fund also seeks to overturn government policies that restrict consumer access to raw milk.

The July 7 event will feature artisan cheese, other local foods, farm tours and blue grass music.

The Farm-to-Consumer Legal Defense Fund, a 501(c)(4), defends the rights and broadens the freedoms of family farms and artisan food producers while protecting consumer access to raw milk and nutrient-dense foods. Join or donate online at www.farmtoconsumer.org or by calling 703-208-FARM (3276).

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