

Murdo, Patricia

Subject: FW: 12-day Rule Comment

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Layne Rolston** >
Date: Wednesday, March 26, 2014
Subject: 12-day Rule Comment
To: "greghertz11@gmail.com" <greghertz11@gmail.com>

Good morning,

I am writing to share our concerns about Montana's 12-day rule regarding milk freshness and consumer safety.

As a retailer, we welcome food safety regulations and rules that enhance our customers' right to know what they are purchasing and consuming. However, the current 12-day rule has little to do with food safety and confuses consumers more than it helps them. The evidence presented to the Department of Livestock by the Hearing Examiner supports this assertion. Legitimate consumer protection regulation would more accurately reflect the fact that milk is safe and palatable for far longer than the arbitrary 12 days under current rules.

At the Good Food Store, we are forced to dispose of dozens of gallons of milk every month that could safely be enjoyed by our customers. This is wasteful on so many levels. The state and its citizens pay for the environmental and financial impacts of this waste, while milk producers appear to profit from it. The more milk retailers and confused consumers throw away, the more milk producers sell to replace it.

One more reason we oppose the current 12-day rule is that it limits our customers' milk purchasing choices. Enforcement of the 12-day rule required us to take Strauss Family Farm's organic products from our shelves, much to the disappointment of scores of our shoppers. Replacing Strauss products with a similar line produced in Montana simply isn't possible – no Montana milk processor does what Strauss does. Simply put, the current rule protects Montana producers from having to compete for our customers' business.

The Good Food Store has a history of supporting Montana farmers, ranchers and food manufacturers. And the state of Montana should support them too. But that doesn't mean that state should enforce arbitrary standards that force Montana consumers to pay higher milk prices than necessary and unwittingly subsidize Montana milk processors.

Sincerely,

Layne Rolston
Layne Rolston
Communications Director, Good Food Store
1600 S. 3rd St. West
Missoula, MT 59801