

## Carol Hughes

Yay! It is about time! In 2000, my Texas dairy farmer Wusband and I, bought a farm on Eielson Farm Road. We had milk goats! The wusband did a terrific job of doing clean milking, filtering, and cooling the milk quickly. He turned off the fluorescent lights so they wouldn't have an effect on the milk! It was absolutely delicious goat milk! (If you ever have bad tasting goat milk, it wasn't caught right and immediately cooled.) We had a friend who needed goat milk for her baby, but because we didn't have a fancy grade A dairy parlor to pasteurize the milk in, we could not sell the milk to her. Several others wanted to buy goat milk to make cheese. But that was not allowed either! It was very frustrating to watch the wusband do all this work and yet not be able to sell the goat milk! Well, in 2009, he gave up on the idea of farming and headed back to Texas! It was sad to watch someone give up on his dreams! The girls and I stayed in Alaska, but we sold the farm to someone who "bought the farm..." and then we moved into North Pole!

Please allow for smalltime farmers to be able to sell good clean and delicious tasting goat milk (and cow's milk) without having to put a dye in it and a sign on it saying: Not for Human consumption. People who were allergic to cow's milk would really appreciate this gesture. Alaska is almost a third world country when it comes to dairy farming! In Texas, we had to have a nice and modern dairy barn with stainless steel fixtures! If the pump broke down, there was a guy nearby who could fix it! If a cow got sick there were two veterinarians who would come by to help a sick cow or a mama cow having trouble with a delivery. There was a huge support system available to help each farmer out so they could maintain a Grade A dairy! There was also a milk truck that came by daily, to take samples, check to see if a cow's milk with antibiotics in it, was accidentally dumped in with all the milk. If so, they would dump the whole batch of milk while we sadly watched it swirl down the drain...If the milk was good, the milk truck would haul it off so the farmer wouldn't have to try to sell his own milk, There were support people all around to help keep a grade A dairy in operation! Here in Alaska, we have small mom & pop farms that would love to be able to sell their milk products "For Human Consumption!" They might have a very nice and clean setup, but if it doesn't match the regulations of a grade A dairy, they can't sell their milk to friends, neighbors and other community members. They also don't have a great support system. Why would they since they can't sell their milk!?!

I do wonder about how to regulate this industry because some farmers might not do a clean catch of milk and they might not cool it off quickly enough...If it tastes bad, they didn't do things right. Could little test kits be made available to farmers so that they can test their own milk? Could people be assigned to go watch each farmer's milking system once a year? A farmer can be sitting on a stool in the middle of a dirt floor and still get a clean catch. They can use their kitchen sink filled with ice and cold water to quickly cool the milk. It doesn't have to be a stainless steel sink for the milk to taste good and to be good. Also, this state does not have a huge support system. We need large animal veterinarians to help quickly. We need people to fix the fancy milk pump when it stops working! To send for, ship, and then purchase all the materials necessary to have a grade A dairy in Alaska, would make it too expensive. Keeping the small farms going and by providing support they need and by allowing them to sell raw milk, we would start heading towards sustainability. We are so dependent on the lower 48 and especially Washington State, we would be in trouble if the supply chain breaks down! Even now the store shelves are being depleted of all sorts of things. We need to be prepared for supply chain issues. We need to be self sufficient and ready for whatever supply chain issues come our way! We need to be able to sell quality milk to other Alaskans. We need to be prepared!