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for **Wise Traditions** in Food, Farming and the Healing Arts

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September 8, 2009

Dear Valued Member,

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I am writing to you today about our beloved Farm-to-Consumer Legal Defense Fund, to share some good news, describe the challenges ahead and request your urgently needed support to ensure that the Fund continues with its vital activities.

First, the good news. Even in these depressed economic times, small farms are making a comeback, and the direct-to-consumer distribution we champion is the fastest growing sector of the agricultural economy. Demand for nutrient-dense foods, like raw milk and grassfed meat, is creating a powerful economic revival in rural America. Even as commercial dairies wither, raw milk dairies--supported by their loyal customers and shareholders--are prospering.

In addition, we are seeing a sharp increase in media attention. The message about our food, our farmers and our opposition is on the airwaves, in the newspapers and all over the Internet. A Google search of "Farm-to-Consumer Legal Defense Fund" nets 310,000 listings and "raw milk" nets nearly one million! Our message advocating nutrient-dense foods from small, sustainable, local family farms has become a mainstream media message.

Unfortunately, current laws and regulations do not reflect the public's growing respect for sustainable family farms. Farmers engaged in direct-to-consumer sales continue to bear the brunt of bureaucratic meddling; and proposed food safety legislation would provide the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) with unprecedented authority to crack down on small farms and food processing businesses. The FDA's "Russian Roulette" stance on raw milk places many of our farmers in the middle of a monumental push-pull of rising consumer demand and excessive regulatory oppression. There are simply too many regulators on the small farmers' backs!

Thank goodness we have a secret weapon--our very own Weapon of Mass Deregulation: The Farm-to-Consumer Legal Defense Fund. The Fund is working full-tilt to provide legal,

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lobbying and educational services to protect our farmers and ensure your unrestricted access to nutrient-dense foods. But without your help, the Fund may not be able to continue.

Here's a summary of the Farm-to-Consumer Legal Defense Fund's activities during the last year:

- The Fund served as a highly regarded and often-quoted legal clearinghouse for accurate and timely information on H.R. 2749, the horrendous Food Safety Enhancement Act of 2009, a bill that would give the FDA unprecedented control over farmers and artisan food processors. As noted by the well-known author and blogger David Gumpert, "[the Fund] almost single-handedly brought the problems of H.R. 2749. . . to public attention." Passing in the House, H.R. 2749 is on its way to the Senate; and we await to see whether the Senate focuses on it or its own bill S. 510.
- The Fund worked with Congressman Ron Paul's office to draft H.R. 778, to allow "Interstate Traffic of Unpasteurized Milk and Milk Products that are Packaged for Direct Human Consumption." With Ron Paul as the bill's sponsor, the Fund is now working to get co-sponsors for the bill.
- The Fund's litigation team has taken on four important court cases:

Putting the Brakes on the National Animal Identification System (NAIS). The Fund filed suit against both the USDA and the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) to halt the advance of NAIS, an unfair, unlawful and expensive system wherein anyone owning even one livestock or poultry animal would be required to register their property, tag each animal (in most cases with electronic ID) and report animal movements to the government within twenty-four hours. Although the suit was recently dismissed, the Fund has filed for reconsideration. Furthermore, our joint efforts have raised awareness of this issue, as evidenced by the overwhelming opposition voiced by attendees at the fourteen NAIS Listening Sessions. The Fund is committed to sparing farmers the onerous burdens that a mandatory NAIS would impose.

The California Effort to Keep Raw Milk Flowing after A.B. 1735. The passage of A.B. 1735 in California, with its unreasonable coliform count standard, threatened to put the only two licensed raw milk dairies in the State out of business through repeated suspension of sales, even in the absence of human pathogens. The Fund filed suit, successfully obtaining a temporary restraining order to prevent enforcement of the standard. Ultimately, the court upheld the

legality of the standard. While the Fund "lost the battle," we "won the war" in the media. The consumer outcry and media attention won the day and sales have never been better for the two large California dairies. Since a "rising tide floats all boats," other farmers have benefited, and we've seen a big increase in raw milk start-up operations nationwide!

Contesting the Raid on Stowers' Manna Storehouse. When we set up the Fund, we could never have envisioned the Ohio Department of Agriculture sending an automatic rifle-toting SWAT team to enter the peaceful home of the Stowers Family, holding them captive while Sheriff's Deputies rifled through their food co-op business records and removed all the food from the premises. This black day left the Stowers family traumatized, stripped of even their families' own food and in need of help. The Fund teamed with the Buckeye Institute to bring this matter to justice and to ensure that this does not happen again.

Meadowsweet Dairy, LLC and the Right to Private Contract. When the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets attempted to stop Meadowsweet Dairy from distributing raw dairy products to its members, the Fund filed suit claiming that the State did not have jurisdiction over a private entity that sold raw dairy only to its members. The case is now in the court of appeals; a favorable ruling would set a strong precedent for the right of farmers and consumers to engage in unregulated direct commerce.

- Not all of the Fund's activities garner headlines and the drama of a day in court. The greatest portion of its work is proactive--quiet, steady and sure. The Fund provides legal advice to farmers regarding their direct-to-consumer operations and the swarms of small but additive regulations that are eating away at their liberty to provide--and our liberty to obtain--fresh foods directly from the farm. Over the past year, the Fund has helped dozens of farmers set up cow-share, goat-share and farm-share operations in States where the retail sale of raw milk is not allowed. With conventional dairy prices plummeting, the Fund is helping qualified dairies develop another source of income by providing raw milk directly to the consumer.
- Also, since the Stowers' Manna Storehouse raid, a new group of members, called Affiliates, are calling for and receiving assistance from the Fund. These Affiliates are the non-profit groups and local food entrepreneurs that are changing the way America shops for food. Buyers Clubs, Food Coops, Farmers' Markets and CSAs can now access the Fund's legal services.

Now for my concerns: this stalwart friend of farmers has hit the ground running and hasn't stopped, and all these activities have resulted in a financial shortfall.

We want the Fund to be a sustainable organization, but right now, their expenses exceed their income. They need your help to carry on. The Fund is no different from our farmers. Without sustained and loyal support, they will both perish from benign neglect.

Here's what I'd like you to do:

1. Use the enclosed form to send a donation to the Farm-to-Consumer Legal Defense Fund or the Farm-to-Consumer Foundation. (Donations to the latter are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.) I'd rather see thousands of small donations rather than just a few large donations--although we need a few large donations too!
2. Use the same form to become a member of the Fund or renew your membership. Memberships are the lifeblood of this organization.
3. Make an effort to sign up at least one new farmer member to the Fund this year. Above all, make sure that all the farmers you purchase food from are members of the Fund.
4. If you would like free Fund brochures to put out at farmers' markets, farm meetings or community events, please indicate on the donation form and we'll send them right to you.

Our combined efforts are fueling--not a revolution--but a renaissance! A new era of enlightened agriculture and nutrition is dawning. But, we cannot and will not rest until we have secured access to nutrient-dense foods for everyone, everywhere--no exceptions.

Thank you in advance for your support, financial and otherwise. I continue to be amazed at what good people can accomplish when they work together towards a noble goal. Our nation is returning to its birth-right of vibrant health and prosperity, based on the timeless wisdom of the ages and nutrient-dense foods from small, sustainable local farms.

With warm regards,



Sally Fallon Morell
President, The Weston A. Price Foundation