

June 4th, 2005

Honorable Michael Johanns
Secretary of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue Southwest
Washington, District of Columbia
20250

03-4283054
AMS

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Our family have been customers of Smith Brothers Farms in Kent, Washington, for many years. They are a small independent dairy whose milk comes from their own cows. They provide a superior product at a competitive price and we are very satisfied with their service. We have no relationship with Smith Brothers Farms other than as their customers.

We understand that your Department proposes to assess Smith Brothers Farms for payments into a pool of funds created in the 1930s, supposedly to protect dairy farmers from having to sell to dairies at prices they considered too low. There is no reason for Smith Brothers Farms to be drawn into such a scheme. As stated, they process their own milk from their own cows. Such an assessment would confer no benefit on Smith Brothers Farms and would result in a price rise to its customers.

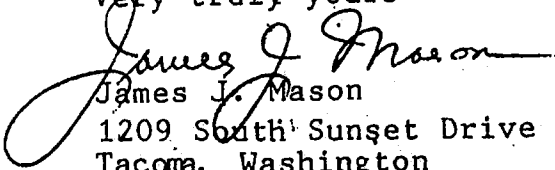
On the larger issue, why is the government meddling in the economics of the dairy industry at all? Its program is a relic of the 1930s, when numerous gurus proposed to remedy the supposed ills of the market economy. They gave us Mussolini's stato corporativo, Hitler's volksgemeinschaft, Stalin's kolkhozes and compulsory 'professional unions', and the NRA of Roosevelt II. Experience taught that such schemes reduce production, create scarcity and increase prices. The NRA was merely a licensed conspiracy to force prices higher than their market level.

It is curious that a proposal to further hamper the market economy should emanate from an administration committed to economic liberty. I urge you to reconsider this entire program and to endeavor to disentangle the dairy industry (and agriculture in general) from government, rather than increasing the latter's interference with people's business.

As consumers, we object to an assessment against Smith Brothers Farms for support of a program which is in neither their interest or that of their customers, and which would be tantamount to a fine imposed on them for conducting a successful independent business. Please let us know when hearings on this matter will be conducted in this area so that consumers may be heard.

Very truly yours

cc: Smith Brothers Farms


James J. Mason

1209 South Sunset Drive
Tacoma, Washington

98465