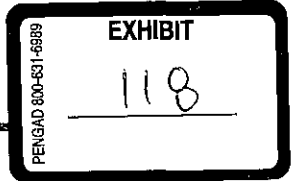


Tom Van Nortwick



**From:** Tom Van Nortwick [myagribusinesspublication@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, October 26, 2015 9:34 PM  
**To:** 'dairygoddesscheese@gmail.com'  
**Cc:** 'Jill Clifton'; 'laurel.may@ams.usda.gov'; 'office@milkproducers.org'; 'Dana Russell'  
**Subject:** Your testimony today at the FMMO Hearings

Barbara,

I just wanted you to know how impactful your testimony was today at the FMMO hearings in Clovis. I have now listened to hundreds of hours of testimony and no one has done a better job of putting to voice these words that are so tender and so near one's heart so as to almost be unspeakable. You, did without exception what so badly needs to be done to properly represent the levels of heart ache and heart break that producers and their families have faced in this State and in fact throughout the entire country. It was an honor to hear it as you said the words. While I was not in the room, not having known you were to testify, I am so grateful to have been listening here in the office and to share in your tears in a private setting so as to not have to divulge to others just how much your story meant to me and I am sure so many more.

I have captured that testimony on an audio file and will see that you have a copy for your family to have and keep for many years to come. I will get it into a MP4 file and bring it to you so that you can have it for those future days when it will do some good to remember how it was that you scaled such a high mountain and then having reached the top, was provided from that vista a clearer vision of what was to come and even the trail that like in the poem by Robert Frost, "is less traveled by". Then someday, like his traveler in the poem, you and will look back and say, " I believe, or even you will know, that, that has made all the difference".

Thank you for the pleasure of working with you and to have witnessed for myself how much it has all meant and I know still means. I know from experience these things will heal over time. While I can only imagine the important highs and the deep despair that have accompanied your journey, I am grateful to know this important story of a family's commitment and their resolve to work together. I know that important aspect of what you have gone through will help you, your family and all of us cherish, even more, the many victories that still lie ahead. I am grateful that you took the time to share such personal experiences, feelings and even the tender mercies that have accompanied the difficult decisions you have made together. Your example of family and what that should mean to all of us is likewise not wasted on those who have eyes to see and ears to hear.

I am likewise grateful for your questioning of producers and others within the industry. How have we come to this? How have we allowed this to happen? How is it that we find ourselves in this situation? Not exactly your words. Those will come. But know that those were powerful words phrased in a question and expressed as maybe only you were able to express them at this time, having gone through all you have gone through. Your questions are a clarion call that every producer and industry leader in the US Dairy Industry should be prepared to answer and hold themselves and others within their respective organizations accountable for, as well as the needed progress that must be made by everyone in order to stop this madness. I am grateful to know that in reality there are more that can and will stand with you, than there are those that will stand against you and all of the producers, but it will take an unparalleled effort to change the course that has wreaked this devastation on so many for no gain at all, only loss and destruction.

Tom