

Senate Majority Policy Committee Whole Milk Hearing

Good morning Honorable Chairman Scavello, Senators and staff. I want to thank you for holding this hearing on whole milk in schools. My name is Bernie Morrissey and I live in Robesonia. For 13 years, I've been involved in the dairy issues.

I have an insurance business over 50 years. I built it from scratch in my garage, from the first policy to a three-generation company now across 10 states and specializing in dairy. I know something about marketing.

But that's not why I'm here today. I'm here because the dairy farmers made me, since 1971, one of the most successful insurance agents in Lancaster County and this is me paying them back. This is what we're doing. I'm 84 years old and still involved.

I'm here because my friend Nelson Troutman contacted me in 2009 to get involved in the dairy issues. I helped bring farmers and people together. Some good things have happened since then, but also things that have not been good for dairy farmers and consumers.

Almost 3 years ago, Nelson painted his first round bale of hay: *Drink Whole Milk 97% fat free*. He called me to come look at it. You'll hear that story. But I asked him, how are you going to market this? You have this bale sign off the beaten path on your farm. The same 10 people drive by.

He said, I'm not going to market it, you are.

So, I started talking to other agribusinesses and they sent donations to print banners and yard signs, and then 97 MILK education got started with website and digital, and you'll hear about that too.

There has been a lot of support from the businesses and consumers in our state. The situation is critical.



Through Farmshine newspaper and 97 MILK online, as well as other news coverages, this message is getting out across the country, and it's working.

The dairy farmers have already lost a generation of milk drinkers since 2010.

All this time, most consumers, most senators, don't know that kids can't have whole milk at school. They are served only skim or low-fat milk and throw it away to buy something else.

Most people don't know whole milk is standardized to 3.25% fat.

They don't know that even if they buy whole milk at home, the children aren't allowed to have whole milk that tastes good at school. They don't know children are missing out on nutrition that helps with immunity and everything else.

That's how the Grassroots Pennsylvania Dairy Advisory Committee I chair came together. These are professional, knowledgeable people in their communities volunteering their time and money for whole milk education. We all work as a team.



I also visited with major stores and retailers. Some put our stickers on the dairy case and banners in their stores. They did the research for me and said whole milk sales in the past 2 years increased volume up over 15% in supermarkets, like Redner's, right in the heart of where the 97 Milk education effort started.

But children still can't choose whole milk in school.

Like others, I am a volunteer, I don't get paid to do this. I even spend my own money getting this all started with the signs. I'm putting my money where my mouth is.



We vigorously support U.S. Congressman G.T. Thompson's Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act at the federal level since the beginning. But we also believe our state needs to get involved.

We believe there is a strong state interest in this, for the health of our children, our citizens, our dairy farms and the many related jobs and businesses.

Will Pennsylvania be a leader? The Senate is the key to getting something done at the state level. We hope we can count on you to help make whole milk choice possible in schools again.