

To Members of the House Ag and Food Finance and Policy Committee

From Odie Jansen
Danube, MN

I am submitting this written testimony today in support of HF 4599 to extend mediation through harvest to December 1st. I farm with my son Bob and our combined acres farmed is about 680 acres. We milk about 120 to 140 cows. I also have a son with special needs who is very active working on the farm.

Our current has situation has come to yet another low. I have just refinanced my operation. I had been through mediation last summer, my bank wanted me to sell my cows and my land to Fagen from Granite Falls. They told me they were concerned about my future. I wanted to sell my land to my 35-yr. old son for \$5000 per acre and several times my banker suggested I could get \$7000 from this Corp. and they would rent it back to me so I could still farm the land (made me wonder who they were looking out for?)

I worked with the farm advocate program (Dan Hunz) he was beyond awesome! I also used the Farm Business Management program. Without these two groups I would have been out of farming.

My son got a loan from FSA and purchased 80 acres of land from me. The land my mother and father bought in 1945. When the bank received the payment, they wanted to know when they would be getting the payment for the sale of cows! Well my operation cash flowed very well with the land sale and a one tractor to my son. After a positive cash flow my bank reluctantly refinanced me, they dropped a small amount of late fees-from my loans. I was not happy with them not dropping all of them after what we had been through with mediation, and my banker forgot to be part of our 2nd meeting, it came to around \$12,000.

So here I am 2 months after, I have fat cattle to sell but cannot, as the packers will not buy them and if they would I would not get much for them as my local sale barn advises to stay home. We do not know when we can market them.

Milk on the other hand is picked up every 3rd day- there are not enough dairy left in my area to be picked up as normal. So, with my refinance I have one payment on the 1st of each month about \$5.300. Below you can see what has happened to my milk check and you can see there is not any money left once again to pay my first loan!

Even before I get started with a new look on my family's life, I am once again facing a disaster.

In Jan. block cheese was over \$ 2.00 lb.
On April 15 the same cheese was \$ 1.00 lb.

consumers have not seen a drop-in price but Oh, my, we have - below is what I have been paid the last 3 months for my advance check. You can see where the family dairy farms are headed, and someone needs to stop this NOW!!

Feb 1 base price \$16.75 115,185# \$19029.83

Mar 1 base price \$16.00 116785# \$17984.07

Apr 1 base price \$12.75 107960# \$12203.99

I think it is important to extend mediation. The extended timeframe would give milk markets a chance to stabilize and rise, and fat cattle markets to rebound – giving farmers like my son and myself hope of staying in farming.

This all is not our fault!

Odie Jansen
Dairy, Beef, and Crop Farmer
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