

TESTIMONY OF TOM WILLEY, OWNER, T & D WILLEY FARMS, Madera, California at the hearing on the proposed National Leafy Green Marketing Agreement, Monterey, California.

My wife and I own and operate a 75-acre, certified organic truck farm just outside of Madera in the central San Joaquin Valley. We grow over fifty vegetable crops, including many in the leafy green category, farming the year round to supply West Coast specialty retailers, restaurants and our own local subscriber network of 800 families who are members of T & D Willey Farms CSA. I've spent most of our farm's near 30-year history pursuing the knowledge and art of biologically intensive soil management in an effort to gain a reputation for the most tasteful and nutritious produce in the marketplace. I am proud to boast a handful of my soil harbors nearly six billion living microbial organisms of vast diversity, equal to the number of human beings inhabiting earth, which generously power the fertility cycle upon which we all depend for our very lives. Eschewing toxic inputs while relying only on biological processes to grow high quality, high yield vegetable crops is a stimulating intellectual and scientific challenge for which I and my customers have been well rewarded. I'm afraid some significant problems in food safety and misguided approaches to their solution, like NLGMA, could derail achievements in biological agriculture and a greater promise of food made safe through respect for and cooperation with the microbial community which owns and operates this planet upon which we are merely guests. The antibiotic resistant and increasingly virulent organisms contaminating our produce from time to time are mutant creatures introduced into the larger environment from confined industrial animal operations across the American countryside. CAFO's using as much as 70% of the nation's annual antibiotic supply in subtherapeutic feeding regimes to mitigate crowding, stress and unnatural diets have been documented by the Pew Commission on Industrial Farm Animal Production to have created at least several of the very dangerous pathogens which episodically threaten today's produce supply. This commission's membership includes such environmental wackos as Dan Glickman, former USDA secretary of Agriculture and John Curlin, former Kansas Governor. Why our vegetable industry refuses to throw rocks at the glass house of industrial animal production is beyond me to comprehend. Instead we pretend it is possible to superimpose a paradigm of sterility over vegetable farms by implementing the more extreme practices suggested by LGMA or rogue buyers and processors to mollify an ignorant and nervous public. If animal manures were an inherently dangerous agricultural input, the human race would have long since become extinct; instead its judicious use has remained a hallmark of good fertility management for centuries if not millennia. If manure is now uniquely dangerous,

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