

Greetings to all,

I'm Raymond Yoder. We have a family of 6 children and grow vegetables and berries on our 20-acre farm in Fredericksburg, Ohio.

All our vegetables and berries are sold by the auction method at Farmers Produce Auction, Mt. Hope, Ohio. The growers for the 66 auctions spread across the Midwest consist of mostly Amish growers. The smaller auctions have 50 growers and the largest ones have 500-600 growers.

These auctions all have mostly Amish and Mennonite growers that use horse and buggy for their source of transportation. These growers also use the horses for their source of power in the produce fields.

When we add up these numbers, we find that over 20,000 family farms could directly affected if the California Leafy Greens Proposal rules would become law. We are quite concerned about food safety and want to do all we can to provide safe food. I feel we can achieve this by education and adapting to the G.A.P.S. program now available.

I feel we need a state-by-state and also a tier program in order to make it possible for us small growers to participate. A one-size-fits-all program will not work, simply because of the many differences in production practices.

If the California Leafy Greens Proposal rules would become the marketing agreement across the U.S., it would cause financial hardship for many Amish families that now grow vegetables for their income.

I feel we need scientific research, common sense and a look at every angle to set up a food safety program that can be viable for all of us that are concerned.

Thank you for having a hearing in Columbus.

Raymond J. Yoder
Yoder's Produce

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