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I am Connie Finton. My husband and I own and operate a dairy farm just outside of New Philadelphia Ohio. About 30 minutes from where we are today.

My husband's grandfather bought the farm in 1930; his mother and father operated the farm until we took over.

I personally have lived on the farm and milked cows there since 1967.

Our son is working into a partnership with us and he has 2 sons who tell us they would like to take over the farm when they grow up.

We do not employ any labor outside of the family and neither my husband, son, or I work off the farm. We milk about 70 cows year around and I consider us to be one form of that elusive thing that USDA continues to try to define as "The Family Farm".

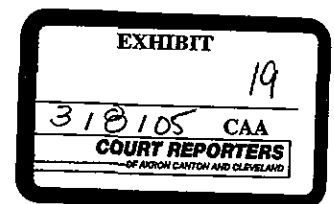
I serve as an elected representative of the dairy farmer members of DFA, on the Mideast Council and the Corporate Board. I am Chairman of the Ohio Dairy Industry Forum, Vice Chair of Ohio Dairy Producers, Inc. I serve on the Board of Trustees of ADADC Mideast, The Ohio Department of Agriculture Animal Health Committee; I am on the Development and Community Relations committee for our local hospital and was appointed by the County Commissioners to advise the Job and Family Services Agency.

We own and farm 150 acres, rent about 200 more and try to raise most of the roughage for our cows. We do not have a cash grain operation, a separate hog business or other business to supplement our income; therefore our milk check is extremely important to us. Not only is our milk check the income that allows us to operate our business, it is, in fact, what pays for the food on our table.

Our farm provides a consistent supply of milk to the Order 33 market ALL the time. When depooling occurs in FO33, it hurts my business financially. Depooling negatively impacts the economics of a market area and I believe lends itself to more and more farms losing the opportunity to be successful, that in turn, I believe leads to the demise of the dairy producers in many areas.

We are predominately a fluid/Class 1 market. Yes, we do have a good cheese industry in our area. In fact, the mission of the Ohio Dairy Industry Forum, of which I am Chairman, is "To facilitate the strengthening of the overall profitability, competitiveness, and long-term viability of Ohio's Dairy Industry."

But milk in the jug is #1 and we need a consistent supply to keep orderly marketing conditions.



I do understand that depooling is not the cause of negative PPDs but it does make it worse.

According to information released by the FO33 Market Administrators office, depooling negatively affected the PPD by \$1.66 in April 2004....on our farm that was \$2826.21 that was not available to us.

And I remind you that we only milk about 70 cows.

When I looked at the Website and reports from the Market Administrator and saw a lot of milk from way outside what I consider our market area and realized by the numbers that only a little ever comes to our area, I'm thinking wait a minute, I thought this was fixed when we reformed this system a few years ago. I guess I was wrong.

We have chosen to belong to a cooperative and I do not believe it is fair for my cooperative to have to pay to bring milk into this market when milk from other areas share in our pool but are not dependable, consistent suppliers to the market.

When our sons were small and wanted to play ball, we made it clear to them that it was a commitment. They needed to be there, prepared to play for every game, not just show up when they wanted to, and stay home if they did not want to play...the same applies with this business.

I also believe that all participants in the pool should bear more of the cost associated with serving the class 1 market. As a member of a cooperative that serves the class 1 market, that should not be our total burden it should be more equally shared. I think I saw where the MA office had projected the blend impact of the transportation credit to be in the 3-4 cent range. I do not think that would be unreasonable for the privilege of being part of the pool.

These are serious problems and we are beginning the task of trying to remedy some of them, but the process takes way too long. It is a good thing that the house is not really on fire, because with a system like this, you would never be able to salvage anything. I would urge the secretary to expedite this process so that those of us who supply the FO33 market are not taken advantage of by those on other orders with earlier hearing procedures.

I would like to thank all those in the MA office and especially the Market Administrator for taking the time to educate so many people on this process and to supply in such a user friendly manner the material and information we needed.