

A new food safety bill is on the fast track in Congress-HR 2749, the Food Safety Enhancement Act of 2009. The bill needs to be stopped. HR 2749 gives FDA tremendous power while significantly diminishing existing judicial restraints on actions taken by the agency. The bill would impose a one-size-fits-all regulatory scheme on small farms and local artisanal producers; and it would disproportionately impact their operations for the worse.

HR 2749 does not address underlying causes of food safety problems such as industrial agriculture practices and the consolidation of our food supply. The industrial food system and food imports are badly in need of effective regulation, but the bill does not specifically direct regulation or resources to these areas.

To read a detailed account of the bill, go to: <http://www.ftcldf.org/news/news-15june2009.htm> (Read the section on tracing. That is NAIS, isn't it? - highly disguised yet triggered by the word "trace.") Alarming Provisions:

Some of the more alarming provisions in the bill are:

* HR 2749 would impose an annual registration fee of \$500 on any "facility" that holds, processes, or manufactures food. [isn't this every home in the US, every garden?] Although "farms" are exempt, the agency has defined "farm" narrowly. [What is the definition?] And people making foods such as lacto-fermented vegetables, cheeses, or breads would be required to register and pay the fee, which could drive beginning and small producers out of business during difficult economic times. [Yes. There are laws against this corporate-size-destroys-the-little-guy policy, aren't there? Are home bread or cheese or lacto-fermented vegetable makers who make for their own families included in this?]

* HR 2749 would empower FDA to regulate how crops are raised and harvested. It puts the federal government right on the farm, dictating to our farmers. [This astounding control opens the door to CODEX. WTO "good farming practices" will include the elimination of organic farming by eliminating manure, mandating GMO animal feed, imposing animal drugs, and ordering applications of petrochemical fertilizers and pesticides. Farmers, thus, will be locked not only into the industrialization of once normal and organic farms but into the forced purchase of industry's products. They will be slaves on the land, doing the work they are ordered to do - against their own best wisdom - and paying out to industry against their will.

There will be no way to be frugal, to grow one's own grain to feed the animals, to raise healthy animals without GMO grains or drugs, to work with nature at all. Grassfed cattle and poultry and hogs will be finished. So, it's obvious where control will take us. And weren't these the "rumors on the internet" that were dismissed but are clearly the case?]

* HR 2749 would give FDA the power to order a quarantine of a geographic area, including "prohibiting or restricting the movement of food or of any vehicle being used or that has been used to transport or hold such food within the geographic area." [This - "that has been used to transport or hold such food" - would mean all cars that have ever brought groceries home so this means ALL TRANSPORTATION can be shut down under this. This is using food as a cover

for martial law.] Under this provision, farmers markets and local food sources could be shut down, even if they are not the source of the contamination. The agency can halt all movement of all food in a geographic area. [This is also a means of total control over the population under the cover of food, and at any time.]

* HR 2749 would empower FDA to make random warrantless searches of the business records of small farmers and local food producers, without any evidence whatsoever that there has been a violation. [If these bills cover all who "hold food" then this allows for taking of records of anyone at any time on no basis at all.] Even farmers selling direct to consumers would have to provide the federal government with records on where they buy supplies, how they raise their crops, and a list of customers.

[NAIS for animals and all other foods?]

* HR 2749 charges the Secretary of Health and Human Services with establishing a tracing system for food. Each "person who produces, manufactures, processes, packs, transports, or holds such food" [Is this not every home in the US?] would have to "maintain the full pedigree of the origin and previous distribution history of the food," and "establish and maintain a system for tracing the food that is interoperable with the systems established and maintained by other such persons." The bill does not explain how far the traceback will extend or how it will be done for multi-ingredient foods. With all these ambiguities, [with all these ambiguities, it is dangerous, period, separate from the money] it's far from clear how much it will cost either the farmers or the taxpayers. [It is massive and absurd and burdensome beyond the capacity of people to comply - is this not fascism? - so it is a set up for being used to impose penalties endlessly and/or to eliminate anyone at will.]

* HR 2749 creates severe criminal and civil penalties, including prison terms of up to 10 years and/or fines of up to \$100,000 for each violation for individuals. [Does it include judicial review, Congressional oversight, a defined and limited set of penalties and punishments for a defined set of "crimes"? Or is it entirely ambiguous and left to the whim and sole power of "the Administrator"? Who is that person set to be? Is it Michael Taylor, Monsanto lawyer and executive, as Food Democracy has said? That is, do these bills set up an agency by which the entire US food supply will be turned over to the control of a multinational corporation under WTO regulations (and not to US farmers and not to US laws under the Constitution), with boundless freedom to do what it wants, and one infamous for harm to farmers and lack of safety of food?] If it was not clear before how frightening these bills were, this small section of provisions, should make their actual fascism clear now. It goes way beyond "food safety" to absolute control over farms, animals, food, and us, including our movements and access to food at all.

Action to Take:

Contact your Representative now! Ask to speak with the staffer who handles food issues. Tell them you are opposed to the bill. Some points to make in telling your Representative why you oppose HR 2749 include:

HR 2749: Totalitarian Control Of Our Food Supply

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The bill imposes burdensome requirements while not specifically targeting the industrial food system and food imports, where the real food safety problems lie. Small farms and local food processors are part of the solution to food safety; lessening the regulatory burden on them will improve food safety. The bill gives FDA much more power than it has had in the past while making the agency less accountable for its actions. HR 2749 needs to be defeated!! Please take action NOW.

To contact your Representative, use the finder tool at www.Congress.org or send a message through the petition system (the petition will be on our website this evening) at http://www.ftcldf.org/petitions_new.htm

. Or call the Capitol Switchboard at 202-224-3121.

To check the status of HR 2749, go to Thomas.gov and type "HR 2749" in the bill search field.

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