

El Dorado County farmers challenge food regulations

By Carlos Alcalá, Sacramento Bee

Pattie Chelseth thinks she has the right to sell you a fraction of a cow.

Chelseth, operator of My Sisters' Farm in Shingle Springs, keeps two cows owned by 15 people.

A cow's owner can legally drink its milk filtered but unpasteurized, so she believes each of those 15 owners is entitled to a share of the raw milk.

California's Department of Food and Agriculture sees it otherwise.

"We consider that a commercial transaction and subject to the dairy food safety laws," said Steve Lyle, the agency's public affairs director.

A battle in a milk bottle is brewing, as small farmers challenge state and federal regulations.

Chelseth is trying to land the latest blow, floating an ordinance for El Dorado County that she thinks would give small producers the right to sell unregulated goods – milk, cheese, home-baked pies and more – directly to the person who consumes them.

She will hold a local meeting at her farm on Friday.

Read the whole story