

Local-food movement gets verbal support from El Dorado County officials

By Carlos Alcalá, Sacramento Bee

The grass-roots (and grass-fed) agriculture revolution that Patty Chelseth started last summer is picking up steam.

Chelseth, of My Sisters' Farm in Shingle Springs, has launched a campaign to get a "Local Food and Community Self-Governance" ordinance. Her effort got a warm reception Tuesday from the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors.

Although supervisors did not pass anything with teeth, they gave strong verbal support to Chelseth and others who believe they are starting a revolution against onerous state regulations that hurt small farmers.

"I am personally appalled that they will come onto my ranch and tell me I can't share my cow or I can't share my chickens," said Supervisor Ray Nutting, after speaking of his homesteading, cow-milking, (and chicken-decapitating) grandmother. "Whatever we need to do, I'm in full support."

Chelseth was backed by more than 20 speakers and more than 100 onlookers who overflowed the board's meeting room.

Her cause began last year when the California Department of Food and Agriculture issued a cease and desist order against Chelseth. She was selling shares of cows on her farm in an attempt to deal with rules that prohibited her from selling raw milk directly to consumers.

She only keeps two cows.

Sheriff John D'Agostini told supervisors he consulted with the

district attorney about Chelseth.

“I made the decision that the El Dorado County Sheriff’s Office was not going to be the milk police,” he said. “So I support this ordinance.”

Read the whole story