



COL NTY OF SANTA CRUZ Item 3 (a)

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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April 5, 2006

Tara Leonard, County Bounty: Claravale Farm re-creates the *glory* days of California dairy with raw milk

Milk and American childhood go together like, well, cookies and milk. When I was a kid, milk meant giggly milk mustaches enjoyed with my siblings after slurping my father's famous malted milkshakes. Little did I know, that milk had probably traveled for weeks from cow to processor to distributor to store before landing in the blender of my family's suburban New Jersey kitchen. Thirty-five years later, do I even know what *real* milk tastes like?

On a recent spring morning, I decided to find out, Just minutes from the rush of downtown Watsonville, off a quiet one-lane road, I found Claravale Farm. Half-a-dozen sweet brown *calves* cavorted in the sun while their mothers *ambled* over for a scratch behind the ears, their warm breath *puffing* on my outstretched hand. Here Ron Garthwaite and his *wife*, Collette Cassidy, are re-creating "the glory days of California dairy" using old-fashioned, time-honored methods to provide their customers with fresh, natural, raw milk.

At Claravale, you won't find the black & white Holsteins whose milk is commonly sold in supermarkets. "We have only Jersey cows," Garthwaite says. "They produce the highest quality milk with higher concentrations of proteins, solids, butterfat and beta-carotene than other breeds."

These animals are clearly treated with dignity and respect, enjoying organic feed, fresh air and plenty of room to stretch their *legs*. The *folks* at Claravale don't *use* hormones to increase milk production nor do they indiscriminately use antibiotics.

It's the way Claravale has been operating since 1927, when owner Ken Peake started off with a single cow. Almost 80 years later, Claravale maintains about 50 cows on two sites, a size that allows Garthwaite to *control* every step of the process. Because raw milk is completely unprocessed, it goes from the cow to the bottle to the consumer. Most commercial milk is pasteurized cooked to kill bacteria and homogenized processed *so* the cream won't rise to the top. Many brands *also* are adulterated with synthetic vitamins and other additives.

Proponents of raw milk argue that pasteurization kills the beneficial bacteria that naturally crowd out the bad. They *claim* that pasteurization destroys valuable nutrients, vitamins and enzymes while altering milk's true flavor. Opponents counter that pasteurization kills common pathogens transmitted by milk that *could* make consumers sick.

"There are many benefits to raw milk," asserts Laura Segelman, a nutrition educator based in Santa Cruz. "It contains all of the natural enzymes and antioxidants that nature intended. Of course, pasteurization does kill some of the bad things that can potentially cause *harm* and you need to be mindful of that risk. However, those problems are more likely to come up in a large, factory farming situation where there's not as much care and attention given to the cows and their lifestyle. A senior or somebody with a compromised immune system *should* certainly be careful, just as you would with anything you put in your body."

Another primary purpose of pasteurization is to increase milk's shelf *life* by reducing the number of spoilage-causing organisms. This wasn't an *issue* when small dairy farms were the norm.

"At the turn of the century, there were more than 200 dairies in Santa Cruz County *alone*," Cassidy explains. "These were small, neighborhood dairies where the product went from the cow to the table in hours if not days." But after World War I, large dairy firms took over. They *consolidated* their herds far from *most* consumers, making extended shelf-life critical.

"We're a couple of generations away from most people having real milk," Garthwaite says. "They don't know what it tastes like. We do dairy the way we think it should be done and let our customers know what that means."

For chef Nicci Tripp of Theo's restaurant it means a "creamy, yummy" product that "tastes like milk is supposed to taste." Tripp, who uses Claravale milk to make fresh mozzarella, Brie and blue cheese says, "you're able to taste the natural flora in the milk — the hay, fresh grass and grain. The flavor changes with the seasons depending on the majority of the animals' diet. You can't get that in store-bought milk that's been all beat UP."

Of course, there's a cost to doing dairy this way, both for the farmer and the consumer. The bucolic beauty of Claravale Farm masks the tough realities facing many small agri-businesses. Hoping to consolidate their operation on one site, Garthwaite and Cassidy are trying to build a new milking parlor. However, the tortuous county permit process threatens their financial viability, they say, even in the absence of any particularly complicated issues. "It's bureaucracy," Garthwaite says, shaking his head. "Just paper pushing."

His words come back to me as I stand at the dairy case of New Leaf Community Market on 41st Avenue. A quart of Claravale milk sells for \$4.49 plus \$1.25 deposit for the environment-friendly glass bottle. Remembering the happy, healthy Claravale cows, I overcome my initial sticker shock and purchase two quarts.

I enjoy the weight and heft of the smooth bottle, showcasing the creamy beige liquid within. One sip confirms this isn't the watery, blue-white fluid I'm used to drinking. Claravale milk has a rich, complex flavor, sweet and layered with grassy undertones. It would be scrumptious over fresh raspberries or drizzled over Irish oatmeal with honey. The milk is so good that I'd almost hate to waste it in a malted milkshake.

Flavor aside, I decide that it's worth the cost to know how my milk began, where the cows live and what they ate for breakfast. Having met Garthwaite and Cassidy, I understand the time, energy and personal sacrifice that have gone into providing this simple, honest drink.

"Ron has a true philosophy that I share," Nicci Tripp concludes. "He takes really good care of his animals and his land, and it shows in the final product."

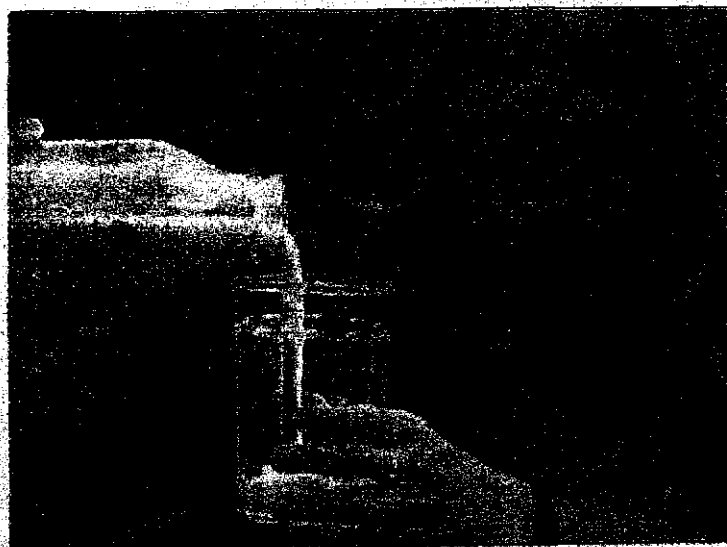
Tara Leonard is a local health writer and mother of two. She can be reached at svreeken@santacruzsentinel.com.

Where To Buy

You can find Claravale milk locally at New Leaf, Staff of Life, and Aptos Natural Foods. To learn more, visit www.claravaidairy.com or call 722-7779.



Ron Garthwaite of Claravale Farms greets one of the newest members of the farm's herd Saturday.



Collette Cassidy pours a glass of the good stuff at Claravale Farms outside Watsonville.

Diane P. and Donald E. Cooley
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March 13, 2006

Mr. David W. Moeller, Executive Secretary
County Planning Commission
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Dear Mr. Mueller,

Re: Approved Application #00-0728, Parcel 110-101-07

This to seek advice and direction regarding the appropriate specifications for the stipulated "vegetative barrier, and solid wood fence" required of the Applicant for this dwelling permit. We are the owners and occupants of the adjacent agricultural properties (APN 110-101-06, 110-101-05 to the south and southeast.)

The unique lay of the land to the fence line and to the uphill structures require much more than normal "minimum height of 6'" for level sightlines. The new structures (~~two~~) are on a significant uphill rise.

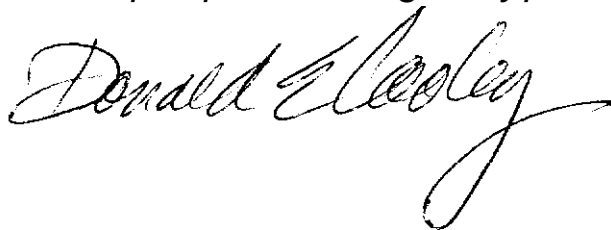
Therefore, the "vegetative buffering barrier: if that means view protection for us and orchard/row crops spraying protection for the new residence (which is within the 200' the normal ag setback requirement) MUST be considerably higher, and dense. As mitigation to the Applicant we would wave his requirement for the expensive 6' tall solid wood fence. Attached are photos to illustrate this fact.

We request an inspection to determine this unique height requirement. The Applicant may also wish for judgment on this requirement -and soon- for planting while the ground is soft.

We have planted some small redwood trees (7' to 12') along the most open, and uphill, view from our long entry driveway. The Applicant has stated that these will potentially obstruct his view of "the city's vista and sunsets: We don't think so -- because of the excessive height of the new structure.

Your response to the above request will help us preserve neighborly peace.

Sincerely,

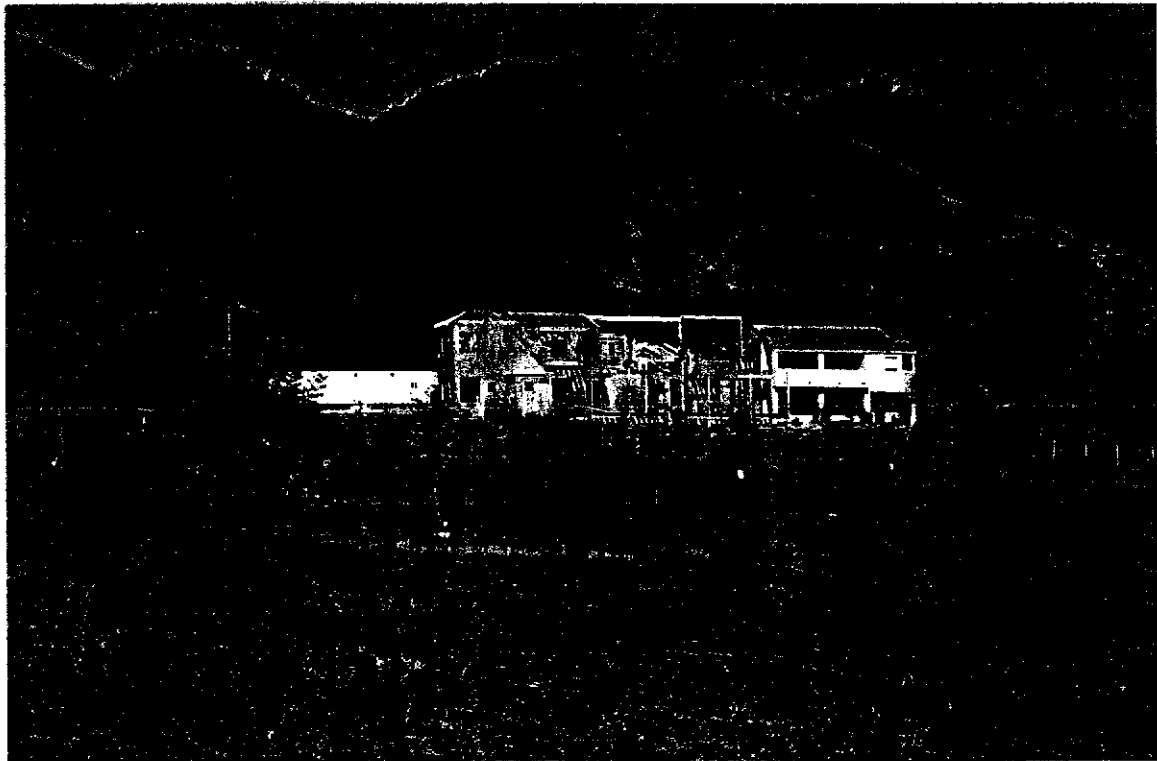


Copies to Mr. Vick, Mr. Campos

Views of New Construction from Parcel below APN 110-101-07



View Up from Cooky livingroom direction. Line fence at edge of Orchard.



View Up from Entry driveway. Line fence at edge of Pasture.

**AGRICULTURAL BUFFER DETERMINATION
Conditions Of Approval**

Application No. 00-0728
Assessor's Parcel No. 110-101-07

Exhibit E: Site plan prepared by Pat Powers, dated 11-5-00

- I. This permit authorizes an Agricultural Buffer Setback reduction to about 175 feet from the southern property line and 120 feet to the eastern property line to the single-family residence and attached garage. Prior to exercising any rights granted by this permit including, without limitation, any construction or site disturbance, the applicant/owner shall:
- A. Sign, date, and return to the Planning Department one copy of the approval to indicate acceptance and agreement with the conditions thereof.
 - B. Obtain a building permit for the residential room addition.
- II. Prior to issuance of a Building Permit the applicant/owner shall:
- 1. Submit Final Architectural Plans for review and approval by the Planning Department. The final plans shall be in substantial compliance with Exhibit E on file with the Planning Department.
 - a) A development setback of a minimum distance of 175 feet from the residential room addition to the existing single-family dwelling from the southern property line and 120 feet to the eastern property line with the adjacent Commercial Agriculture zoned parcel.
 - b) Final plans shall show the location of the vegetative buffering barrier and 6-foot tall solid wood fence. The shrubs utilized shall attain a minimum height of 6 feet upon maturity. The vegetative barrier and six-foot wood fence shall be located between the residential development and the southern property line between the subject property and APN 110-101-05. Species type, plant sizes and spacing shall be indicated on the final plans for review and approval by Planning Staff. Fencing shall be installed to within 150 feet east and west from the edge of the property line.
 - 2. The owner has recorded a Statement of Acknowledgment, as prepared by the Planning Department, and submitted proof of recordation to the Planning Department. This Statement of Acknowledgment acknowledges the adjacent agricultural land use and the agricultural buffer setbacks. (Document 2001-0027786, recorded on 11th May, 2001).
 - 3. The owner shall record a Declaration of Restriction to maintain the structure as a single-family dwelling.
- III. All construction shall be performed according to the approved plans for the building permit. Prior to final building inspection, the applicant/owner must meet the following conditions:

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APN: 110-101-07

1. The agricultural buffer setbacks shall be met as verified by the County Building Inspector.
2. The required vegetative and/or other physical barrier shall be installed. The applicant/owner shall call the Agricultural Planner at 454-5174, a minimum of three working days in advance to schedule an inspection to verify the required barrier (vegetative and/or other) has been completed.
3. All inspections required by the building permit shall be completed to the satisfaction of the County Building Official and the County Senior Civil Engineer.

IV. Operational Conditions

- A. The vegetative barrier and fencing shall be permanently maintained between the residential uses and the southern property line.
- B. All required Agricultural Buffer Setbacks shall be maintained.
- C. In the event that future County inspections of the subject property disclose noncompliance with any Conditions of this approval or any violation of the County Code, the owner shall pay to the County the full cost of such County inspections, including any follow-up inspections and/or necessary enforcement actions, up to and including permit revocation.

Minor variations to this permit which do not affect the overall concept or density may be approved by the Planning Director at the request of the applicant or staff in accordance with Chapter 18.10 of the County Code.

Please Note: This permit expires *two* years from the date of approval unless you obtain your building permit and commence construction.

EXHIBIT B

2.82.010

Chapter 2.82

AGRICULTURAL POLICY ADVISORY COMMISSION

Sections:

- 2.82.010 Established—Statutory authority.
- 2.82.020 Membership.
- 2.82.030 Term of office.
- 2.82.040 Organization and procedures.
- 2.82.050 Powers and duties.

2.82.010 Established—Statutory authority.

The agricultural policy advisory commission is established under the authority of Government Code Section 25208, in compliance with Chapter 2.38 of the Santa Cruz County Code. (Prior code § 3.59.010; Ord. 2521, 1/17/78)

2.82.020 Membership.

.4. The commission shall consist of five members, residents of the county, appointed by the board of supervisors. Each supervisor shall nominate one person to serve on the commission. Membership on the commission shall be open to those who are active in the production of agricultural commodities or a related agricultural industry.

B. There shall be, in addition, two liaison members appointed, the county director of agricultural extension, and the county agricultural commissioner, who shall have seats on the commission but not vote. (Prior code § 3.59.030; Ord. 2521, 1/17/78)

2.82.030 Term of office.

Each member shall serve for a term of four years, commencing April 1st of the year in which the member's nominating supervisor begins a full term. (Prior code § 3.59.040; Ord. 2521, 1/17/79)

2.82.040 Organization and procedures.

A. General Organization. The commission may establish its own rules and procedures insofar as they comply in all respects with the provisions of Chapter 2.38 of this code. The commission may also, from time to time, consult with authorities in the field.

B. County Staff. The agricultural commissioner's department shall provide staff support for the commission. The director of the department, or his designate, shall serve as administrative secretary to the commission, and shall receive copies of all minutes, reports and recommendations submitted to the board of supervisors by the commission.

C. Planning Department Support. With regard to commission duties under subsection B of this section, the planning department shall cooperate in providing staff support for the commission. Such support shall consist of application receipt and processing, staff report preparation, and presentation of appeals of agricultural policy advisory commission decisions to the board of supervisors. (Prior code § 3.59.050; Ord. 2521, 1/17/78; Ord. 2677, 5/15/79)

2.82.050 Powers and duties.

The commission shall exercise the following responsibilities:

A. Advise and assist the board of