

## The Case of the Uneconomic Investment

In 2005 Tide Mill Farms invested \$25,000 in a chicken processing facility, based on a Maine Department Of Agriculture Crab Picking Trailer. They use this facility one or two days a week to process their own chickens for sale. So far so good.

There are several small farms in Washington County that have, or would like to have, their own chicken flocks and need the use of a processing facility. It is the most obvious thing in the world for Tide Mill to hire labor (**Create Jobs**) to run their facility four or five days a week, and to process birds from nearby farms.

"Oh No!", says the State of Maine, "**We can't allow that**". Either Tide Mill Farms give up the right to process their own chickens in order to process those from other farms, or they don't process chickens for other farms.

So here we have a substantial investment idle most of the time through a nonsensical licensing decision from the State of Maine.

Common sense suggests that a more fully utilized facility, as well as providing a fair return to its investors, allows the State to concentrate its inspection and licensing efforts on a smaller number of better equipped facilities. The State's approach, however, is to force individual small farms to duplicate expensive under-utilized facilities at a great waste of investment funds, time and effort for all concerned.

**Net effect, less farms offering chickens, less choice for consumers, less employment in the County.**



## The Case of the Illegal Juice

Hatch Knoll Farm grows Certified Organic Blueberries, Raspberries and Strawberries, and manufactures 1800 jars of "Fruit Spread" annually in a licensed "Home Kitchen" on the farm.

The Farm developed a Blueberry Juice product that is entirely suited to Home Kitchen manufacture, since it is steam extracted in a stove-top stainless steel extractor that produces pasteurized highly acidic juice in a single step. This product and process has been evaluated by Dr. Al. Bushway at Umaine, the State Food Safety expert. Dr. Bushway has concluded the process and product are safe.

However it is illegal for the juice to be manufactured on the Farm due to a carefully written piece of legislation, the **Beverage Law Title 32, Ch. 27** which states that such a juice can only be made in a state licensed bottling plant. (Think Coca-Cola.) Interestingly if the Farm wanted to import **Chinese** Juice Concentrate and dilute it then it would NOT be subject to this law. And if the Farm wishes to produce a Concentrated blueberry juice it would NOT be subject to this law. The law only stops the manufacture of juice from fruit. Someone was very careful about that wording. Too healthy I guess.

**But there is more.** The Farm plan is to manufacture 500-1000 bottles a year, and to offer a 50¢ per bottle return fee to ensure the bottles are returned. Not good enough for the State of Maine. The **Bottle Deposit Law Title 32, Ch. 28** requires the Farm to only charge a 5¢ deposit, but to pay the State a fee of \$ 500 a year and contract with the State redemption centers to collect bottles.

Another case of a law written around the large scale distributor in complete indifference to the struggling artisan.

Yet we are constantly told the future of Maine lies in its small businesses...