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FSANZ: Applications and Submissions - Submission

Tuesday, 23 September, 2008

- 1. Assessment Report Number:** P1007
- 2. Assessment Report Title:** Primary Production & Processing Requirements for Raw Milk Products
- 3. Organisation Name:** Raclette Australia Pty Ltd
- 4. Organisation Type:** Other
- 5. Representing:** Raclette Australia Pty Ltd
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- 12. Submission Text:** see attachment

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Submission to Proposal P1007 "Primary Production & Processing Requirements for Raw Milk Products", closing date 24 September 2008

Purpose:

To add the support of Raclette Australia Pty Ltd for the production, import and sale of unpasteurised cheeses, especially raclette cheese.

Comments:

This submission does not attempt to be a scientific discussion of the bacteriological safety of semi-hard and hard cheeses but rather a reminder to look at empirical evidence, statistical data, cultural history and traditions and customer satisfaction when assessing food safety standards.

As part of an article on cheese for the Sydney Morning Herald (<http://www.smh.com.au/news/good-living/whey-to-go/2007/07/30/1185647795723.html?page=fullpage#contentSwap2>) the author describes the flavour difference between pasteurised and unpasteurised cheese as palpable: "Both were delicious, but the raw-milk version had a depth of flavour, texture and complexity quite unlike its pasteurised counterpart. Legally, this cheese could not have been sold."

One of Australia's most awarded cheeses, Heidi Farm Raclette Cheese, is produced in Tasmania as a pasteurised cheese and has won many gold medals. It has been named "Champion Cheese of Cheeses" at various shows for its superior taste, most recently as Grand Champion Cheese 2008 at the Melbourne Specialist Cheese Show (ASCA). It also has been Grand Champion of the Australian Grand Dairy Awards in 2007, 2005 and 1999. Yet, the creator of this cheese, Frank Marchand, has retired from his cheese making profession and one of the reasons he cited was the forced use of only pasteurised milk in his creations. How much better could this cheese have been if unpasteurised milk had been allowed? What slice of the world market could this Grand Champion of Cheeses have gained had it been made with unpasteurised milk, produced and sold in Australia and exported to the world?

In the last few years two new raclette cheeses were produced in Queensland, Maleny Raclette and Fromart Raclette. Both are creations of Swiss migrants who in their country of origin would not have been as restricted as here.

In France and Switzerland the production and sale of many cheeses is based on, permitted or even required to use unpasteurised milk and neither country can be said to put the health of their inhabitants at risk. Empirical data in these countries over many years shows no evidence that the use of unpasteurised milk for the production of cheeses must be prohibited if other safety requirements are met, so why does Australia impose such drastic measurements on local cheese makers?

Why can not the consumer make the choice what type of cheese she wants to eat? Why does an overprotecting government agency deny Australian consumers the sensational taste they can experience overseas, but not in their own country? Why are Australian cheese makers deliberately hindered to enter the world markets with better cheeses?

This submission was made by Jens Olscher, Managing Director of Raclette Australia Pty Ltd, a company active in production and distribution of raclette grills to enable Australians to discover new culinary delights.

Parts of this submission are based on the book "Raclette – The secret World of Raclette Dining" by Jennifer and Jens Olscher, published by Raclette Australia Pty Ltd, available through the websites www.raclette.com.au or www.raclette.co.nz or through various retail outlets.