

SUBMISSION

Re: Proposal P1007 Primary Production & Processing Requirements for raw Milk Products

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I write in support of raw milk and raw milk product consumption. I believe everyone should have the opportunity to consume raw milk if they choose to.

Consumption of raw milk

I have grown up on a dairy farm in New Zealand. As a child from the age of 1 year old until I travelled overseas at 17, our family used raw milk from our dairy cows for 10 months of each year (the remaining 2 months when the cows were dry we bought pasteurised milk from the local store). I would estimate that our family of 2 adults and 3 children consumed approximately 10L of milk per week on our breakfast, in milkshakes and in milk puddings. Our family was very healthy with no irregular health problems and I would suggest less common ailments than most.

On leaving home I studied and gained a Bachelor of Science and Technology followed by a postgraduate Diploma in Dairy Science and Technology with Distinction. Especially in the diploma course the study was focused on milk and milk processing topics. My understanding of scientific principles and research is sound, and clearly my knowledge of milk is extensive. The decision to drink raw milk is in **no way** incidental, uninformed or without consideration of any “scientific” risks.

Now as an adult of 38 years with three children aged 6, 8 and 9 ½ years old, we choose to drink raw milk at every possibility. For the past 6 years our family has been dairy farming and for 10 months of the year when the cows are milking (the other two months the cows are dry and as when I was a child we purchase pasteurised milk) we consume raw milk on our breakfast, in milkshakes and in cooking (especially milk puddings). Our family of 2 adults and 3 young children usually consume 2 litres of milk per day when the cows are milking.

The choice to drink raw milk is based on the following principles and thoughts:

- A clear understanding of the farming practices of the animals from which we drink raw milk. I do not believe that all raw milk is good. Raw milk for our family's consumption must come from healthy pasture fed cows which have been farmed in a sustainable manner which minimises risk of pathogen entering the milk from the cow

- The cow is milked in a hygienic environment and the milk treated with maximum care to prevent contamination with bacteria and/or foreign matter
- The milk is refrigerated after it comes from the cow and stored below 4°C.
- Raw milk from a healthy pasture fed cow has a balanced composition ideal for digestion. The pasteurisation of milk destroys enzymes which influence our ability to digest milk .
- If a litre of milk from a healthy cow is not refrigerated and left at room temperature (20°C)it is still satisfactory to drink after a day – on the other hand if you leave a litre of pasteurised milk at room temperature it is not drinkable after a day (I have tried this experiment!).
- Drinking milk from local producers supports the local community and is better for the environment than sending it long distances for processing and then finished products redistribution back into the local community (foodmiles).

Clearly because we farm our own animals we are able to minimize risks associated with farming and milking practices. In order to manage these risks (associated with farming and milking practices) when raw milk is made available to everyone I believe it would be necessary to have a certification system which recognizes and checks for best practice management. Current certification systems could meet these requirements; such as in New Zealand BioGro and Demeter Organic Standards, as well as current farm dairy inspections by AgQuality.

Our family has suffered from eczema, acne, and asthma previously and all symptoms are reduced when we consume raw milk. We believe that raw milk has health benefits for our family.

Summary

Our family regularly consumes raw milk. Our decision to use raw milk is an informed and conscious decision based on scientific research and our own experiences. We believe there are significant improvements in our health when we use raw milk by comparison to pasteurized milk. However it is important that strict criteria are met in the production and harvesting of milk for it to be of acceptable quality to consume raw milk. To this end I would recommend that a certification process is utilized to allow only quality raw milk to be sold directly to the public. There are suitable certification systems in place such as BioGro which could be utilized for ensuring risks are minimized in the sale of raw milk to the public.