

Seamons, Colleen

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Sent: Wednesday, 17 February 2010 4:50 PM
To: submissions
Subject: Submission regarding Proposal P1007 - Primary Production & Processing Requirements For Raw Milk Products

Categories: Blue Category

Submission regarding Proposal P1007 - Primary Production & Processing Requirements For Raw Milk Products

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Overarching questions:

1) The overarching scope of the Proposal is assessing the safety of raw milk products using the Category Framework. FSANZ has undertaken a Technical Assessment based on three Risk Assessments (Raw Cow Milk, Raw Goat Milk and Raw Milk Cheese), a Consumer Study and Nutrition Assessment – Can you identify any aspects we have not covered at this point?

The Proposals exaggerate the risks of raw milk products.

They state that “Because of the potential for raw milk to be contaminated with pathogens, raw milk and products made from raw milk present a high level of risk to public health and safety if there are no control measures to manage the microbiological hazards that may be present.”

It is a false assumption that the risks are “high level” for raw milk products. A more realistic description for raw milk products is “they present an *additional* risk to public health and safety compared with products made from correctly pasteurised milk”.

2) We have summarised the impacts by option in Table 1 in the Report. Do you have any comments on the overall assessment? Can you identify other benefits and costs to the affected parties?

For raw milk cheese, the overall assessment seems to be far more alarmist than the technical assessment suggests. I consider that the technical assessment indicates that all soft cheese should be placed in Category 2, reserving Category 3 for raw drinking milk alone.

Consumers:

3) Would Australian consumers benefit from a greater range of cheeses and dairy products? Please provide details.

I recently travelled to Europe and one of the things that impressed me most was the variety and availability of artesian cheese, including raw cheeses. As an amateur gourmet, I would relish the opportunity to easily obtain raw milk cheese, as I believe they will add a new and unique element to my cooking adventures. I also believe there is a growing demand in the market for goods that have been minimally processed, a category that includes raw milk cheeses.

4) FSANZ has received comments that raw milk cheeses are likely to be gourmet, high-end market products. Costs associated with ensuring the safety of products may also be passed on to the customer - if raw milk cheeses were permitted:

a. How much would you be willing to pay for such cheeses?

It is difficult to speculate upon price, but I would certainly be willing to pay higher than supermarket prices for raw cheese. This is particularly the case when I know I am buying from a smaller producer. The unique nature of these cheeses will make them worth the additional cost in my opinion. I don't believe these issues can be quantified on the basis of money alone.

b. Are you willing to pay more than the cost of current gourmet cheeses?

Yes. See above.

c. Are you prepared to pay more if there are added costs in ensuring the safety of raw milk products?

Yes - food safety is of course an important issue, but so long as correctly and strictly regulated I believe the added cost will be worth it.

d. Would you choose to purchase an Australian raw milk cheese over an imported equivalent?

Definitely. I am a firm believer in supporting local producers wherever possible.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

Kind regards,

Leah Currie