



Food Standards Australia New Zealand  
PO Box 7186  
Canberra BC ACT 2610

29 December 2013

**SUBMISSION** - Ref: Proposal P1022 – Primary Production & Processing requirements for Raw Milk Products

Dear Sir,

Please find below my submission in response to draft Proposal P1022 – Primary Production & Processing requirements for Raw Milk Products.

As a consumer of quality cheeses, I am strongly in favour of Option 1 – to permit raw milk products where reasonable safety outcomes (consistent with equivalent international standards) can be demonstrated.

I have just spent Christmas in New Zealand, during which time I have purchased unpasteurised cheese from Canterbury Cheesemongers, which was in turn imported from Neal's Yard Dairy in the UK. Both are long standing, successful businesses, providing customers with a great choice of both local and global cheeses of the best quality available.

Having been a long time consumer of unpasteurised cheeses in the UK, and occasional consumer in more recent times in New Zealand, the greater quality of these cheeses in terms of the expertise, artisan manufacture and greater quality, variety and length of taste is clear. Compared to New Zealand, Europe, UK and USA, the variety and quality of the cheese available in Australia is of a much lower standard. Part of this relates to the unavailability of most unpasteurised cheeses and very limited ability to use unpasteurised cheese in artisan cheese manufacture.

As a consumer, I cannot understand where countries such as the UK, most of Europe and even New Zealand, can allow the safe production and importation of raw milk cheeses, and yet Australia does not. Given New Zealand has had equal, if not more strict quarantine requirements than Australia over the years, I struggle to understand the rationale Australia can possibly still have to ban most unpasteurised cheeses. Outright protectionism appears to be the only logical justification, hidden behind a veil of other reasons.

Allowing the importation of artisan unpasteurised cheeses is unlikely to materially change the amount of artisan cheeses imported, just change the mix and improve the quality and variety available to consumers. Likewise, the cheese purchasing patterns of the general population of Australia are unlikely to move away from supermarket Tasty, etc.

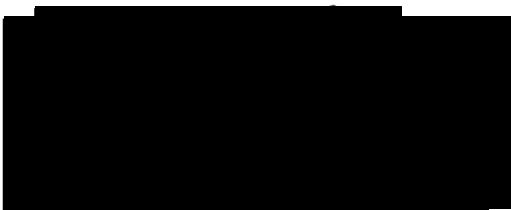
Allowing local Australian artisan cheese makers to use unpasteurised milk and develop their own cheese making skills will open up a new boutique market segment to support these small producers, in a similar way to those we have seen successfully develop in the UK and Europe, providing a point of differentiation for smaller producers and a great draw card for 'food tourists'. Given the great dairy resources and capability of Australia, surely it is time to blow away the cobwebs and catch-up with the rest of the World?

In summary, my submitted points for consideration are:

- Unpasteurised cheese offers greater variety and quality of taste to consumers
- Consumers in Australia should be able to experience the choice of cheese available to consumers in similar countries around the world
- If New Zealand can get its act together and allow the safe import/production of more unpasteurised cheese, why can't Australia?
- Protectionism is not a valid argument in today's globalised society.
- Allowing the importation of unpasteurised cheese would not materially change the pattern of import demand volumes, just change the mix and choice available to consumers.
- Allowing the production of more unpasteurised cheese would allow Australia's artisan cheese producers to catch-up with the rest of the world both in skills and developing food tourism.

Thank you for considering my submission as part of the public consultation process, I look forward to the remaining stages of the process with much interest, and hope that common sense and consumer choice will for once prevail over protectionism.

Yours faithfully,

A large black rectangular box redacting the signature of Alastair Pearson.

Alastair Pearson

A black rectangular box redacting contact information, likely a phone number and email address.