

Seamons, Colleen

From: Phillippa Grogan [phillippa@phillippas.com.au]
Sent: Tuesday, 23 February 2010 9:16 AM
To: submissions
Subject: raw milk cheese
Attachments: Submission regarding Proposal P1007.doc

Categories: Blue Category

Please find enclosed and attached my submission;

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

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.

Off course . Why should we not have the same choice and range of cheeses available to us as the rest of the western world? The more we are exposed to (good imported cheeses) in Australia, the more creative and inspired our dairy industry can become in the future with Australian made products. It also allows Australian cuisine and restaurant chefs to further develop by being less restricted by a limited range. There are huge benefits to the creative food sector, in having a larger range of exceptional ingredients available. (imported or local)

- 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?

Cheese that I purchase are usually \$80-\$110 per kg. I would prefer not to eat cheese than to eat cheese which lacks complexity.

b. Are you willing to pay more than the cost of current gourmet cheeses?
If the quality is there, off course. I sometimes pay \$550 per kg for Spanish Jamon.

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

Yes as long as the flavour and quality are present in the more expensive cheese. It is not a given that just because cheese is made with raw milk, it is great cheese. It still has to be made well. But in my experience all of my most memorable cheeses have been raw except Colston Bassett Stilton

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

If it really was equivalent in quality I would absolutely prefer to buy local Australian made products, which I believe are generally fresher, cleaner and in buying them I would be boosting the Australian Economy. I am very disappointed that at present this is not possible and I am of course purchasing a few imported cheese which currently are allowable raw milk cheese and far superior in complexity of flavour and in character,

Regards

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Many thanks for your co-operation.