

RAW MILK FACTS

FACTS ABOUT RAW AND PASTEURIZED MILK:

- Raw milk from pasture-fed dairy herds is highly nutritious and has many health benefits.
- Raw milk is a specialty food in growing demand from health conscious consumers.
- Not all raw milk is alike. Pre-pasteurized milk produced by conventional methods can contain pathogens and should be pasteurized before drinking. In contrast, raw milk produced using methods intended for direct consumption is clean and safe to drink. “Best practices” prevent contamination and keep bacteria from growing.
- Raw milk from pasture-fed herds contains valuable nutrients such as Omega 3 fatty acids, lactoferrin, calcium, phosphatase (the enzyme that transports calcium to the bones), and Vitamins A, B-12, and D.
- Pasteurization is not a guarantee of safety. In 1998, 75 people in BC got sick from *Yersinia pseudotuberculosis* in pasteurized milk. Since 1966, pasteurized dairy has caused 155 reported outbreaks in the U.S. resulting in about 154,000 illnesses, 282 hospitalizations, and 82 deaths.

RAW MILK AVAILABILITY IN OTHER COUNTRIES:

- Raw milk is legally available in many other nations including England, New Zealand, France, Italy, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark.
- Raw milk is legally available in 43 American states via retail and farm-gate sales, private buying clubs, and herdshares. Consumers in the 7 remaining states obtain it from food co-ops and buying clubs which source it from out-of-state farms.
- This is a niche dairy product, not a “fringe” product: Organic Pastures Dairy sells over a million gallons of raw milk per year in over 700 grocery stores in California and is now the #1 brand of milk (by dollar volume) sold at Sprouts. According to a 2018 FSA survey, 10% of the population of England, Wales, and Northern Ireland drink raw milk (up from 3% in 2012) — that’s over 6 million raw milk consumers. Eleven percent of the population of Vermont consumes it.
- BC is bordered by three U.S. states where herdshares are legal by state law. In Washington State, they are licensed and inspected. In Idaho they are registered with the state. Alaska state regulations recognize that citizens have a legal right to obtain milk from animals that they own.
- Many British Columbians purchase raw milk when cross-border shopping at any of over 100 grocery stores and 38 licensed farms which sell it in Washington State. BC’s Ministry of Health confirms that this is perfectly legal.

For more information, contact the B.C. Herdshare Association.

Website: www.bcherdshare.org. Email: contact@bcherdshare.org

RAW MILK AND FOOD SAFETY:

- Legalization of grass-fed microdairy herdshares will not result in increased numbers of disease outbreaks. Reviewing current U.S. data, outbreak rates do NOT increase with legalization.
- The Raw Milk Institute's Risk Analysis and Management Planning (RAMP) on-farm food safety system effectively trains farmers in the production methods for clean, pathogen-free fresh milk.
- The BC Herdshare Association provides free training in RAWMI's RAMP system.
- International quantitative microbiological risk assessment (QMRA studies) prove that raw milk can be a low-risk food.

RAW MILK LAWS IN BC:

- The original *Milk Industry Act* (1955) allowed certified farms to sell raw milk.
- The regulation defining all raw milk as a "health hazard" was created in 1988 without public consultation. It wrongly assumes that all raw milk is the same.
- Raw milk distribution is now punishable under the *Public Health Act* by a fine of up to \$3,000,000 or 3 years jail.
- Prohibition and the "black market" it created does not protect public health. Consumers are desperate and will buy raw milk of unknown quality from anyone who may sell it.
- While most commercial farmers drink their own raw milk and some also sell it illegally, many may fear the competition of herdshares once legalized.
- True herdshares do not sell raw milk. They are not "private buying clubs" or "herd-leasing" operations. In a herdshare, a group of consumers legally owns a herd of meat and dairy animals, in order to enjoy the products from their animals. These livestock owners hire farmers as agisters to board and care for their animals.

LEGALIZING HERDSHARES IN BC:

- As herdshares don't sell raw milk, they can be legalized provincially without changing the federal law which bans the sale of raw milk.
- Other provinces have laws regulating raw dairy products that differ from Federal law, so BC could as well. Example: Quebec law allows raw milk cheeses aged less than 60 days to be produced and sold, whereas Federal law specifies a 60 day aging period.
- The Raw Milk Institute requires training, on-farm food safety plans, and bacterial testing standards for all of RAWMI-listed farmers. The modern alternative to the current state of prohibition in BC is for government to pass a regulation requiring a certification program based on RAWMI standards.
- British Columbians are not asking for federal law to change to legalize sales. We are asking that BC regulations be changed to legalize and register herdshares, so that livestock co-owners can legally access safe, nutritious, fresh products from their own animals.