

Seamons, Colleen

From: Myriam Thibault [myriamthi@hotmail.com]
Sent: Friday, 5 March 2010 7:18 AM
To: submissions
Subject: Proposals (P1007) to change Australian Food Standards for cheese in Australia

Categories: Blue Category

Good morning,

Here's my submission for your raw milk cheese enquiry:

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.

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

Having a greater choice of quality produce is always a good thing for consumers, especially if that means a wider range of flavours showcasing the variety of Australian "terroirs".

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? I wouldn't be able to mention a specific price, but I'd be willing to pay a premium for sure. Quality product has a price, you just buy less of it.
- b. Are you willing to pay more than the cost of current gourmet cheeses? yes
- c. Are you prepared to pay more if there are added costs in ensuring the safety of raw milk products? yes
- d. Would you choose to purchase an Australian raw milk cheese over an imported equivalent? yes, although I'd probably keep on buying both because they'd be different, and as such equally interesting

Kind regards,

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