

Seamons, Colleen

From: Gail and Rob [blonderex@bigpond.com]
Sent: Tuesday, 2 September 2008 1:27 PM
To: submissions
Subject: P1007 Raw Milk Products.
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Dear Food Standards;

I am writing this as a consumer of many types of cheese and as a recently retired Dairy Engineer. Australia has been well served by the existing prohibition of the manufacture and sale of raw milk products. During my 21 years as a dairy engineer for one of Australia's leading dairy Co-Operatives with manufacturing plants in 4 states and one territory I have seen some of the bacterial problems that can occur from time to time with the best safety systems in place and under the current pasteurisation standards. I have designed high volume milk pasteurisers to the present standard and automatic CIP systems. There is always something that can go wrong regardless of standards in place and written operating procedures. Plant malfunction and human error are the two most common.

Regardless of whatever standards and regulations that could be enacted to try to make raw milk products safe, they can never guarantee 100% safety of the product on the market. There will always be incidents where something goes wrong and unsafe product is produced. If raw milk products are to be made and sold in Australia, I would like the regulations to include a with-holding time and then retesting to guarantee that the product is free of pathogens and any harmful contamination. This may not be possible with all types of fresh cheeses so they would have to continue with pasteurised milk. Another worry is the proliferation of small boutique specialty cheese manufacturers. They do not have the bacterial laboratory facilities and suitably qualified staff to guarantee their raw milk product is safe. Again if raw milk products are to be made, then each manufacturer must have approved laboratories and personnel in place. Annual recertification with on site inspection should be mandatory. **No tic box form to be mailed back.**

Just because Europeans do things differently is not a valid reason to compromise Australia's food safety, which is seen here and around the world as good or better. If we must follow the milk and milk safety practices of other countries, I personally, would be much more comfortable using the USA and Canadian standards as a guide than the Europeans. I would much prefer that Australian Standards were written by Australians with the best qualifications and experience in dairy product safety. Also they should do this with public safety foremost in their minds and not the winging of the so called "Cheese Elite".

Trusting your decisions will be made in the best interests of the majority of Australians.

Yours faithfully

Robert G Stewart.