

Wholesale Distributor

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To FSANZ
Submission For Raw Milk
Proposal P1007

Submitted by Dianne Vickery, Proprietor of Cheese Please in Byron Bay
I have been in the food industry since graduating from secondary school.
I started as a qualified chef 32 years ago and have a very keen interest in keeping food clean, and natural, and safe.

Cheese Please is a distributor of cheese and dairy in the Northern Rivers region of New South Wales. Over the past 4 years I have listened to the preferences of the dairy consuming public and I have my own professional views to include in this submission. I travel widely to educate myself on this subject, because I love cheese.

Raw milk cheese making is the most natural way to make real live food which maximises the benefits of nutrition and strengthens the immune system, it is an age old tradition, a practice we should not loose in the haste of the fast life and the sterile environment which we live in.

There is a place for raw milk cheese in our food chain, as there are specialists in the industry who operate independently from the mainstream supermarket style of shop. We need to provide an alternative to the supermarket direction which we are heading in and encourage people to source food locally. If we encourage more local artisans of dairy and other food specialities it brings health back into the local food chain.

This is where raw milk fits into our food chain. It is highly regarded by alternative health people and gourmet people, which are intelligent active people in our communities. We should allow some small artisan producers to make raw milk cheese to be sold on location, or within the shire of it's origin. Allow accredited raw milk farmhouse cheese makers to operate and create another speciality for this great food nation. Create food destinations for gourmand's to travel, enhance our local tourism industry.

I currently sell a lot of raw goats milk, I have to manage it very efficiently, as it has only 7 days shelf life. The whole supply chain is passionate about the quality and freshness right down to the customers who are very conscientious about buying early in the week, and never a litre is wasted. This market is not main stream as is this product. It is highly regarded by the health industry who care about the properties of natural food, this group is substantial and growing rapidly.

This market is so passionate about raw milk they even go to the effort of herd sharing, There seem to be ways of getting around the law to get what one feels is their natural right to drink fresh unadulterated milk. It would be safer if there were regulations to manage this small section of the community who for health and other natural reasons would prefer to be drinking natural milk

In Australia we have a Certified Organic Industry, which is growing enormously due to the value people are putting on natural foods. The quality food industry is getting back to nature and eliminating unnecessary additives and processes, which detract from the nutritional benefits of natural food. We could have a certified raw milk industry operating under regulation. Make Australia a food destination for the world.

I have requests from chefs asking for imported raw milk cheese. They wish to make particular dishes, which contain imported cheese made from raw milk, which is not available in Australia. These are a small percentage of highly qualified professionals who take great care of their ingredients and operate with a high level of food handling practise.

We need **national** standards on all food related legislation, **national** labelling standards, which are informative and consistent We need to be continually looking at ways of raising the quality of food standards and not be guided by large companies who have their own interest as their motivation.

Conclusion

It is evident that a small percentage of cheese makers in Australia would like to produce raw milk cheese for the benefits of flavour, health and tradition. I would like to see a set of industry guidelines and education available to enable them to achieve world class standards of cheese making. Australia is renowned for producing high quality food and at present there are limitations.

Certification is one way of regulating the industry, as safe food is good food, and we need our producers to operate with the utmost of integrity Our organic industry has achieved this and there is a whole industry created by the regulatory process, and specialised shops and markets catering specifically for it.

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