

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

By Samara McIlroy
Document Management Consultant, Visual Artist, Home Cheese-maker
2/33 Darcy St SOUTH HOBART TAS 7004
0424 955 447
samara.mcilroy@gmail.com

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.

Absolutely. Of the myriad varieties of cheese made all over the world, very few are sold here. Even fewer are sold in our supermarkets. As a consequence, your average consumer has no idea how good cheese tastes.

When choosing to eat raw milk products, I would like to be made aware of the dangers. However, ultimately, it is my choice. I do believe that there are health benefits to drinking raw milk, and eating raw milk products.

Standards will make provision for "adequate information relating to food to enable consumers to make informed choices", but no-one is suggesting that the current crop of mass-produced, over-processed and bland cheese sold in Australian supermarkets should be labelled to assist in making an "informed choice", are they!

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?

Around \$7.50 per 100g would be the maximum

b. Are you willing to pay more than the cost of current gourmet cheeses?

No, and I don't see why there should be extra costs. Anyone who is in the business of cheese-making and selling has already had to meet stringent health requirements. It is an extremely clean process.

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

Definitely. I prefer to buy local, or Australian made, where possible.