

KAMFES
PO Box 1464
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Pasteurization of Raw Milk

The Kentucky Association of Milk, Food, and Environmental Sanitarians supports the position that all milk and milk products offered for sale or public consumption must be pasteurized in an approved and permitted facility that complies with all state, federal, and local regulations. The term “sale” may include any transaction that relates to selling, offering for sale, holding for sale, preparing for sale, distributing, dispensing, delivering, supplying, trading, bartering, leases, lease or trade agreements, trades, donations, offering as a gift as an inducement for sale of, and advertising for sale in any media. Since raw milk may contain human pathogens, the consumption of raw milk and raw milk products increases the risks of gastrointestinal illness due to the likelihood that it may contain infective doses. The only proven methods shown to be reliable in reducing the level of human pathogens in raw milk and raw milk products are by those milk products being produced and processed under sanitary conditions and by an approved pasteurization process. Some raw milk products may undergo processing, which includes the use of time as an effective means of eliminating harmful bacteria (i.e. cheeses that are processed for 60 days).

It has been claimed that pasteurization destroys certain enzymes present in milk. Fortunately, naturally occurring enzymes are present in human bodies and we do not use animal enzymes to metabolize calcium and other nutrients. The pasteurization process allows milk to be heated to certain temperatures for a controlled amount of time to allow for the destruction of certain harmful organisms that may affect individual health. These organisms are of particular concern for the young, the elderly, and for people who experience problems with their immune system. There are many different ways in which raw milk produced by animals may become contaminated. Animals routinely shed bacteria in their intestines that will not make them sick, but may cause illness in individuals who consume that milk or eat milk products processed from the contaminated source. Data and documentation support that raw milk and raw milk products may contain the following organisms: Campylobacter, Salmonella, E. coli O157:H7, Yersinia, Listeria, Mycobacterium, Brucella, Staphylococcus, Coxiella, and Cryptosporidium.

Recent confirmed outbreaks attributed to the consumption of raw milk and raw milk products have increased across the United States. Thirty-one states have confirmed raw milk outbreaks, including states that regulate the sale of raw milk to the general public.

Without a process to destroy these potentially life-threatening disease causing bacteria many individuals may become ill, experiencing some if not all of these symptoms: bloody diarrhea, kidney failure, vomiting, severe headaches, high fevers, tuberculosis, pneumonia, meningitis, blood, heart, and liver infections, and in some cases miscarriages.

As a Public Health Association, KAMFES is charged with enforcing existing regulations and ensuring that future regulations protect the public and provide a safe food supply. Therefore, we support current legislation that requires pasteurization of milk products and are opposed to any legislation that would weaken that requirement.

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References related to this subject may be found in the following sources:

- Dairy Division of National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
Raw Milk Survey-November, 2004
- FDA/CFSAN – M-I-03-4 Sale/Consumption of Raw Milk-Position Statement
March, 2003 <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~ear/mi-03-4.html>
- Neil Chamberlain's Medical Microbiology Website
<http://www.kcom.edu/faculty/chamberlain/>

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Presiding Officer: Matthew T. Rhodes