

## **Preserve MA Dairy Farms – Support Raw Milk Sales!**

**Help protect food choice in Massachusetts.** Massachusetts raw milk farmers have proven that they can produce a safe, clean, healthy product, and Massachusetts consumers have demonstrated a strong demand for it.

Raw milk farmers in at least eight U.S. states – including Connecticut and Maine – are allowed to sell their milk in grocery stores. Many other states allow farmers to deliver milk to customers. By allowing expanded markets for raw milk, states are better able to monitor and regulate raw milk sales and keep it from developing into an underground market. This helps ensure the safety of raw milk.

### **IS RAW MILK SAFE?**

**Yes.** Massachusetts raw milk farmers have proven that they can produce and distribute raw milk safely. Any food product has the ability to harbor pathogens, but those pathogens are not part of the food itself – they are introduced via poor handling of the product. Raw milk is not inherently unsafe, any more so than pasteurized milk, spinach, peanut butter or poultry, all of which have been sources for recent food borne illness outbreaks.

### **HOW DO WE ENSURE THAT RAW MILK IS SAFE?**

The Massachusetts Department of Agriculture has set standards that raw milk must meet, and inspects the farms and the milk every month. **Raw milk sold to consumers must meet the same standards of bacteria and coliform testing as pasteurized milk sold in grocery stores.**

### **HOW DO RAW MILK FARMERS KEEP THEIR PRODUCT SAFE?**

Raw milk farmers meet these stringent guidelines by keeping very clean facilities, by keeping their animals healthy, by employing sustainable and healthy management methods such as grazing, and by keeping the inventory of milk they have for sale fresh – often selling milk that came out of the cow the same day. And the food chain is very short and simple – from the cow to the tank to the bottle to the cooler for customers to purchase. By eliminating many of the steps that happen with most food products – mixing the milk with milk from other farms, trucking it from the farm to the plant and the plant to the store, running it through numerous machines – there are far fewer opportunities for pathogens to accidentally be introduced to raw milk.

Pasteurization became necessary decades ago, when some dairy farmers were employing management methods that allowed their milk to become unsafe. With the advent of refrigeration, management methods that emphasize herd health, stainless steel equipment, and other sanitation methods, pasteurization is not always necessary to ensure the safety of milk. Raw milk farmers are committed to making clean milk by paying attention to the entire production chain, beginning with how they build their herd all the way through how they bottle and store the milk for sale, rather than counting on a single process at the end to eliminate any problems created earlier.

### **WHY DO PEOPLE WANT TO DRINK RAW MILK?**

Consumers are demanding more and more local, fresh and unprocessed foods in general. They say that raw milk tastes better. Many place a premium on knowing that they are supporting a local farmer. And many raw milk drinkers point out that unpasteurized milk is a more ‘complete’ food than milk that has been pasteurized, a process that kills many vitamins, minerals, enzymes and beneficial bacteria that make milk such a healthy product.

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**For more information, see [www.marawmilk.org](http://www.marawmilk.org), or contact [winton@nofamass.org](mailto:winton@nofamass.org), 413-634-5728.**