



News Release

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"Connecting Cows, Cooperatives, Capitol Hill, and Consumers"

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NMPF: New Study from the CDC Offers Powerful Argument Against Efforts to Ease Restrictions on Raw Milk Consumption

ARLINGTON, VA – The National Milk Producers Federation said today a new food safety study from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention presents a powerful argument against efforts to ease restrictions on the sale of raw milk to consumers.

According to the [study](#), which will appear in the January 2015 issue of the CDC journal *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, the average number of foodborne illness outbreaks associated with drinking unpasteurized milk has more than quadrupled in recent years, as states approved more laws allowing retail sale of raw milk.

From 2007 to 2012, the study reported 81 raw milk-associated foodborne illness outbreaks nationwide, or an average of 13 per year. The outbreaks, which sickened nearly 1,000 people and sent 73 to the hospital, were concentrated in states where raw milk sales are legal.

By contrast, an earlier study, covering 1993 to 2006, found an average of only three foodborne illness outbreaks per year associated with raw milk consumption.

"The more raw milk that is available to people, the more people become sick; the connection is crystal clear," said Beth Briczinski, NMPF's vice president for dairy foods and nutrition. "Since 2004, eight more states have allowed raw milk sales, and food-borne illnesses associated with raw milk consumption have increased."

"In the face of these findings," Briczinski added, "state and federal regulators and legislators must resist pressure from those seeking to make raw milk more accessible. Caving in to their demands will translate into more illnesses, more hospital visits, more state resources spent investigating outbreaks, and more lives harmed from consuming raw milk."

Raw milk is not subject to the pasteurization process, which kills pathogens that can cause illness and death. Among the pathogens found in raw milk are *Salmonella*, *E. coli* and

– More –

Campylobacter. Sales of raw milk are not permitted in interstate commerce, and both the CDC and the Food and Drug Administration recommend against consuming unpasteurized milk.

But retail sales of raw milk are now legal in 30 states, while 10 more states allow consumers to obtain raw milk by paying a farmer to help care for a cow in return for a percentage of the milk the cow produces. In addition, legislation was introduced in Congress this year to lift the ban on raw milk sales in interstate commerce.

NMPF has led the dairy industry in vigorously opposing efforts to make raw milk more accessible to consumers, either through changes in laws or regulations. NMPF noted that the new CDC report provides credible evidence of the real-world consequences of ignoring a century's worth of public health progress.

"Consuming raw milk is like playing Russian roulette with your health," said Briczinski. "It is especially dangerous for children and seniors. The last thing any state or the federal government should do is encourage consumers to consume raw dairy products by legalizing their sale."

The food poisoning outbreaks found in the latest study from the CDC accounted for about five percent of all foodborne illness outbreaks from a known source from 2007 to 2012. More than 80 percent of the outbreaks occurred in states where selling raw milk is legal. The most common pathogen involved was *Campylobacter*. The study is available on the CDC website now.

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The National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF), based in Arlington, VA, develops and carries out policies that advance the well being of dairy producers and the cooperatives they own. The members of NMPF's cooperatives produce the majority of the U.S. milk supply, making NMPF the voice of more than 32,000 dairy producers on Capitol Hill and with government agencies. For more on NMPF's activities, visit our website at www.nmpf.org.