

Dairy Producer Organizations OPPOSE Raw Milk Amendment #30

Prevent Increased Foodborne Illness; Keep Consumers Safe

May 17, 2018

The Honorable Paul D. Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan and Minority Leader Pelosi:

Due to the significant public health risks associated with the consumption of raw milk, the undersigned dairy farmer cooperatives and associations from across the U.S. respectfully urge you to **strongly oppose Amendment 30** to the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018 (H.R. 2), offered by Rep. Thomas Massie (KY-04). The amendment is designed to allow the interstate sale of unpasteurized (raw) milk and milk products, removing existing regulations prohibiting their direct sale. Every major health organization in the U.S. has opposed consumption of raw milk and milk products, including the American Medical Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Consumption of raw milk has demonstrated public health risks. The link between raw milk and foodborne illness has been well-documented in scientific literature, with evidence spanning nearly 100 years. Raw milk is a key vehicle in the transmission of human pathogens, including *E. coli* O157:H7, *Campylobacter*, *Listeria monocytogenes*, and *Salmonella*.

Based on a 2012 report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), between 1993 and 2006, unpasteurized dairy products resulted in 73 known outbreaks – causing 1,571 cases of foodborne illness, 202 hospitalizations, and 2 deaths. Most recently, analyzing data collected between 2009 and 2014, researchers recently concluded that **unpasteurized milk is 840 times more likely to cause foodborne illness** than pasteurized milk, and such illnesses have a hospitalization rate 45 times higher than those involving pasteurized dairy products.

Moreover, the CDC has reported that nearly 75% of raw milk-associated outbreaks have occurred in states where the sale of raw milk was legal. Eliminating the regulations that currently prohibit the interstate sale of raw milk in the United States would increase the risk to public health, exposing consumers nationwide to the inevitable consequence of falling victim to a foodborne illness. No matter how carefully it is produced, raw milk is inherently dangerous. Americans have become ill after consuming raw milk obtained from farms of all sizes, from cow-share programs, and from licensed, permitted, or certified raw milk producers.

Nearly two-thirds of all outbreaks associated with raw milk or raw milk products involve children and nearly half of outbreaks involve a child younger than five years old. For example, in 2011, five children in California were infected with *E. coli* O157:H7 after drinking raw milk;

three required hospitalization with hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS), a devastating condition that can lead to permanent kidney failure. At a school event in Wisconsin, also in 2011, sixteen fourth grade students and adults who drank raw milk donated by a parent later suffered from diarrhea, abdominal cramping, nausea, and vomiting from *Campylobacter* infections. It is the responsibility of America's leaders to make decisions to protect the health of the public, most especially children who are unable to make fully informed choices – choices that can have profound harmful consequences for the rest of their lives.

One critical aspect of this high-profile issue is the tremendous amount of mythology and misinformation that has been disseminated regarding the supposed health benefits of raw milk. **No claim related to the health benefits of consuming raw milk has been substantiated in any medical literature.** Rather, the scientific consensus is that raw milk causes serious illnesses and hospitalizations, and results in life-long negative health complications and death.

Nationally, our dairy industry benefits from a very high degree of consumer confidence – confidence built in large part due to the excellent food safety record of milk and dairy products. Current statistics estimate only 1-2% of reported foodborne outbreaks are attributed to dairy products. However, of those, over 70% have been attributed to raw milk and raw milk cheeses.

In a 2007 report, the CDC concluded that “State milk regulations and methods for their enforcement should be reviewed and strengthened to minimize the hazards of raw milk.” Allowing the sale of raw milk or any raw milk product through Amendment 30 to H.R. 2 would be a step in the opposite direction.

To allow the interstate sale of raw milk and milk products is an unnecessary risk to consumer safety and public health. Therefore, we strongly oppose Amendment 30 to H.R. 2.

Sincerely,

Agri-Mark, Inc.
American Association of Bovine Practitioners
Associated Milk Producers, Inc.
Bongards' Creameries
California Dairies, Inc.
Colorado Dairy Farmers
Cooperative Milk Producers Association
Cortland Bulk Milk Producers Cooperative
Dairy Farmers of America, Inc.
Dairy Producers of Utah
Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative
Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery
FarmFirst Dairy Cooperative
First District Association
Foremost Farms USA
Idaho Dairymen's Association
Illinois Milk Producers' Association

Iowa State Dairy Association
Land O'Lakes, Inc.
Lone Star Milk Producers
Maryland & Virginia Milk Producers Cooperative Association
Michigan Milk Producers Association
Midwest Dairy Coalition
Mid-West Dairymen's Company
Milk Producers Council
Minnesota Milk Producers Association
Missouri Dairy Industry Alliance
Mount Joy Farmers Cooperative Association
National All-Jersey
National Milk Producers Federation
Nebraska State Dairy Association
Northeast Dairy Farmers Cooperatives
Northwest Dairy Association
Ohio Dairy Producers Association
Oneida-Madison Milk Producers Cooperative Association
Oregon Dairy Farmers Association
Prairie Farms Dairy, Inc.
Premier Milk Inc.
Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania
Scioto Cooperative Milk Producers Association
Select Milk Producers, Inc.
South Dakota Dairy Producers Association
South East Dairy Farmers Association
Southeast Milk, Inc.
St. Albans Cooperative Creamery, Inc.
Texas Association of Dairymen
Tillamook County Creamery Association
United Dairymen of Arizona
Upstate Niagara Cooperative, Inc.
Virginia State Dairymen's Association
Western United Dairymen
Wisconsin Dairy Products Association
Zia Milk Producers, Inc.