

Raw Milk, Warm Deal

After extensive public consultation, the Minister for Food Safety has announced a new policy on the production and sale of raw milk (from any milking animal) to consumers. From 1 March 2016, raw milk can be sold directly from the farmer to consumers either at the farm or via home deliveries provided suppliers meet certain criteria – *Ministry of Primary Industries*

Electric refrigeration arrived over 80 years ago in New Zealand and surely today, regardless of your income, wealth or lack thereof, there is a fridge in your house. The common-sense and reliance on that old “ice box” is something we all take for granted and naturally anticipate one and all (*even elected officials*) to understand the merits of chilling food to avoid bacterial growth or decay in raw, or cooked products ready for consumption.

Understandable, it therefore is not, that the *heavily industry-lobbied* Government has declared that instead of making raw milk available in licenced premises (*like supermarkets*) next to the other similar *dangerous goods* such as cigarettes and alcohol, alternatively, the Government has set itself a task of colluding to ostracise what is clearly an established market, and what threatens to potentially take a very miniscule percent of the overall milk industry revenue and profit.

Having already made off-limits safe licenced premises for raw milk to be sold (*like supermarkets and dairies*), a while ago people were forced to form Milk Clubs, which for some reason reminds me of an era of Doo Wop, Dilly Dilly, Swing and Rockabilly.

In the latest attack on the freedoms of raw milk drinking New Zealanders, instead of continuing to deliver the milk from a refrigerated delivery truck to the “Milk Club” refrigerated drop-off points, where families and individuals can collect their dangerous goods, now the Government is proposing to do away with intermediate refrigeration and force the already busy farmer to become like a traditional “milk-man” of old, trawling the streets to deliver the milk to households directly.

Notwithstanding the utter waste of a consumers time and resources in travelling up to 100 kms in a round-trip, the alternative method of procuring said dangerous goods is direct from the farm gate, which, given the Governments concern about carbon emissions and global warming, not to mention unrefrigerated transportation of the dangerous raw product, it creates somewhat of a paradox against which I have always been taught to be cautious.

By potentially eliminating safe modern refrigeration from the delivery equation, is the Government attempting to create a raw milk health crises to *finally* have some justification for clamping down on this wayward obsession of a few raw milk nutters that must threaten not only the fabric of society but also the well-being of all those who have not been vaccinated against raw milk?

Does raw milk have to kill off 5,000 New Zealanders per year¹ (*smoking and passive smoking*), or up to 1,000 New Zealanders per year² (*alcohol related causes*), or cause our Police to deal with 124,000 incidents per year² (*alcohol-related*), (*all of which the financial implications are counted in the 100s of millions of taxpayer dollars*), before it will be allowed to sell itself in supermarkets?

In comparison, the proposal of the Government today to eliminate the current safe delivery of raw milk to secure modern refrigerators, will increase by 100-fold the potential for contaminated raw milk to be consumed by families and individuals in the future, and therefore indicates that the suggested *danger* raw milk poses to lives in our society might appear to be a rort in the machination of the Government approach on this matter.

Please note, this a concern about maintaining regular safe delivery, not on the new safety regulations surrounding the production and supply of raw milk, procedures to avoid faecal contamination, testing of all cattle in New Zealand for TB, or new rules regarding the labelling of products.

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¹ Smoking kills 5,000 New Zealanders every year, Health Sponsorship Council, February 2009

² Alcohol Quick Facts, Alcohol Advisory Council of New Zealand, November 2010