

251 Sir Frederick Banting Driveway  
Tunney's Pasture,  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0K9

November 22, 2017

[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your correspondence of November 7, 2017, regarding the sale of raw (unpasteurized) milk in Canada. A copy of your correspondence was forwarded to Health Canada's Food Directorate for direct reply.

Historically, the consumption of raw milk has resulted in numerous outbreaks of foodborne disease caused by pathogenic bacteria such as *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter*, *Brucella*, *Yersinia* and *Listeria*. These bacteria can cause serious health conditions, ranging from fever, vomiting, and diarrhea, to life-threatening kidney failure, miscarriage, and death. Vulnerable populations such as the elderly, pregnant women, individuals with a weakened immune system, and young children are at greater risk of illness from the consumption of raw milk. Milk is an important food in a balanced diet for Canadians. It is also a beverage of choice for young children and pregnant women. Therefore, it is important to pasteurize milk

In 1991, a regulatory amendment to the *Food and Drug Regulations* was brought into force that prohibits the sale of raw or unpasteurized milk. This amendment provides a regulatory safeguard against milk-borne illness by implementing a uniform control measure across Canada. This measure resulted in a significant reduction in the number of outbreaks since its implementation. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the National Dairy Council, and the Dairy Farmers of Canada have expressed support to ban the sale of raw milk.

Outbreaks of illnesses related to the consumption of raw milk continue to be reported, including in countries where there are allowances for the sale of raw milk. While some U.S. states allow for the sale or distribution of raw milk from dairies that implemented rigorous quality control programs including Good Manufacturing Practices, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continues to report foodborne illness outbreaks associated with raw milk. The Deputy Director, Division of Foodborne, Waterborne and Environmental Diseases from the CDC sent a letter to State and

Territorial epidemiologists and State public health veterinarians recommending that State regulators should continue to support pasteurization and consider further restriction or prohibition on the sale and distribution of raw milk in their State due to the ongoing public health hazard that it represents to the consumers.

There is no evidence that raw milk is nutritionally better or presents a health benefit over pasteurized milk. The potential consequences of consuming raw milk on our health far outweigh its potential health benefit. With all of the above, the Health Canada remains of the opinion that the current regulations that prohibit the sale of raw milk are necessary to protect the health of Canadians.

I hope that my comments are helpful in explaining our position.

Thank you for writing.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karen McIntyre', written in a cursive style.

Karen McIntyre  
Director General, Food Directorate