

General Circular

General Circular 06/2014

Raw milk – a reminder to all dairy production licensees of their obligations

The recent cases of serious food borne illness in Victoria, including a death, due to the consumption of raw milk highlights the risks associated with the commercial supply of raw milk products for human consumption - particularly to young children, pregnant woman, the elderly and infirm people.

Raw milk provides an ideal environment for a range of pathogenic organisms which can cause illness, and as seen in the cases earlier this month, potentially even death.

This incident serves as a reminder for all dairy primary production businesses to be aware of their obligations in regards to the production and sale of milk and milk products.

The sale of raw milk for human consumption is illegal in Australia as they could contain harmful bacteria such as *E.coli*, *Salmonella* and *Listeria*. The heat treatment of milk by pasteurisation is required by the Australian New Zealand Food Standards Code before these products are sold.

The Food Regulation 2010 states:

- A person must not sell (including sell by retail) a dairy product for human consumption unless the product has been processed in accordance with the processing requirements specified in clause 15 (Processing of milk and dairy products) and clause 16 (Processing of dairy products to make cheese and cheese products) of Standard 4.2.4 - *Primary Production and Processing Standard for Dairy* of the Food Standards Code. A summary of both clauses are summarised below.

Licensed dairy farmers must ensure they do not sell or supply raw milk to any individual or business for the purpose of human consumption unless they can be assured that the milk will be pasteurised as required by the Food Regulation 2010. Farmers that supply raw milk without this assurance are committing an offence and are placing their business at considerable risk of possible enforcement action being taken against them.

The Food Authority recognises that it is normal practice for licensed dairy farmers to consume their own raw milk. The concern lies with the further supply, packaging and distribution of raw milk to consumers for commercial sale which significantly increases the food safety risks associated with this product and must be avoided.

Please direct any enquires to:

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Further information can be found at www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au