



Considerations When Selling Unpasteurized (Raw) Milk

Introduction

The demand for unpasteurized (raw) milk, in particular from pastured and grass-fed cow, is increasing in both the Commonwealth and across the country. At this point in time, raw milk sales in Massachusetts are legal only through the direct sale from the farm in which it was produced.

Farms selling raw milk must also first comply with state regulations. The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) is the main regulatory agency that governs the sales and distribution of raw milk. However, on the local level, towns and cities have the authority to enforce the policy.

All farmers selling raw milk must register with MDAR, regardless of the quantity sold. A “Dairy Farm Certificate of Registration” will be given to the farm as validation of compliance. Farms selling retail raw milk must also obtain a vendor’s license from the nearest appointed milk inspector just like in the case of any dairy selling raw milk to pasteurization plants. MDAR keeps a close watch on the raw milk licensees, regularly inspecting the operations.

Regulations

Prior to starting the sale of raw milk, it is advised to review the following Massachusetts’ Regulations at www.mass.gov/agr/legal/regs/

- [330 CMR 27.00](#) Standards and Sanitation Requirements for Grade A Raw Milk
- [330 CMR 28.00](#) Milk and Milk Products
- [331 CMR 7.00](#) Determination of Milk Fat Content in Milk or Cream
- [330 CMR 21.00](#) Supervision of Milk Pricing and Supply

Because towns and cities may establish, amend, or repeal rules and regulations for the handling and sale of milk, it is suggested that farmers work with their local Board of Health to ensure that they are complying with the most current regulations. A list of Board of Health’s contacts can be found through the [Massachusetts Health Officers Association](#).

Once you decide to sell raw milk to the public, you need to consider the following:

- Cleanliness is of utmost importance. Always properly sanitize milking equipment. It is advised to use an automatic milking machine since it is considered a safer handling process as compared to hand milking.

- Storage of milk should be below 40 degree F. Transport should also be below 40 degrees F.
- On-farm testing of milk on a daily basis. There are test kits available to test somatic cell counts and also for antibiotic drug residues. This data should be recorded and always available for the consumer to examine.
- Send milk samples to an independent milk lab to compare readings to your on-farm test results.
- Investigate your market audience to determine your use of Bovine Growth Hormone (rBGH) or other hormones in your herd. If you plan on selling your milk as organic or hormone free, you may want to explore alternative herd health treatments instead of the use of antibiotics and do not use rBGH.
- Test your herd for tuberculosis, brucellosis, Johnes and Bovine Leukemia Virus (BVD); also In particular, test all new animals coming into the herd. Herd records should also be available to the consumer at any time.
- Check with your legal adviser to see if you should have customers sign a legal waiver agreeing to hold the farm harmless for any illness caused by drinking your raw milk.
- Farmers complying with MDAR regulations must have a label on all of their bottles reading ""Raw milk is not pasteurized. Pasteurization destroys organisms that may be harmful to human health." A sign with this language must also be posted in the area where the milk is being sold. The FDA's position is that "Raw milk, no matter how carefully produced, may be unsafe." <http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/types/milk/>
- The farmer shall label the product "Raw cow's milk" or "Raw goat's milk" and the label shall

include the name, address, and zip code of the producing farm

Remember that you are the face of agriculture. Consumers need to be comfortable with farmers and their practices.

Resources:

Kleinschmit, M., and T. Gompert. May 2007. Raw Milk Use and Safety Fact Sheet. Center for Rural Affairs, Nebraska. <http://www.cfra.org/files/Raw-Milk-Use-and-Safety-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources. 251 Causeway Street. Boston, MA 02114. Tel: (617) 626-1700. <http://www.mass.gov/agr/>

Northeast Organic Farming Association Massachusetts Chapter. (NOFA) <http://www.nofamass.org/programs/organicdairy/info.php>

The NOFA/Mass Raw Milk Network

If you are a consumer or dairy producer wanting to be part of The Raw Milk Network to help make safely-produced raw milk available throughout Massachusetts, contact Winton Pitcoff, Raw Milk Network Coordinator, at winton@nofamass.org, or at (413) 634-5728.

Raw Milk Facts: <http://www.raw-milk-facts.com/index.html>

Raw Milk Truth: <http://www.rawmilktruth.com/>

Real Raw Milk Facts:

<http://www.realrawmilkfacts.com/>

Weston A. Price Foundation's Real Milk website promotes raw milk from a nutritional viewpoint and lists producers in different states, as well as local Weston Price chapter heads who can provide a good source of raw milk information in your area.

<http://www.realmilk.com/>

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More information

Questions?

Visit Umass Amherst Extension CDLE at www.umass.edu/cdl or

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