

# PLEASE DO NOT Co-Sponsor RAW MILK Legislation

March 24, 2011

To: Members of the Wisconsin State Legislature

Fr: **Wisconsin Safe Milk Coalition**

Re: **Do Not** Co-Sponsor Legislation to Permit the Sale of Unpasteurized Milk

On behalf of the state's well-respected medical community and several thousand Wisconsin residents directly involved in the state's \$26.5 billion dairy industry, **we strongly urge you to not co-sponsor legislation to permit the on-farm sale of unpasteurized (raw) milk in Wisconsin.** This misguided legislation is supported by a small number of Wisconsin residents who believe the benefits of drinking raw milk outweigh the risks, which we believe is scientifically inaccurate and unfounded.

Raw milk can cause people to become ill. Medical, public health and microbiology professionals recognize the substantial risk for serious infectious diseases to occur with the consumption of unpasteurized milk. Moreover, there is no published scientific evidence of either any benefit from raw milk nor is there any danger or loss of nutritional value as a result of pasteurization.

Last spring, 18 people became ill in Michigan after drinking tainted raw milk. The Michigan case is only the latest in a string of at least 17 major foodborne illness outbreaks in the United States between 2000 and 2009 that were linked specifically to raw dairy products. In 2009 alone, more than 60 people in the United States became sick from drinking raw milk or eating cheese made from raw milk with at least 35 of those people from Wisconsin. Fortunately, the majority of the illnesses in the recent Michigan outbreak were the result of a type of bacterial infection that causes diarrhea and other flu-like symptoms and can be treated with antibiotics. This outbreak once again highlighted how raw milk and raw milk products can be contaminated with bacteria that can cause serious illness, hospitalization, lifelong diseases or death.

- Among the serious or fatal infections caused by raw milk, *E. coli O157:H7* poses the greatest threat of endangering life. In 2005, the Center for Disease Control report found numerous cases of *E. coli O157:H7* infection that were traced to raw milk from a cow-share program in Cowlitz County, Washington where five children were hospitalized.
- In 2006, the California Department of Food and Agriculture temporarily quarantined milk and cream from Organic Pastures, California's largest raw milk producer, after four children were stricken with *E. coli O157:H7* bacterial illness. The department determined that the common link in all four cases "was consumption of raw milk."

We strongly urge that you carefully consider the impacts to public health before signing on to any legislation that allows for the sale of raw milk in Wisconsin.

For more information, please call Wisconsin Safe Milk Coalition contact Shawn Pfaff at 608-258-8411.

*The Wisconsin Safe Milk Coalition is a broad coalition of medical professional and dairy producers and related-partners from across Wisconsin who have formed to keep Wisconsin's milk consumption safe for consumers and families.*

Members of the Wisconsin Safe Milk Coalition include:

**Associated Milk Producers Inc. (AMPI)**



**Children's Hospital and Health System of Wisconsin**



**Cooperative Network**



**Foremost Farms USA**



**Land O' Lakes**



**Marshfield Clinic**



**Wisconsin Association of Local Health Departments and Boards**



**Wisconsin Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (WIAAP)**



**Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association**



**Wisconsin Dairy Business Association**



**Wisconsin Dairy Products Association**



*Wisconsin Dairy Products Association is the only Wisconsin dairy association that represents all segments of the dairy processing industry*

**Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce**



**Wisconsin Medical Society**



**Wisconsin Medical Society**  
Your Doctor. Your Health.

**Wisconsin Public Health Association**

