



The Unpasteurized (Raw) Milk Bill

What Consumers Need to Know

For the last several years, Rural Vermont has been working with a group of farmers to enact progressive raw milk legislation that would expand opportunities for the buying and selling of raw milk in Vermont. On June 8, 2009, the “Unpasteurized (Raw) Milk Bill” was signed into law! This landmark legislation adopts and recognizes tiered regulations as an appropriate and reasonable approach to ensuring a safe, clean product while giving farms of all sizes the opportunity to take advantage of the growing consumer demand for raw milk. The new law – Act 62 – took effect July 1, 2009.

The Basics

- The new law creates reasonable and basic sanitary standards that all farmers selling raw milk must follow. It creates a two-tiered regulatory structure, defined by the quantity of milk being sold. Farmers in Tier 1 are selling 50 quarts or fewer per day. Farmers in Tier 2 are selling more than 50 quarts and up to 40 gallons per day, and must follow some additional requirements. Farmers in Tier 2 are permitted to deliver to customers’ homes.
- Only direct sales from the farmer to consumer are permitted (no resale, no retail).
- Customers must go to the farm to purchase milk, unless the farmer is a certified Tier 2 producer and offering home delivery.
- Farmers are required to keep a record of their customers, including names, addresses, telephone numbers, and email addresses when available.
- Farmers are required to keep a transaction record of purchases, including each customer’s name, date of purchase, and amount purchased.
- The farmers must provide the customers with a tour of the farm and any area associated with the milking operation before milk can be purchased. Subsequently, customers are permitted to return to the farm at reasonable times and intervals to re-inspect any areas associated with the milking operation.
- In Tier 1, either customers or farmers may provide, wash, and fill bottles. In Tier 2, customers may only provide and wash bottles if they are labeled with the customer’s name and address, and only farmers are permitted to fill bottles.

Want to learn more about raw milk?

- ∂ **Rural Vermont’s** website: www.ruralvermont.org.
- ∂ The **Weston A. Price Foundation** is leading an international Real Milk Campaign, with a goal of expanding access to raw milk everywhere. Also lots of nutrition info. www.realmilk.com
- ∂ **The Untold Story of Milk**, by Dr. Ron Schmid: <http://www.drrons.com/untold-story-of-milk.htm>
- ∂ Talk to your **local farmers**. The best resource available!

What You Might See at the Farm

- Tuberculosis and brucellosis test results and verification of rabies vaccination posted in a prominent place on the farm
- Each container of milk labeled with the following:
 - milking date
 - contact info for the farmer
 - name or image of the milking animal
 - the following words: “Unpasteurized (Raw) Milk. Not pasteurized. Keep Refrigerated.”
 - warning about raw milk’s supposed health risks

Note: When customers of Tier 1 producers are bringing and filling their own jars, there will be pre-printed labels in the milkhouse to be adhered to jars. Customers may need to fill in the date.

- A prominently displayed sign with the following language: “Unpasteurized (Raw) Milk. Not pasteurized. Keep Refrigerated.” and “This product has not been pasteurized and therefore may contain harmful bacteria that can cause illness particularly in children, the elderly, and persons with weakened immune systems and in pregnant women can cause illness, miscarriage or fetal death, or death of a newborn.”



- Milk stored at 40°F; this might be accomplished with a bulk tank, refrigerator, or even a simple cooler with ice
- Total bacterial, coliform, and somatic cell test results posted in a prominent place (Tier 2 only)

The Delivery Details

- Delivery is an option for Tier 2 producers only. A farmer selling less than 50 quarts per day may choose to get certified as a Tier 2 farmer, if s/he would like to deliver milk.
- Delivery is only permitted within the state of Vermont.
- Milk must be brought either directly to the customer at his/her home, or into a refrigerated unit at the customer's home.
- Only available when customers have paid for the milk in advance, either by a one-time payment or subscription
- Producers do not have to deliver the milk themselves; they can contract with another individual to make deliveries.

Handling Your Milk

- Always keep your milk cool. Bring a cooler to the farm to store your milk in transit, and then keep it in the main part of the refrigerator (not on the door). Don't let your milk sit out.
- Keep in mind that raw milk is a rich and creamy product. If you've never had it before, it's a good idea to start slowly with small amounts so your digestive system has time to adjust.
- If the arrangement with your farmer requires that you bring clean jars back to the farm, be sure to rinse them first in cold water, and then wash them with hot, soapy water. Remember – a dirty jar can contaminate even the cleanest milk!



Being a Good Customer

- Find out the process for buying milk. Each farmer has a slightly different arrangement with his/her customers. Some questions to ask might be: Should I bring my own jars? What day/time should I pick up my milk? Where will the milk be stored?
- Be reliable, regular, and respectful. Be considerate of the farmer's time by showing up when you say you will, purchase your milk on a regular basis, and while on the farm, be respectful of the property, the animals, and the farmer.
- Respect the law! Take the farm tour, provide contact info to the farmer, fill out the transaction record, pre-pay for delivery, etc. And don't put your farmer in an uncomfortable position by asking him/her to act outside the law because it would be more convenient, less expensive, or easier for you.
- Bring exact change when you can.
- Ask questions if you want more information. Get to know the farmer, the farm, the animals, and how the farm and animals are managed.

Looking for a raw milk farmer? Start here –

- ∂ The **Rural Vermont** staff knows lots of farmers looking for customers: (802) 223-7222 / shelby@ruralvermont.org
- ∂ The **Weston A. Price Foundation's** raw milk directory: <http://www.realmilk.com/where>
- ∂ The **Vermont Grass Farmers' Association** directory: <http://www.uvm.edu/~pasture/Document/s/2009Directory.pdf>.
- ∂ Local growers' guide for your region, often published by localvore groups, your county's Natural Resource Conservation District, local agricultural nonprofits, or the regional Land Trust.

Raw Milk
does a
community
good!



Thanks for buying local! Want to support Rural Vermont's work to create even **more** local food options? For more info, call us or visit the website anytime ...