

Support HB 46 and Raw Milk in Texas

HB 46 would expand legal sales of raw milk by licensed farmers directly to consumers by allowing sales at farmers markets and farm stands, and by allowing farmers and consumers to agree to delivery arrangements.

Authors: Dan Flynn, Dennis Bonnen, Jodie Laubenberg, and Bill Zedler; **Co-Authors:** Lance Gooden, Lyle Larson, Rick Miller, Eddie Rodriguez, David Simpson, and Steve Toth

Supporting Organizations: Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance; Farm-to-Consumer Legal Defense Fund; Fair Market (Tyler); The Heritage Guild of Collin County and Chestnut Square Historic Village; Jacksonville Farmers' Market; Manor Farmers' Market; Slow Food Austin; Slow Food South Texas; Sustainable Food Center; Texas Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association; Weston A. Price Foundation

Background

- Under current law, farmers can legally sell raw milk in Texas directly to consumers under a Grade A Raw for Retail license. Texas Grade A Raw for Retail dairies are subject to regulations that meet or exceed all regulatory standards for pasteurized milk.
- Agency regulations limit the sales to “the point of production, i.e., at the farm.” This marketing restriction burdens both farmers and consumers. Farmers who invest significant resources to become licensed face unfair limitations. Consumers who want unprocessed food must expend significant time, gas, and money on long weekly drives.
- Texas raw milk farmers have an excellent safety record. CDC data from 1998-2008 show that there were **only two** reported illnesses attributed to raw milk in Texas during that time. Since 2008, there have been 4 additional illnesses allegedly linked to raw milk, for a total of 6 illnesses in 15 years.
- Approximately 12,500 foodborne illnesses were reported in Texas between 1998 and 2010, traced to such foods as mangos, cake, beans, lettuce salads, salsa, pot pie, chicken salad, hot dogs, deli meats, and beef brisket.
- Raw milk has a better safety record in Texas than many foods, including strawberries (29 illnesses), chicken soup (47 illnesses), and turkey (852 illnesses).

The Impact of HB 46

- The bill does only one thing: removes the on-farm restriction on the sale of Grade A raw milk.
- The bill makes **no other change** to the existing regulatory requirements for licensed raw milk producers that have been successful in protecting the public's health in Texas.
- Sales will continue to be limited to direct-to-consumer transactions, as they are currently.
- The bill will not allow sales of raw milk in grocery stores.

Advantages

- Improves the safety of raw dairy by allowing producers to transport it to consumers under safe conditions, rather than relying on consumers to remember to take coolers and ice.
- By allowing a producer to make a single trip to serve multiple customers, rather than having each customer drive to the farm, the bill reduces vehicle miles, benefiting air quality, traffic congestion, and public safety.
- Benefits rural economies because direct farm-to-consumer sales of raw milk can mean the difference between a net loss on the farm and a reasonable income for the farm family.
- No negative impact on conventional grocery store sales. (Supporting data available)

For more information, contact: Judith McGeary, FARFA at (254) 697-2661 or Judith@FarmAndRanchFreedom.org