



Allow Off-Farm Raw Milk Sales Direct to Consumers: Support HB 1669

Currently, Grade A Raw for Retail dairy farms can sell raw milk to consumers, but only on their farm. The farmer may deliver the pre-ordered milk to the buyer anywhere in the state. These limitations are regulatory, not statutory; the current statute simply directs the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to adopt regulations governing the sale of dairy products, including raw milk.

HB 1669 by Representative Hull allows licensed farmers to sell raw milk directly to consumers anywhere in the state. This allows the same licensed farmers who are selling through their website and then delivering the pre-orders to places like farmers' markets to sell the same milk to people at those locations without pre-ordering.

HB 1669 also specifically allows individuals and nonprofits to act as coordinators for people to buy raw milk as a group, a practice that is already occurring. Right now, in order to comply with the DSHS's regulations, each consumer must place their order and pay the dairy directly; the dairy can then deliver many people's milk to a single drop point. HB 1669 simply allows an individual or nonprofit to collect the orders and payments to provide to the dairy.

Texas raw milk farmers have an excellent track record for safety, with only two suspected outbreaks in the last 25 years. These dairies are licensed by DSHS, and are inspected and the milk tested at least 6 times a year (usually more). The regulatory standards that govern both the dairies and the milk testing meet or exceed all regulatory standards for pasteurized milk.

While raw milk – like **any** food – carries a risk of foodborne illness, it also provides benefits that are of growing interest to many Americans facing an epidemic of chronic disease. Multiple studies have found that drinking “farm” (raw) milk protects against asthma and allergies.¹ A 2015 study found that raw milk consumption reduced the risk of rhinitis, respiratory tract infections, ear infections, and fever by around 30% compared to the consumption of ultra-pasteurized milk.² Pasteurization denatures proteins, inactivates enzymes, and destroys heat-sensitive vitamins.

Allowing consumers to buy the same raw milk from the same licensed farmers at farmers' markets and other direct-to-consumer locations allows consumers to more easily choose to buy this natural, unprocessed product.

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¹ See Riedler, J. et al. 2001. Exposure to farming in early life and development of asthma and allergy: a cross-sectional survey. *Lancet* 358:1129-33. Perkin, M.R. and D.P. Strachan. 2006. Which aspects of the farming lifestyle explain the inverse association with childhood allergy? *J Allergy Clin Immunol*. 117(6):1374-8. Waser, M. et al. 2006. Inverse association of farm milk consumption with asthma and allergy in rural and suburban populations across Europe. *Clinical and Experimental Allergy* 37:661-670. Perkin, M.R. 2007. Unpasteurized milk: health or hazard? *Clinical and Experimental Allergy* 37:627-630.

² G. Loss et al., Consumption of unprocessed cow's milk protects infants from common respiratory infections, *J. of Allergy and Clinical Immunology* 134: 56-62 (2015).