



Bringing Dairy to Life!

Memo

To: Chairman Dan Kerschen and Members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

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Subject: Documented Health Benefits of Pasteurized Milk

Midwest Dairy is affiliated with the National Dairy Council, a leader in dairy nutrition research, education and communication since 1915. Midwest Dairy provides timely, scientifically sound nutrition information to foster a healthier society. Under United States Department of Agriculture oversight, Midwest Dairy is prohibited from lobbying. At the invitation of the Kansas Dairy Association, I submit these comments on Senate Bill 308 only to provide information on pasteurization and the scientifically documented health benefits of pasteurized milk.

Importance of Pasteurization

All milk intended for direct consumption should be pasteurized – it's a matter of food safety. Pasteurization is a simple, effective method to kill harmful pathogens without affecting the taste or nutritional value of milk. During pasteurization, milk is heated to a specific temperature for a predefined length of time and then rapidly cooled. It is the only practical, commercial procedure which – if properly applied to all milk – will destroy any harmful microorganisms in the product.¹

For more than a century, pasteurization has been recognized around the world as an essential tool for protecting public health. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and the American Veterinary Medical Association all support pasteurization.²

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), cases of Campylobacter, Salmonella, E. coli, Listeria and Yersinia infections can be attributed to raw milk consumption. Pasteurization kills bacteria responsible for diseases such as listeriosis, salmonellosis, typhoid fever, tuberculosis, diphtheria.³

Illnesses caused by pathogens found in raw milk can be especially severe for pregnant women, the elderly, infants, young children and people with weakened immune systems.² Over the past century, pasteurization has been proven to be effective in ensuring that milk and dairy products are unquestionably safe.¹

For these reasons, the dairy industry, the CDC and the FDA recommend that no one consume unpasteurized milk.

Use of pasteurization as a food safety tool is not limited to the dairy industry. Other foods such as fruit and vegetable juices, eggs, and spices are pasteurized.⁴



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Health Benefits of Pasteurized Milk and Milk Products

There is no scientific evidence that raw milk is more nutritious or healthier than pasteurized milk. Pasteurization does not reduce milk's nutritional value. In fact, the health benefits of consuming pasteurized dairy products are extensively documented in peer-reviewed scientific journals. Numerous studies demonstrate the role of dairy foods in blood pressure regulation, weight management, adolescent bone health and more.

The 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that people consume 3 cups per day of fat-free or low-fat milk or equivalent milk products.⁵ This recommendation is a direct result of evidence revealing the committee considered on the health benefits of milk.

Lactose Intolerance

Pasteurization does not affect one's ability to digest lactose. Lactase, the enzyme needed to break down lactose, is produced by the cells lining the small intestine—it is not present in raw or pasteurized milk.³

Vitamin D

In addition, there are no meaningful differences in the nutrient content of raw and pasteurized milk^{2,3} except for Vitamin D, which is not found in significant amounts in raw milk. Vitamin D is added during processing making the milk even more nutritious.⁵

Good Bacteria

A better source of "good" bacteria is fermented dairy products, such as yogurt made from pasteurized milk. Many of these foods contain live and active cultures and added probiotics, without the risk of foodborne illness associated with raw milk.²

Summation

In closing, research shows pasteurized milk and milk products to be an essential part of a healthy diet. American dairy products are among the safest in the world. In fact, the dairy industry is often cited by other industries as a model for food safety. The FDA Grade A milk program outlines strict quality control and regulatory oversight, which starts at the farm, and continues at the manufacturing plant with thorough testing and product safety measures. Pasteurization is an important step in this process and assures consumers they are purchasing a healthy, wholesome and safe product.

References:

¹U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Public Health Service, Food and Drug Administration. Grade "A" Pasteurized Milk Ordinance... 2017 Revision

²[Raw Milk Questions and Answers](#) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 6/15/17)

³[The Dangers of Raw Milk: Unpasteurized Milk Can Pose a Serious Health Risk](#) (Food and Drug Administration, 11/08/2018)

⁴[Science of Our Food Supply: Food Safety A to Z Reference Guide](#) (Food and Drug Administration, National Science Teachers Association, 2014)

⁵[2015 – 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 8th Edition](#). (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2015)