

H.125

An act relating to the sale of unpasteurized milk

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. FINDINGS

(a) Vermont farmers who currently sell unpasteurized (raw) milk directly to consumers operate in a largely unregulated environment that fails to address a full range of food safety issues, and in which restricted supply is the primary method of addressing food safety concerns.

(b) There are widely divergent views on unpasteurized milk's benefits and risks.

(c) Vermont's current unpasteurized milk law also limits economic development opportunities. Farmers sell their unpasteurized milk for \$5.00 to \$10.00 per gallon, which represents an economic opportunity.

(d) The purpose of this act is to allow farmers to sell larger quantities of unpasteurized milk while at the same time creating new sanitary production, marketing, and consumer education standards.

Sec. 2. 6 V.S.A. § chapter 152 is added to read:

CHAPTER 152. SALE OF UNPASTEURIZED (RAW) MILK

§ 2775. LIMITED SALE OF UNPASTEURIZED (RAW) MILK

PERMISSIBLE

The production and sale of unpasteurized milk for fluid consumption is permitted within the state of Vermont only when produced, marketed, and sold in conformance with this chapter. Such production and sale is not subject to rules adopted pursuant to section 2701 of this title.

§ 2776. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this chapter, “unpasteurized milk” or “unpasteurized (raw) milk” means unpasteurized milk sold for fluid consumption and does not include unpasteurized milk to be pasteurized or unpasteurized milk produced for use in manufacturing of milk products other than fluid milk.

§ 2777. STANDARDS FOR THE SALE OF UNPASTEURIZED (RAW)

MILK

(a) Unpasteurized milk for fluid consumption shall be sold directly from the producer to the end user and shall not be resold.

(b) Unpasteurized milk shall be sold only from the farm on which it was produced except when delivery is arranged in conformance with section 2778 of this chapter. Unpasteurized milk shall not be sold or offered as free samples at any location other than on the farm on which the milk was produced.

(c) Unpasteurized milk operations shall conform to reasonable sanitary standards, including:

(1) Unpasteurized milk shall be derived from healthy animals which are subject to appropriate veterinary care, including tuberculosis and brucellosis testing and rabies vaccination, according to accepted testing and vaccinations standards as established by the agency. Test results and verification of vaccinations shall be posted on the farm in a prominent place and be easily visible to customers.

(2) The animal's udders and teats shall be cleaned and sanitized prior to milking.

(3) The animals shall be housed in a clean, dry environment.

(4) Milking equipment shall be of sanitary construction, cleaned after each milking, and sanitized prior to the next milking.

(5) Milking shall be conducted in a clean environment appropriate for maintaining cleanliness.

(6) The farm shall have a potable water supply which is sampled for bacteriological examination according to agency standards every three years and whenever any alteration or repair of the water supply has been made.

(7) If an animal is treated with antibiotics, that animal's milk shall be tested for and found free of antibiotics before its milk is offered for sale.

(d) Unpasteurized milk shall conform to the following production and marketing standards:

(1) Registration. Each producer intending to sell unpasteurized milk pursuant to this chapter shall register with the agency.

(2) Record keeping and reporting.

(A) A producer shall collect one composite sample of unpasteurized milk each day and keep the previous 14 days' samples frozen. The producer shall provide samples to the agency if requested.

(B) A producer shall maintain a current list of all customers, including addresses, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses when available.

(C) The producer shall maintain a list of transactions for at least one year which shall include customer names, the date of each purchase, and the amount purchased.

(D) On or before March 1 of each year, the producer shall submit to the agency a statement of the total gallons of unpasteurized milk sold in the previous 12 months.

(3) Labeling. Unpasteurized (raw) milk shall be labeled as such, and the label shall contain:

(A) The date the milk was obtained from the animal.

(B) The name, address, zip code, and telephone number of the producer.

(C) The common name of the type of animal producing the milk (e.g. cattle, goat, sheep) or an image of the animal.

(D) The words “Unpasteurized (Raw) Milk. Not pasteurized. Keep Refrigerated.” on the container’s principal display panel, and these words shall be clearly readable in letters at least one-eighth inch in height and prominently displayed.

(E) The words “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.” on the container’s principal display panel and clearly readable in letters at least one-sixteenth inch in height.

(4) Temperature. Unpasteurized milk shall be cooled to 40 degrees Fahrenheit within two hours of the finish of milking and so maintained until it is obtained by the consumer.

(5) Customer inspection and notification.

(A) Prior to selling milk to a new customer, the producer shall provide the customer with a tour of the farm and any area associated with the milking operation. Customers are encouraged and shall be permitted to return to the farm at a reasonable time and at reasonable intervals to re-inspect any areas associated with the milking operation.

(B) A sign with the words “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.” shall be displayed prominently on the farm in a place where it can be easily seen by customers. The lettering shall be at least one inch in height and shall be clearly readable.

(e) Producers selling 12.5 or fewer gallons (50 quarts) of unpasteurized milk per day shall meet the requirements of subsections (a) through (d) of this section and shall sell unpasteurized milk only from the farm on which it was produced. A producer selling 12.5 or fewer gallons of unpasteurized milk may choose to meet the requirements of subsection (f) of this section, in which case the producer may deliver in accordance with section 2778 of this chapter.

(f) Producers selling 12.6 to 40 gallons (50.4 to 160 quarts) of unpasteurized milk per day shall meet the requirements of subsections (a) through (d) of this section as well as the following standards:

(1) Inspection. The agency shall annually inspect the producer’s facility and determine that the producer is in compliance with the sanitary standards listed in subsection (c) of this section.

(2) Bottling. Unpasteurized milk shall be sold in containers which have been filled by the producer. Containers shall be cleaned by the producer

except that the producer may allow customers to clean their own containers only if each customer's container is labeled with the customer's name and address and the customers use their own containers. Producers shall ensure that only clean bottles are filled and distributed.

(3) Testing.

(A) A producer shall have unpasteurized milk tested twice per month by a U.S. Food and Drug Administration accredited laboratory. Milk shall be tested for the following and the results shall be below these limits:

(i) Total bacterial (aerobic) count: 15,000 cfu/ml (cattle and goats);

(ii) Total coliform count: 10 cfu/ml (cattle and goats);

(iii) Somatic cell count: 225,000/ml (cattle); 500,000/ml (goats).

(B) If any test results exceed these limits, it is recommended that the laboratory notify the agency of the results, and the producer shall notify the agency within five days of receiving the results.

(C) Test results shall be kept on file for one year and shall be posted on the farm in a prominent place and be easily visible to customers. The producer shall provide test results to the farm's customers or the agency if requested.

(4) Prearranged delivery of unpasteurized milk is permitted and shall be in compliance with section 2778 of this chapter.

(g) The sale of more than 40 gallons (160 quarts) of unpasteurized milk in any one day is prohibited.

§ 2778. DELIVERY OF UNPASTEURIZED (RAW) MILK

(a) Delivery of unpasteurized milk is permitted only within the state of Vermont and only of milk produced by those producers meeting the requirements of subsection 2777(f) of this chapter.

(b) Delivery shall conform to the following requirements:

(1) Delivery shall be to customers who have purchased milk in advance either by a one-time payment or through a subscription;

(2) Delivery shall be directly to the customer at the customer's home or into a refrigerated unit at the customer's home if such unit is capable of maintaining the unpasteurized milk at 40 degrees Fahrenheit until obtained by the customer.

(3) During delivery, milk shall be protected from exposure to direct sunlight.

(4) During delivery, milk shall be kept at 40 degrees Fahrenheit or lower at all times.

(c) A producer may contract with another individual to deliver the milk in accordance with this section. The producer shall be jointly and severally liable for the delivery of the milk in accordance with this section.

Sec. 3. 6 V.S.A. § 2723 is amended to read:

§ 2723. -EXEMPTIONS

Handlers' licenses shall not be required from the following persons:

(1) Producers, except producers who sell fluid dairy products at retail in Vermont.

(2) A hotel, restaurant, or other public eating place that sells fluid dairy products for consumption on the premises, or a store which sells packaged dairy products, provided the entire supply of fluid dairy products is purchased from licensed milk handlers.

(3) ~~A person who produces and sells or offers for sale less than 50 quarts of milk in any one day, but in such case an inspection may be made and reasonable sanitary requirements shall be complied with~~ A person producing unpasteurized milk under chapter 152 of this title, with respect to the sale of that unpasteurized milk only.