

HB1449 – Public Health - Milk Products Direct-to-Consumer Sale of Raw Milk for Human Consumption

FAVORABLE

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Two Kinds of Raw Milk in America

There are two kinds of raw milk, but they often get lumped together and no distinction is made. The first is raw milk intended for pasteurization. This milk — which accounts for 68% of milk in America — is often produced in large (1000+ cows) dairies and the cows are kept in confinement most of the time. ([Source](#)) When the cows get milked, the raw milk goes to a bulk tank until the milk truck picks it up for processing.

There is a set of production standards called the Pasteurized Milk Ordinance (PMO) for these large dairies.

The **other kind** of raw milk in America is raw milk intended for human consumption.

These dairies are often small or micro dairies (1-100 cows), usually exclusively grassfed, and typically adhere to many of the organic standards, whether certified or not.

Most of the raw milk intended for human consumption comes from the second kind of dairy.

One of the biggest points of confusion in discussions and data about raw milk safety is conflating raw milk in the bulk tanks of milk intended for processing, vs clean, safe raw milk produced for human consumption.

We must not confuse these two as they are very different products.

As you hear and read testimony on this bill, please keep these questions in mind:

What is the original source of the claim that raw milk was responsible for 25% of foodborne illness before WWII? Is there documentation to show this is accurate?

In references to studies that show raw milk is risky and has pathogens in it, what kind of raw milk do the studies refer to –

- *Clean, tested raw milk for human consumption?*
- *Bulk tanks of milk intended for pasteurization?*

*What are the **relative risks** of permitted, tested raw milk when compared to other foods?*

Bird Flu and Raw Milk

With concerns about bird flu spreading in 2025, this is a topic that needs careful examination.

There is good reason to engage in sensible testing procedures for bird flu. The Department of Health (MDH) and Department of Agriculture (MDA) have already implemented a testing procedure for all dairy farms — including those providing raw milk. ([Source](#))

If this procedure works, why are they not trusting it? If they are not confident in it, why are they not changing it?

Why can't we have the option to purchase raw milk and have safe handling instructions on the label that includes pasteurization/cooking instructions just as we have for poultry and eggs?

A great example of testing that is working is our neighbor Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA), recently declared their dairy industry free of bird flu. ([Source](#))

STATE

Pa. dairy industry declared free of bird flu, but poultry farms report new cases



Bethany Rodgers

USA TODAY NETWORK

Published 3:18 p.m. ET Feb. 13, 2025

Under the leadership of Secretary of Agriculture, Russell Redding, Pennsylvania has a thriving dairy industry including approximately 114 permitted raw milk dairies following the PA safety standards which HB1449 is modeled on.

How can Pennsylvania continue to provide and even support their 114 permitted raw milk farmers while MDH refuses to consider it here in Maryland?

What can our Maryland agencies learn from our neighbors in PA? Will they?

How can we come to an agreement when MDH refuses to speak to us about their concerns or work with us to compromise?

The Black Market is a Race to the Bottom

Unfortunately, whether MDH likes it or not, Marylanders are getting raw milk. Lots of it.

This milk is pouring across state lines from untested, often unscrupulous farms not following any reasonable safety standards. This black market milk has already resulted in alleged multiple illnesses in other states, and court documents show that one particular farm has tested positive for pathogen multiple times. ([Source](#))

If it's true that bird flu is a big public health concern at this time, we must work together to provide a **tested** and **safe** product that Marylanders can and should trust, not leave it to an unregulated black market to provide a food that, quite frankly, more and more people are flocking to. ([Source](#)), ([Source](#))

What happens if Maryland takes no action to make clean, tested, safe raw milk from Maryland farms an option?

What happens if the black market farms are allowed to thrive and prosper while the clean, safe, law abiding farms are continually handicapped and enforced against?

How will the new federal administration acknowledge and respect our state rights and help prevent untested, unsafe raw milk coming from other states?

Raw Milk and Misleading Marketing

Torches of Freedom was the name given to cigarettes during the early 1900s as the suffragettes were working hard on womens' right to vote.

Edward Bernays, the father of modern Public Relations and author of the 1928 book, *Propaganda*, gave them this name to make them more appealing and encourage women to take up smoking.

The tobacco industry needed more revenue and the industry saw women as a prime target to increase sales. Marketing firms created the talking points based on what women wanted to hear: smoking meant they were independent. Ads featured medical doctors telling women which

brand of cigarettes would keep them slim, which brands tasted better, which brands meant freedom.

Dare I say, we now understand a little more truth about the tobacco industry?

But fast forward to 1945 and **we see the same tactics play out against women**, this time targeting the household staple, milk.

Pasteurized milk had gained a foothold in American cities and the processors saw profit in the centralized production model.

The industrial model needed women – especially mothers – to fear raw milk.

But how could they do that?

Before social media was the Coronet - a popular women's magazine.

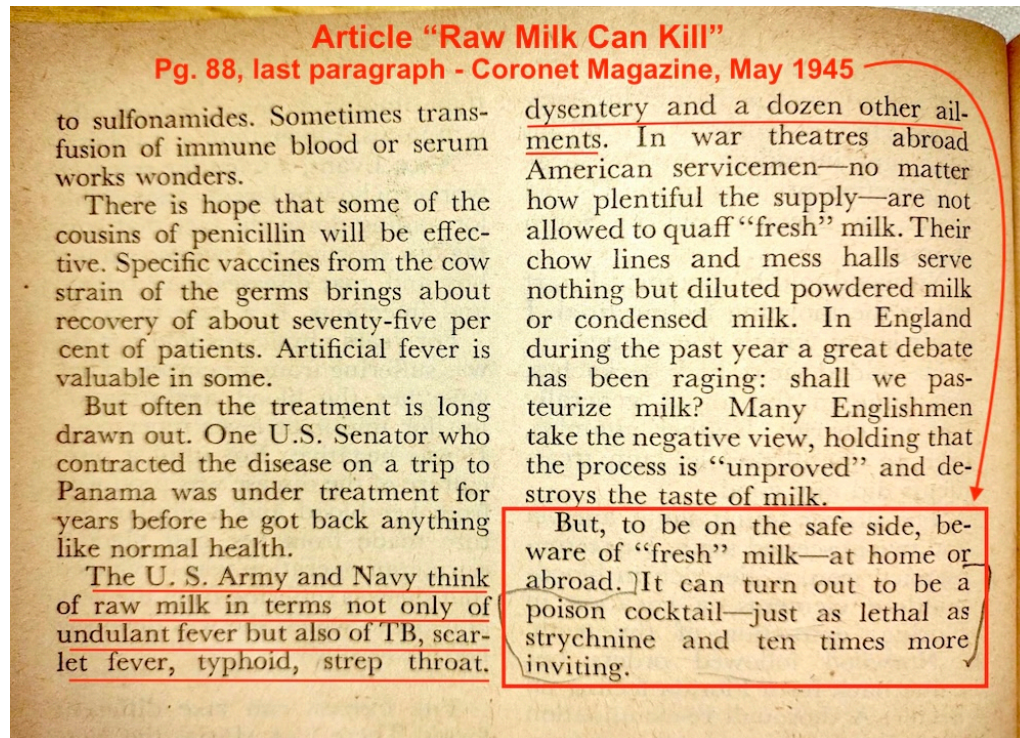
The May 1945 edition featured a cover article screaming that "Raw Milk Can Kill You" complete with an illustration of skull and crossbones. This told the story of "Crossroads" America where there was a deadly outbreak of undulant fever.



Undulant fever was the colloquial term for brucellosis infection – a serious, but highly treatable, and rarely fatal illness.

In the article he warns mothers of just how dangerous raw milk is and how deadly it was to this town of Crossroads America. 1 out of every 4 patients died.

It was more dangerous than the toxic poison strychnine, he warned.



How frightening. If I were a mother in 1945, I would be terrified as well.

But there was just one BIG problem.

The whole story was a diabolical lie to change women's purchase behaviors and artificially inflate corporate profit. In this case not tobacco, but the pasteurized milk industry.

There was no Crossroads America.

There was no outbreak.

There were no deaths.

But the fear hit its mark and women shied away from a previously staple food, raw milk from small, local farms.

We know what's happened since then. Pasteurized milk took over.

A few expert marketers, just like the "Torches of Freedom" campaign a couple decades prior, craftily created an inflated foodborne illness alarmism.

Their intention was profit over public health.

When will we stop relying on corporate, profit-driven marketing to set our public health policies?

What do the marketing strategies teach us about the vilification of safe raw milk?

The Future of Food Security in Maryland

The unintended consequence of the push for pasteurization was a decimation of America's dairies and of American's local food security.

From our national agriculture census data, we once boasted 4.5 million dairies ([source](#)) before 1940, to just under 25,000 dairies today ([source](#)).

Maryland fares even worse with only 310 remaining dairies as of 2023 ([Source](#))

But the alarmism stuck and that alarmism has grossly distorted the true facts and data around clean, raw milk, safely produced for human consumption or home pasteurization.

Who and what will Marylanders be dependent on as consolidation and centralization reduces our local food security?

Will low income families, dependent on EBT, be able to choose this naturally healthy food using their benefits or will we continue to discriminate against them by banning raw milk for human consumption?

Raw milk isn't just about foodborne illness, or a choice of what we get to eat today and tomorrow. Access to clean, safe raw milk is about our local food security.

We're all on the same team here. We all want:

- safe food sources for ALL Marylanders.
- economic opportunity for Maryland farmers.
- local food security for community resilience.

With that in mind, it's time for a healthy, productive change. Thank you all for your dedication to learning about this niche topic and reviewing the information in a fair and balanced way, and allowing our representative government to do what it was designed to do — represent Maryland citizens.