

Seamons, Colleen

From: Milawa Cheese Company [milawacheese@ihug.com.au]
Sent: Wednesday, 17 September 2008 10:56 AM
To: submissions
Subject: Submission to FZANS P1007

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Blue

Please find attached David Brown's submission regarding P1007

Submission to FZANS regarding the enquiry into the pasteurisation of milk. P1007

From David Brown, Milawa Cheese Company

I would like to make a contribution to the enquiry with respect to the interest in changing the regulations relating to specialist cheesemaking in Australia.

Australian cheesemakers are making a wide range of cheeses in all categories using pasteurised milk. The revolution in specialist cheesemaking has been dramatic, in the space of twenty-five or so years the industry has begun and flourished. Many of our producers have mastered the art of making the world's best cheeses within the existing regulatory framework.

Food safety standards led mainly by DFSV have been enforced rigidly and to my knowledge there have been no food safety incidents caused by the manufacture of specialist cheese. The industry has been doubling in size every five years or so making it the fastest growing sector in the dairy industry. Last year supermarket sales of Australian mould ripened cheese grew by 30%. Manufacturing businesses from small family operations to those controlled by multi nationals have contributed to this growth, and many more small players are entering the game all the time. Since specialist cheese industry is world class, growing rapidly, and adding significantly to the value of dairy produce and regional employment change, under conditions that are safe and positively embraced by the vast majority of manufacturers, it is difficult to understand the need for change.

Some European cheeses have unique qualities provided by terroir, different animal breeds or maybe more experience, some are made with raw milk some with pasteurised milk, good and bad cheeses are made from both milk treatments. The factors contributing to cheese quality are so diverse that it is absurd to say raw milk is the key factor in making better cheese. It is however a matter of record that cheese made from raw milk has been the cause of many cases of illness and death.

Amongst specialist cheesemakers there a small number who would like to experiment with making cheese from raw milk however in a recent ASCA survey less than 12% of those surveyed though that freeing up regulations would be beneficial to their business and they represent less than 1% of the milk processed.

The push for change comes from one of the major importers of European cheese, he has enlisted the support (not surprisingly) of the French Government and has furthered his case by offering free trips to France to many of the influential journalist in the

Fairfax stable. It would appear that further relaxation of our food safety standards would open up enormous import potential for him.

Ironically as we are spending a considerable amount of public money to investigate the safety of raw milk cheese in Australia, two of the largest raw milk camembert makers in Normandy have changed from raw milk to heat treated milk citing the risks to public health are too great.

This presumably was in response to an outbreak of severe haemorrhagic e.coli infection linked to raw milk camembert that hospitalised several French children.

In the recent assessment of the food safety implications of the importation of Roquefort FSANZ presided over a demonstrably flawed study. The officers in charge of the investigation displayed little knowledge of the cheesemaking process, never saw the manufacture of Roquefort and derived no information from primary sources. Instead they relied on some computer chicanery to massage the numbers provided by the French authorities. The total ineffectiveness of this procedure has been demonstrated by the number of shipments of Roquefort that have been sent back due to excessive e.coli counts. The importer promoting the case was in print saying that we should allow higher e.coli counts in our imported cheese, hardly a position that would be embraced by the Australian public.

The Australian specialist cheesemaking industry has evolved making cheese from milk of the highest standard. Pasteurisation has been the standard and it has provided food safety in the Australian dairy industry for generations. The products we make are world class, demonstrating Australian ingenuity and a unique mix of art and science.

This is our tradition and we are proud of it. Please don't change it.

David Brown

Founder Milawa Cheese Company

Executive Cheesemaker

Milawa Cheese Company
www.milawacheese.com.au