

Sprucewind Alpines

Thank you for taking my comment.

I support the freedom for consumers to choose what to buy and what to feed their families. I think it would benefit Alaskan agriculture for farmers to be able to sell raw dairy straight from the farm. I see these proposed regulations as a step forward; however, it will be difficult or impossible for small farms to comply with them. Most of the dairy farms in Alaska are very small, and will not be able to afford facilities such as those described within these regulations.

I have a few specific concerns:

18 AAC 32.070(a)(2)...having a licensed veterinarian hired to oversee the herd will be cost prohibitive. Also, finding a good vet for dairy animals is very difficult in parts of Alaska.

18 AAC 32.070(b)(1)(A), (2), (3)...perhaps I don't fully understand all the separations, but these regulations for facilities seem to require the animals to be housed in an enclosed building. Is there allowance for pasture?

Section (c)(3)...what about cheese wrapping or food grade cheese wax?

Section (c)(4)(B)...consumers should do their own research. Any food may contain harmful bacteria, so if we are to be consistent, all raw products need to have "ATTENTION: This product has not been pasteurized....and may cause serious illness...". The statement regarding those who may be high risk is debatable and it is also a cultural statement. How many cultures use dairy goats and raw milk as a means of moving out of poverty? Heifer International is a great example of the benefits of dairy animals and raw dairy. How many cultures live on raw milk from cradle to grave and live healthy, vibrant lives?

Section (c)(4)(E)...all raw milk products do not need to be consumed within four days of production. Properly cared for raw milk keeps for approximately one week. Most raw cheeses improve with age. Some are required to age in order to produce a particular taste or texture.