WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for August 5, 2024
Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, & Healthy Relationships we'll talk about raw milk, and as always look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

Raw milk has been in the news a lot the past few months. I'm also noticing more about herd share opportunities and dairy products made with raw milk. So, I feel compelled to write today's column about raw and pasteurized milk.

I confess that I come to this topic with my own biases. I majored in food science at Ohio State and my master's work was in dairy processing. I also worked for a food company that specialized in processing dairy nutritional products, so I am very comfortable with the thought of pasteurizing milk.

Federal law requires that any milk sold across state lines- interstate- must be pasteurized. Pasteurization is the process of heating a food to kill harmful bacteria. This law has been in place since 1987, but milk pasteurization existed for 100 years before that.

Like any food we consume, the risk of getting sick from foodborne illness is low. But the risk is there. And for our children, elderly, and friends with compromised immune systems, their risk of getting sick is higher. Because milk is a staple in many people's diets, and can be consumed multiple times a day, the risk increases.

Federal law does not dictate whether raw milk can be sold within a state – intrastate. There are differences in states throughout the country on the restriction of raw milk sales. Here in Ohio, statutory law clearly prohibits the sale of raw milk to an "ultimate consumer." But the law does not prohibit animal owners from consuming raw milk from their own animals.

Therefore, some Ohio farms offer herd shares for sale. Consumers can pay to become part-owner of cows or goats in a herd. Then they receive raw milk from the herd as a part-owner. There are a variety of reasons that people desire raw milk. Often this is driven by a perception that there are health benefits that outweigh the health risks. The FDA has a very thorough fact sheet that addresses common perceived health benefits of raw milk. *(I encourage you to view the explanations for each of these statements at go.osu.edu/fdarawmilk .)*

- Raw milk does not cure lactose intolerance.
- Raw milk does not cure or treat asthma and allergy.
- Raw milk is not more effective in preventing osteoporosis than pasteurized milk.
- There are no beneficial bacteria in raw milk for gastrointestinal health.
- Raw milk is not an immune system building food and is particularly unsafe for children.
- There are no immunoglobulins in raw milk that enhance the human immune system.
- There are no additional protease and lipases in raw milk that facilitate milk digestion.
- Raw milk is not nutritionally superior to pasteurized milk.
- Raw milk does not contain natural antimicrobial components that make milk safe.
- Raw milk does not contain nisin for pathogen inhibition.
- Folate binding protein (FBP) is not denatured during pasteurization and folate utilization is not reduced in pasteurized milk.
- Raw milk causes a greater rate of foodborne outbreaks than pasteurized milk.

The most important thing I want to share today is about the latest massive Salmonella outbreak associated with raw milk sold in California. As of February, there were 165 reported cases. The most concerning part is the median age of these very sick people. It was 7 years old. Over 40% of the 165 cases were children under the age of 5.

And now let's see what else is new from OSU Extension. I'm looking forward to the next class - a Canning Basics workshop at Schumaker Farms on Wednesday, August 7 from 6:00-7:30 PM. The workshop is free, but registration is required at coshocton.osu.edu.

In closing, at OSU Extension, we are proud to work for Coshocton County to help educate and empower our families, individuals, farms, and businesses. Please feel free to contact OSU Extension for more information at 740-622-2265 or visit our website at coshocton.osu.edu. Make it a healthy day!