

THE GREEN MAMA



Manda Aufochs Gillespie

Manda Aufochs Gillespie, aka The Green Mama, writes, teaches, and consults on growing greener families, homes, and businesses. She has been featured on the TV shows Save My Planet and The Lazy...

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What is white, frothy, and illegal to sell in B.C.?

Manda Aufochs Gillespie | Posted: Sep 13th, 2010



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Raw milk is illegal to sell in B.C., however 45 minutes south in Washington state it is sold legally. The Canada/U.S. border is being driven even further apart (at least in ideology) as the Lower Mainland's largest raw milk cooperative is being brought to court, again.

This Tuesday, September 14, the Fraser Health Authority will attempt to have Alice Jongerden, the dairy farmer for Home on the Range cooperative, found in contempt of court for "distributing raw milk for human consumption" after Judge Gropper issued a cease and desist on March 18th of this year.

What is at stake is whether or not the Home on the Range cooperative of over 400 herd owners is allowed to continue to receive milk from the dairy cows they collectively own. As a group, they pay dues that supports dairy farmer Jongarden in caring for the herd. A few times a week the farmers bring the milk into the city or herd owners go to the farm to pick-up their "dividends": unpasteurized milk, butter, and yoghurt. After the March order, all the dairy products are marked with a large: "NOT FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION."

"The owners... then use and enjoy their own property in whatever ways, they believe best," says share member Gordon Watson on his website: http://bovinity.webs.com.

Watson has said that what is really at stake in this debate is a person's right to make his own informed decision about what goes into his body.

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Canada is the only G8 country where raw milk is outlawed. And after a decision in early 2010 legalizing raw milk cooperatives in Ontario, British Columbia is coming out as one of the **most stridently anti-raw milk places in the world**.

Canada made **raw milk illegal** in 1991. In B.C. it is considered a **health hazard** under Section 7 of the Public Health Act Transitional Regulations. Why all the fuss? Health officials in Canada say that milk can contain potential pathogens, such as E. coli, and that pasteurization (heat treatment) makes the milk safer by destroying potential pathogens. They say that especially for people with compromised immune systems: the elderly, pregnant women, and children, drinking raw milk could cause severe illness.

Raw milk, or real-milk, **enthusiasts say that Health Canada laws have it wrong**. They say that raw milk, when raised on small, controlled dairies with healthy, free-ranging cows produce the healthiest milk there is. They point to **studies** suggesting that raw milk can ease lactose intolerance, provide important **probiotics** and their associated health benefits, and even provide protection against **asthma**, **allergies**, and eczema.

The raw milk fans point the finger right back at health officials and say that it is pasteurized milk that is more likely to become contaminated because it doesn't have the good bacteria to help fight off any contaminating bad bacteria. As well, herds that supply pasteurized milk do not have to be inspected for disease. Processed milk is being linked to a host of other ailments from **infertility linked to skim milk** and **heart disease from homogenized milk ingestion**.

So, **what is the truth** you may wonder? Is raw milk a magic elixir or is it instant death in a glass bottle? Getting to the truth might never happen in North America. There is very little, if any, good research being done on this question on this side of the ocean. The most recent studies have all come from Europe and have largely found that raw milk is closer to magic elixir than deadly poison. However, neither the FDA nor Health Canada have shown any signs of conducting their own studies or of funding peer reviews. In a recent series on raw milk, **CTV interviewed** Mark McAfee, creator of the first international safety standards for raw milk. He claims that raw milk is unlikely to ever get studied in North America because there is a lack of a financial incentive here and because the health agencies do not assign a value to food for healing or medicinal purposes.

If raw milk has been illegal to sell in BC since 1991 how are there over 300 families getting raw milk as part of the Home on the Range cooperative? Rather than buying the milk, a person becomes an owner in the herd with a financial investment in the cows. This money goes toward buying, feeding, housing, and maintaining the herd and the milking operations and supporting a farmer to oversee the process. The Home on the Range cooperative hires Alice Jongerden.

Ms. Jongerden grew up on a dairy and as an adult wanted to get raw milk for herself and her family. Even in her rural, Chilliwack setting, she couldn't find a good source for raw milk. So, **she decided to get a cow**. "When I had too much milk for our family, and not wanting to waste a drop, I started sharing the cow with a couple other families." It wasn't long before people were contacting her, clamoring for access to the cowshare. "We were not planning or anticipating more that 2 cows...it just happened that way."

Cowshares are not unusual. They exist wherever laws prohibit the sale of raw milk—throughout much of Canada and in the U.S. states where it is illegal. The idea of the cowshare is to circumvent restrictive laws around the sale of raw milk. The owners are, instead, simply drinking (or bathing in or feeding to their animals) the dividends of their investment.

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When I visited the farm where the Home on the Range herd lives I was struck by just how bucolic it all is: cows standing in pastures munching on grass, a big red milking barn that handles just four cows at a time, milk that is served in real glass jars. Just down the road the other reality can also be seen: another barn, this one with concrete flooring and cows kept all day in pens and milking is done en masse.

The cowshare owners I spoke to were not a homogenous bunch: a Dutch family with 6 kids, a middle-eastern family with a new baby, a college professor with a dog. Most of them expressed surprise that the government was interested in putting such tight controls on raw milk. "It is legal to get cigarettes and alcohol and even possible to get marijuana or meth, but illegal to get real milk. What sense does that make?" asked one anonymous herd owner. It is odd that hotdogs with nitrates (linked to childhood leukemia) and Chinese food with m.s.g. (linked to birth defects) are all legal and accessible, yet raw milk is subject to such intense public health scrutiny.

Across the border, in Washington State, the health officials found that legalizing and regulating raw milk was the best way to protect public health. As has been proven in B.C., raw milk drinkers will find a way to get their goods: either through a regulated market or underground. Let's see who is lifting a glass of the white and frothy after tomorrow's hearing.

Learn more:

[CTV series on raw milk](#)

[The Green Mama](#) looks at whether milk is really good for a body

[Campaign for Real Milk](#)

[Pros and Cons of Drinking Milk](#)

[Health Canada](#) urges people not to drink raw milk

By Manda Aufochs Gillespie

Manda Aufochs Gillespie is also known as [The Green Mama](#). Learn more about healthy living with children at www.thegreenmama.com and read more of what she has to say about milk. She has been known to consume a HUGE chocolate chip cookies washed down by tall glasses of raw milk.

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THE GREEN MAMA | Manda Aufochs Gillespie



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Raw Milk _ Freedom of Food Choice

dfg September 14th 2010 | 1:13 PM

This is about a campaign of fear and disinformation about raw milk. Fear, either as a principle or a motive, is the beginning of all evil for a "just society." You have to ask yourself why they are so afraid of one raw milk farmer. Why they are so afraid of natural food? Raw milk is an idea whose time has come...again. As people gradually wake up and realize that the Govt does not have your best interests at heart, the tipping point will reach critical mass. Raw milk is delicious and nutritious and it tastes like real food, because it is real food! What they sell as milk in the grocery store is an imitation of what milk should be. That is the nature of all processed foods. They imitate real food. I LOVE RAW MILK. I drink RAW MILK. I fully support Home on the Range. David Gomes

 I Agree (0)  I Disagree (0)

Raw Milk

Urban Diner September 14th 2010 | 3:15 PM

By outlawing raw milk, instead of regulating it for safety like everywhere else it is readily available in the world, the Fraser Valley Health Authority has essentially thrown the baby out with the bathwater. The latest science is showing real milk to be far healthier than the denuded industrial milk produced by the industry. By not allowing raw milk to be available, even when there is a large and growing demand from consumers, FVHA is showing that they are less concerned about safety and more concerned about pleasing the big businesses that seek to control the market. Paul Kamon

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Raw milk

cristian244 September 16th 2010 | 1:13 PM

In Italy, we have public distributors that sells raw milk for 1 euro per litre. Of course it has to be boiled before consumption, but it's highly recommended for its quality and because it's cheaper than 1,40€ industrialized milk. Cristian Righetti

 I Agree (0)  I Disagree (0)

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