

6 V.S.A. Chapter 152

Raw Milk Sales

Guideline for Retail Sales Direct
From Farm to Consumer

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History

- For several decades the law allowed the sale of 25 quarts of raw milk to be sold at the farm
- In 2008 this was raised to 50 quarts
- In 2009 this was raised to 160 quarts and allowed for delivery; but added some requirements, accountability and created a two tiered system
- In 2011 the allowable sales were changed from strictly fluid milk to fluid milk for personal consumption.

What are the Common Pathogens That May be in Raw Milk

- Common bacteria include *Salmonella*, *E. coli*, *Listeria*, *Campylobacter* and *Brucella*.
- CT in 2008 seven people sick with several hospitalized with one child on dialysis for E. Coli O157:H7 in raw milk
- VT 2010 there were three outbreaks of *Campylobacter* where raw milk was implicated
- **Pasteurization works** “the incidence of milk-borne illness in the US has decreased from approximately 25 per cent of all reported food borne illness outbreaks in 1938 to less than 1 per cent of reported outbreaks today.” (VT Health Department)

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The Statutes Related to the Sale of Unpasteurized, or Raw Milk

- Sets up two tiers of producers that could sell, give or barter raw milk directly to consumers without requiring a milk handler's license
 - 50 Quarts or less
 - 51 Quarts to 160 Quarts

For simplicity in describing the legislation Tier 1 is used for 50 Quarts and less; and Tier 2 will be used for the 51 to 160 Quart group

Rules and privileges are given to each tier.

Definitions 6 V.S.A Section 2776

- 1) “Consumer” means a customer who purchases, barter for, or otherwise acquires unpasteurized milk from the farm or delivered from the farm.
- 2) “Personal consumption” means the use by a consumer of unpasteurized milk for food or to create a food product made with or from unpasteurized milk which is intended to be ingested by the consumer, members of his or her household, or any nonpaying guests.
- 3) “Unpasteurized milk” or “unpasteurized (raw) milk” means milk that is unprocessed.
- 4) “Unprocessed” means milk that has not been modified from the natural state it was in as it left the animal, other than filtering, packaging, and cooling.

Privileges

May sell unpasteurized (raw) fluid milk, for personal consumption only, under the following two tier system:

- Tier 1
 - May sell, barter or give away milk on the farm where it is produced
 - May sell 50 quarts or less
 - May allow customers to fill their own bottles (containers)
- Tier 2
 - May sell, barter or give away milk on the farm where it is produced
 - May sell up to 160 quarts
 - May deliver if milk is presold and they follow the added requirements in the statute for tier 2
- Farmers that sell less than 50 quarts may deliver if they meet Tier 2 requirements

NOTE: Personal consumption does not include taking raw milk products to a social function or otherwise distributing the products made.

Common Requirements for Both Groups

- Milk may only be sold, bartered or given directly to the end user at the farm where it is produced (unless Tier II requirements are met)
- Milk may be sold, bartered or given by the farm for personal consumption only.
- Milk and cannot be resold or redistributed by the buyer.
- No free samples or milk sales at farmers markets or locations other than the farm where it is produced.
- Farmers may advertise and collect payment for milk at farmers markets or other locations as long as the customer comes to the farm to pick the milk up. (Tier II may deliver the milk to the customer)

Common Requirements for Both Groups

- Must be from healthy animals that are subject to veterinarian care and have current Rabies vaccinations, TB tests and Brucellosis tests, with results posted in a prominent place on the farm.
 - This testing and vaccinations must be done prior to selling any milk.
 - All dairy animals in the herd must be tested or vaccinated
 - Segregating a group of animals within a herd and only testing those used for producing milk for raw milk sales is not permitted.

Common Requirements for Both Groups

- Animals udders and teats cleaned and sanitized prior to milking
- Animals housed in a clean dry environment
- Milking equipment of sanitary construction, cleaned after each milking, and sanitized prior to the next milking
- Milking done in a clean environment appropriate for maintaining cleanliness

Common Requirements for Both Groups

- A potable water supply tested every three years or whenever it is modified
- If an animal is treated with antibiotics its milk must be tested and found free of antibiotics prior to being offered for sale.
 - Testing for antibiotic residue must be done utilizing a test validated for the drug used in the treatment (FDA Approved test kits must be used)

Record Keeping and Reporting Requirements for Both Groups

- A producer shall keep a composite sample of each day's milk frozen for two weeks. This sample will be made available to the Agency of Agriculture if requested.
 - This means if the producer, or their insurance company, wants a sample to utilize if someone gets sick, the producer should pull multiple samples. Producers should consider keeping the samples for 30 days but are not required to.
- A producer shall maintain a list of all customers including addresses, telephone numbers, and email when available.
- A producer shall maintain list of transactions for at least one year with customer name, date of purchase, and amount purchased

Labeling Requirements for Both Groups

- Date milk obtained from animal
- Name, address, zip code, and telephone number of the producer
- Common name for the type of animal (cattle, goat, sheep, etc.) or a picture
- The words “Unpasteurized (Raw) Milk. Not Pasteurized. Keep Refrigerated” on the principle panel clearly readable at least 1 / 8 inch high
- Also required is the warning shown on the next page.

Labeling Requirements for Both Groups

- On principal display panel at least 1 / 16 of an inch high the following warning:
“This product has not been pasteurized and therefore may contain harmful bacteria that can cause illness particularly in children, the elderly, and persons with weakened immune systems and in pregnant women can cause illness, miscarriage, or fetal death, or death of a newborn.”

Temperature Requirements for Both Groups

- Milk shall be cooled to below 40°F within 2 hours of the end of milking and held there until it is obtained by the consumer.
 - Milk needs to be cooled rapidly in a sanitary fashion (bulk tanks are not a requirement).
 - Cooling media around containers must be sanitary such as water from a tested supply changed often (recommended daily) or other acceptable means.
 - Packaged milk must be kept in a cooler below 40°F until it is obtained by the consumer.

Customer Inspection and Notification

- Prior to selling milk new customers shall be provided with a tour of the farm and any area associated with the milking operation.
 - While it may not be convenient, the statute clearly states that new customers are to have a tour of the farm. You can't force someone to look around but it needs to be offered. It is recommended that it is noted on the customer record when they take a tour.

Signs to be Posted in one inch text and clearly readable

“Unpasteurized (Raw) Milk. Not Pasteurized. Keep Refrigerated”

And

“This product has not been pasteurized and therefore may contain harmful bacteria that can cause illness particularly in children, the elderly, and persons with weakened immune systems and in pregnant women can cause illness, miscarriage, or fetal death, or death of a newborn.”

Tier 2 Requirements

- All of Tier 1 plus the following
- Must register with the Agency.
 - A phone call to the dairy section and talking with one of the dairy inspectors or the dairy section chief will suffice. An inspection will be scheduled in a timely manner.
- Annually inspected by the Vermont Agency of Ag inspectors
 - This inspection will be scheduled for the first visit and then be unannounced in future years.

Tier 2 Requirements

- Bottles (containers) must be filled by the producer
 - The customers cannot fill their own bottles
- Bottles (containers) cleaned by producer unless customers have their names and address on their bottles (containers).
 - Either way the producer is responsible that the bottles (containers) are clean before filling.

Tier 2 Testing Requirements

- A producer must have the milk tested twice per month by an FDA accredited lab and be below the following limits:
 - Total bacteria count - 15,000 cfu/ml
 - Total coliform count - 10 cfu/ml
 - Somatic cell count
 - 225,000/ml for cattle
 - 500,000/ml for goats
- All results must be forwarded to the Agency
- Results must be kept for a year and prominently posted where customers can see.
 - The procedure the Agency has adopted is that a container of milk, in the same size and type container as you are selling milk, is to be delivered to the lab. This monitors the quality of the milk and the container.

Persons that wish to have their milk tested should contact an accredited lab for specific methodology and handling.

The contact information for the state lab in Waterbury is (802) 244-4510

Tier 2 Requirements

- Every year, on or before March 1, the producer must report total gallons sold in the previous 12 months.
 - This is interpreted to mean the preceding calendar year's 12 month period.
 - These results should be mailed to:

Dairy Section
Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets
116 State St.
Montpelier, VT 05620-2901
- May not sell more than 160 quarts in any one day.

Tier 2 Delivery

- Only can sell within the state of Vermont
- Customers must have purchased the milk in advance
- Must deliver directly to the customers home or a refrigerated unit at the customers home that is capable of storage below 40°F
- Must protect from sunlight
- Must maintain the milk below 40°F throughout delivery
- Can contract with someone to deliver for them but the producer and delivery person are jointly and severally liable that the rules are followed.

Educational Dairy Product Classes Utilizing Raw Milk

- Educational classes showing consumers how to make foods utilizing raw milk can be held following the principles of Chapter 152
 - They must be held at the farm where the milk was produced
 - A sample of the milk utilized in the class must be frozen and saved for at least two weeks (can be the same sample frozen for normal sales)
 - Classes must be held in clean and sanitary location.
 - A sign equivalent to the consumer information sign that is posted at point of sale, must be clearly displayed during the class.
 - The attendees must all have been offered a tour of the farm's production areas prior to the class
 - A list of attendees with contact information must be kept by the farm for one year.
 - Samples of the foods made may be consumed by the class but not otherwise distributed.
 - Any fees charged need to clearly be identified as payment for the educational opportunity rather than as a payment for dairy products produced during the class.
 - The classes cannot be used as a marketing method to sell dairy products other than raw milk.

Dairy Product Making Classes Other Than on the Farm Where the Milk is Produced

- The following class scenarios are considered acceptable by the Agency as long as the classes are held for educational purposes and not as a means of selling dairy products.
 - Classes using pasteurized milk as a base; in a Health Department licensed food establishment such as a school cafeteria or a restaurant; or licensed dairy plant. Products made may be sampled.
 - Classes in other locations may demonstrate how to make products but no sampling of the final product may occur.
- If you have other ideas for classes you should discuss them with the dairy section at the Agency to see if there is a way to accommodate what you are trying to do within the statutory language.

Resources for Information

- Dairy Section of the Vermont Agency of Agriculture
 - (802) 828-2433
- Laboratory Section of the Vermont Agency of Agriculture
 - (802) 244-4510
- The Dairy Practices Council has educational guidelines on a variety of dairy subjects - www.dairypc.org
- Rural Vermont has guides for both farmers and consumers of raw milk (802) 223-7222