

IN RESPONSE TO THE ARTICLE PUBLISHED IN THE *WALL STREET JOURNAL* ABOUT THE RISE IN POPULARITY AND INTEREST IN RAW MILK

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While the article covers the rise in interest in fluid raw milk, as well as some health problems in consuming fluid raw milk, the article unfortunately does not make the distinction between consuming fluid raw milk and cheeses made with raw milk/unpasteurized milk. This distinction between raw fluid milk and raw milk/unpasteurized milk cheese is important because there are major differences in regulations and in health issues between consuming fluid raw milk and cheeses made with raw milk/unpasteurized milk, which has the potential to create consumer confusion about raw milk/unpasteurized milk cheeses. As [Dr. Catherine Donnelly](#), Professor Emeritus at the University of Vermont and expert in dairy microbiology has concluded in books and many studies, including this one in 2006 in [Food Technology](#), “Raw Milk Cheeses can be Produced Safely.”

Dr. Donnelly is a member of the advisory board of the [Oldways Cheese Coalition](#), an educational program of the nonprofit [Oldways](#). The OCC website notes, “Raw milk cheeses are worth celebrating for their complexity of flavor, diversity of microflora, and history. The quality of the ingredients, the extreme care taken by producers, and the natural cheese aging process ensure that raw milk cheeses are a safe choice. In order for a raw milk cheese to be sold in the US, the cheese must be aged at least 60 days at a temperature no lower than 1.7°C / 35°F. “

In [Food Standards Scotland](#), Dr. Donnelly writes that “Fluid raw milk and raw milk cheese have different risk profiles...U.S. regulations for use of raw and heat-treated milk in cheesemaking were issued in 1949 (21 CFR Part 13310). Cheesemakers could select one of two options to assure cheese safety: pasteurise milk used for cheesemaking; or hold cheese at a temperature of more than 2°C for a minimum of 60 days (known as the “60-day ageing rule”). The 60-day holding period recommendation was first published in the 24th August 1950 Final Rule (15 FR 5653) (Boor 2005). The recommendation was established as a result of expert testimony hearings that included the observation that no disease outbreaks had been associated with cheeses held for more than 60 days.

At Oldways, we think it is important to make this distinction between raw milk/unpasteurized milk cheeses and fluid raw milk, as the risks for consuming them are very different and raw milk/unpasteurized milk cheese producers represent years, even decades, of knowledge, tradition and thoughtful cheese-making. We hope the *Wall Street Journal* will consider a follow up article about the differences between fluid raw milk and raw milk/unpasteurized milk cheeses.