
Raw Milk Products

A four-part survey on awareness and understanding of raw milk products

November 2008

Summary

- a limited range of raw milk products are now available in New Zealand
- such products pose a low but definite health hazard to certain vulnerable groups
- the New Zealand Food Safety Authority (NZFSA) is the government agency tasked with educating these groups, the public, wholesalers, retailers, health professionals, and others, about these risks
- NZFSA commissioned research to find out about the effectiveness of their raw milk products education programme to date as well as some information on related matters
- the research was in four parts with the first a telephone survey of 300 members of the public, the second a “store intercept” survey of consumers, the third a telephone survey of selected trade outlets and medical centres, and the fourth a series of focus groups of vulnerable groups and others
- the research found that the general understanding of the term “raw milk” is that it means unpasteurised or uncooked milk but many people, particularly amongst the public, think it simply means fresh milk or milk in general
- most of the general public and the shoppers were not aware of the availability of raw milk products
- current consumption is generally limited to those who shop or dine where it is sold and some of this is inadvertent ie, some buy it without knowing the product is made from raw milk
- almost a third of the public thought that raw milk cheeses (products) were as safe as pasteurised milk products and many in the focus groups thought the same
- there was a low awareness of NZFSA material on raw milk products, even amongst medical centres
- while there was quite high awareness on food safety material in general and material for vulnerable groups on the dangers of certain foods, four out of 10 members of the public said that they had not seen any such information anywhere

- most of the general knowledge about raw milk products appears to have come from the news media
- when it came to terminology, the predominant view was that “unpasteurised” was a better term than “raw milk” with some arguing that this should be accompanied by an explanation
- effective communications was seen to be improvements to labelling (by putting information about raw milk on the front and in bold) and a multi-faceted programme with a brochure or brochures as the centrepiece.

Introduction

A limited range of raw milk products are now available to New Zealand consumers from retail outlets and restaurants. These are imported cheeses, the most well-known of which is the semi-hard cheese Roquefort.

Raw drinking milk is only available in New Zealand through limited sales “from the farm gate”. Producers are allowed to sell up to five litres of raw milk from their farm gates to people who intend to consume it themselves, or to provide it to their families.

Some raw milk products ie, products made from unpasteurised milk, can pose health hazards to consumers, particularly to those with vulnerabilities associated with pregnancy, immune system disorders, and the very young and the very old. NZFSA is tasked with educating people about these hazards so they can make informed choices about whether or not to consume raw milk products themselves.

In order for NZFSA to determine the effectiveness of its educational efforts, to gauge awareness and understanding of issues and terminology, and to find out better ways of presenting information about raw milk products, it requires feedback from those involved in the process including actual and potential consumers, wholesalers and retailers, health professionals, and vulnerable groups.

Accordingly, NZFSA commissioned research for this purpose and this report outlines the approaches taken and the results achieved.

The specific goals of the research were to get information on:

1. the effectiveness of NZFSA's raw milk products education campaign to date
2. awareness of the risks of raw milk products
3. understanding of associated terminology
4. likely effective labelling methods
5. consumption profiles.

After some discussion it was decided to carry out the research as four separate but related exercises targeting:

- a. general public
- b. consumers
- c. trade and health professionals
- d. vulnerable groups.

It was realised that one methodology for all would not suit. Accordingly, it was decided that the best way to get feedback from the various groups would be:

- general public - a quantitative nationwide telephone survey
- actual and likely consumers - interview them face-to-face at retail outlets where raw milk products were sold
- those who do or may sell raw milk products (and therefore have or will have an opportunity to inform consumers of possible hazards) and those who are health advisers (and therefore have the same opportunity) - contact them directly
- potentially vulnerable people - bring them together as focus groups.

Section One - General Public

Introduction

This survey component was designed generally to determine overall awareness amongst the adult public of the risks, issues and educational material associated with raw milk products as well as what they think might be effective labelling of products.

Methodology

A random sample of 300 people aged 15 and older was taken from telephone directories throughout New Zealand. Respondents were offered the opportunity to go in a draw with a one-in-20 chance of winning a \$25 voucher.

Results

The following are the collective responses to the questions put to the respondents:

1. Does the term "raw milk" mean to you any of the following?

Fresh milk	55
Unpasteurised milk	174
Uncooked milk	15
Milk in general	42
Other*	12

(* Of those who answered "other", 8 said "raw milk" meant nothing to them or had never heard the term, 2 said "straight from cow", 1 said "trim milk", and 1 "pasteurised".)

2. Are you aware that there are food products now available in New Zealand made from raw milk ie, unpasteurised, milk?

Yes	83
No	194
Not sure	15
Don't know	7

3. One of the food products made available more recently is Roquefort cheese. Have you heard of Roquefort?

Yes	106
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If "yes" do you know it is made from raw (unpasteurised) milk?

Yes	33
No	52
Not sure	2
Don't know	9
No	180
Not sure	6
Don't know	6

4. Do you think raw milk cheeses are as safe as pasteurised ones?

Yes	86
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No	116
Not sure	46
Don't know	51

5. Raw milk products carry a low health risk for most people but pose a higher risk for some people. Did you know this?

Yes	141
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If "yes" do you know which groups?*

*(Pregnant women – 40; babies/very young/small children – 28; people with allergies – 18; elderly – 15; chronic health problems/sick/low immunity – 12; lactose intolerant – 9; diabetics - 6; TB sufferers – 2; bronchial, high blood pressure, chemo patients, unhygienic people, those with terminal illness, on low fat diet and those with gastric complaints – 1 each.)

No	146
Not sure	10
Don't know	2

6. Have you seen any education material for vulnerable groups such as pregnant woman and people with low immunity about the dangers of eating certain foods eg, shellfish and raw milk?

Yes	166
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If "yes" ask can you recall where and what it was about?* **

*(Of those who said "where": Plunket/midwives/ante-natal classes - 18; Magazines (Women's, Consumer, etc) – 16; Newspapers – 16; Doctors/doctors' offices/pamphlets from same – 14; television – 14; pregnancy books, Bounty Pack/pregnancy material – 13; word-of-mouth – 5; general knowledge – 4; flyer/pamphlet/brochure – 4; supermarket – 3; FSA pamphlet/fridge pull-out, advertising, National Radio, and "in England" – 1 each.)

** (Of those who said "what": Pregnancy – 45; shellfish – 27; listeria – 9; raw food (fish/meats/eggs, etc) – 8; seafood - 3; processed meat – 2; low immunity – 2; raw milk products/soft cheeses – 2; iron, meat, alcohol, milk, chicken, cancer, deli products, goat's

milk, disabilities, elderly, and children – 1 each.)

No 122

Not sure 7

Don't know 2

7. Does anyone in your household fall into this vulnerable group?

Yes 40

If "yes" ask do you mind explaining which group?*

*(Baby/child - 6, allergies and low immunity – 5 each; asthma – 3; pregnant, cancer, diabetes, eczema, and lactose intolerant – 2 each; blood pressure, post-operation, and elderly – 1 each.)

If "yes" ask is English the best language to use to communicate with this person?

Yes 34

No 6

Not sure 0

Don't know 0

If "no" then ask which one?*

* (Chinese - 3, Samoan and Maori – 1 each)

No 249

Not sure 5

Don't know 2

8. The Authority has issued a brochure for doctors to have in their surgeries about the dangers of raw milk cheeses. Have you seen this?

Yes 10

If "yes" ask was the information useful?

Yes 3

No 2

Not sure 2

Don't know 2

If "yes" ask do you follow the advice?

Yes 3

No 2

Not sure 2

Don't know 2

No 282

Not sure 5

Don't know 2

9. The Authority has issued a brochure for shops selling Roquefort cheese to have available for consumers. Have you seen this?

Yes 76

No 282

Not sure 3

Don't know 1

10. What terms do you think would be useful to have on the label of raw milk products to let vulnerable groups know what it is made of? (read out)

Raw milk 63

Unpasteurised milk 118

Non heat treated milk 49

Other (and if so what?)	0
Not sure/Don't know	45

11. If you don't mind, could you please tell me whether you are aged between ...

15 and 24	15
25 and 34	33
35 and 44	52
45 and 64	92
65+	105

Section Two - Consumers

Introduction

The emphasis here was on milk products and especially cheese consumers and their awareness of and views on raw milk products, risk, understanding, terminology, use, educational material, and labelling.

Methodology

A popular specialist food retail outlet in Wellington agreed to a researcher conducting intercept interviews with shoppers on behalf of NZFSA. Four hours of "intercepts" were carried out over two days in early November.

The interviewer stood near the cheese area and looked out for shoppers who either lingered at the area (studying what's for sale) or selected an item.

Interviewer then approached the shopper, introduced himself, and, with agreement, carried out an interview.

Twenty consumers were interviewed over the four hours.

Results

The following is formatted around the questionnaire used with the aggregated results listed.

Ask all:

1. a) I noticed that you stopped at the cheese counter/milk product area (or chose product from). Would you mind telling me what products you were interested in (or what you chose)?

Cheese	20
Yoghurt	0
Milk	0
Cream	1
Other	0
None	0

If not cheese then go to question 2.**If cheese then ask :**

- b) Would you mind telling me what sort of cheese?

Standard cheese*	18
Roquefort	2

(* "standard" to mean all types of cheese other than raw milk cheeses)

If standard cheese then go to question 2.**If raw milk cheese then ask:**

- c) Are you aware that this is made from raw milk ie, unpasteurised milk

Yes	0
No	2
Not sure	0

If aware that is made from raw milk, then ask:

- d) How were you made aware?

Ingredients label	0
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In-store publicity	0
Newspaper	0
Other publicity	0
Word-of-mouth	0
Other	0

e) Are you aware that raw milk products are not recommended for certain vulnerable groups such as pregnant women, the elderly and people with low immunity?

Yes	0
No	0
Not sure	0

If yes, ask:

f) Can you recall how you found about such risks?

Packaging	0
News media	0
Brochures (and if so where	0
Word of mouth	0
Other (list)	0

For those who did buy raw milk cheese now go to question 3.

If person did not buy raw milk cheese then ask:

2. a) Are you aware that raw milk ie, unpasteurised milk cheeses are now sold in New Zealand?

Yes	7
No	6
Not sure	5

b) Are you aware that raw milk products are not recommended for certain vulnerable groups such as pregnant women, the elderly and people with low immunity?

Yes	10
No	2
Not sure	6

If yes, ask:

c) Can you recall how you found about such risks?

Packaging	0
News media	5
Brochures (and if so where)*	2
Word of mouth	4
Other (list)**	

* (could not recall)

** (when pregnant – 2; from family – 1; through commonsense – 2; from doctor – 1; from a caterer – 1)

All get asked the rest of the questions:

3. Does the term raw milk mean to you any of the following:

Fresh milk	1
Unpasteurised milk	17
Uncooked milk	2
Milk in general	0
Other	0

4. Raw milk cheeses are labelled as containing unpasteurised milk. If you saw this would you think it meant milk that has not been heat treated to kill harmful organisms?

Yes	12
No	1
Not sure	3

Not sure	4
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5. What do think are the best ways to make sure that people, particularly those who may be vulnerable to the harmful organisms, know of the risks?

Packaging	15
In-store publicity	5
News media	9
Brochures	3
Word of mouth	4
Other	0

Now ask 6 a) or b) AND c) depending on earlier responses

6 a) Are you a frequent consumer of raw milk cheese?

Yes	1
No	1

OR

b) Have you ever consumed raw milk cheese?

Yes	9
No	8
Not sure	1

AND

c) Would you continue consuming or consider consuming raw milk cheese?

Yes	12
Not really	3
No	1
Maybe	3
Not sure	1

7 a) Why do you consume it/would consider consuming it /would not consume it?*

*(just like cheese – 3; taste/tastes better – 6; because good for you – 1; might try if tastes better – 1; for certain recipes – 1; tried but didn't like – 1; would like to try -1)

If do, has or would consider then ask:

b) Who do you/would you share the raw milk cheese with?*

*(friends - 7; friends and family – 1; friends but tell them first - 1; friends who are safe – 1; anyone who hires my catering business – 1; no-one – 1.)

Interviewer to note gender and approximate age:

Male – 5

Female – 15

Ages:

30 – 39 (5)

40 – 49 (8)

50 – 65 (7)

Section Three - Trade and Health

Introduction

The views and practices of the people and outlets that interface with the public on food and health matters are obviously important in ensuring that people generally and the vulnerable in particular are aware of the health hazards of consuming raw milk products.

Because of this it was decided that a limited survey of trade outlets and health centres would be useful in gaining an understanding of what is happening in these areas.

Methodology

An open-ended telephone survey of 20 trade outlets and health centres in the Wellington region was carried out during November 2008. Ten of each were contacted and a principal person interviewed. In the case of the trade outlets the principal was usually the owner and/or operator or manager of the business. In the case of the health centres it was usually the practice manager or the head nurse.

The interviewer was instructed to contact the outlets, explain that he was carrying out a survey on behalf of NZFSA, and with agreement either interview a suitable person then and there or organise a suitable time for calling back.

Results

Trade outlets

Principals from 10 wholesale, retail and restaurants in Wellington were interviewed:

Sale of raw milk products

Six of the outlets sold raw milk cheeses.

Likelihood of selling in the future

Three of the four outlets that are not currently selling the products intend to do so at some stage.

Reasons for selling now or in the future

The overwhelming reasons for selling now or in the future are quality, taste and flavour. One person called Roquefort "the king of cheese". Several mentioned that raw milk cheeses were good to have for variety, particularly with cheese platters.

One outlet not selling at present wasn't aware that raw milk cheeses were available and, now that he knew they were, would look to stock them. One restaurant was trying it out simply to see how popular it would be. One retail outlet said that they stocked it because of customer demand.

Awareness of risks for vulnerable groups

All but two outlets said that they were aware of the risks for vulnerable groups, most mentioning pregnant women as the vulnerable group and two mentioning the elderly as well.

Of the two outlets not aware of the risk, one has no intention of selling raw milk cheeses but the other does.

How people became aware of the risks

One outlet says that they were the first to import the cheeses and because of this became fully aware of the risks to vulnerable groups. Another – yet to sell but intending to do so – said it was a matter of commonsense. Another referred to "common knowledge". This person said that their "front of house" staff were all French and they know about the risks. As well, there was information on the labels of the cheeses.

One said that they became aware when training in Europe and two more said during chef and polytech training in New Zealand. One of these said that they got information off the internet as well and were given some information by their supplier.

Two referred to hearing about the risks at cheese lectures. One retailer said that they became aware via NZFSA brochures.

Awareness of NZFSA brochure

Four of the 10 outlets were aware that the NZFSA had issued a brochure on the subject. Of these four, one added that they pass on the brochure to the people they supply while another said that went to a meeting where they were given the brochure.

Two of the six who were not aware of the NZFSA brochure are currently selling raw milk cheeses, two more intend to and two do not intend to.

Whether they have the brochure and whether they use it

Three outlets said that they have, or have had, the brochure and used it.

Views on the risks

Most people did not have a view on the perceived risks preferring to leave it to customers to decide. One said that it was clear that some people stayed away from the soft cheeses because they didn't trust them as much as the hard cheeses.

One – a supplier to other outlets and a retail outlet in its own right – said that it was important for people to be informed. Accordingly, they provided information (the NZFSA brochure) to the people they supplied as well as training their front of house staff to know the risks so they could explain these where appropriate.

Three did say that vulnerable people like pregnant women should be careful, two implying that they would inform such people where possible and the other saying it was a matter of commonsense.

What sort of customers purchase raw milk cheeses

The supplier said that he was now providing raw milk cheeses to quite a wide range of restaurants but that the people who bought it direct from his outlet were “discerning but not necessarily wealthy people”.

Another outlet said that quite a few caterers bought from them as well as what they called “general consumers”.

A restaurant said that it was popular with business customers and “couples dining out”.

Recall of consumers mentioning health risk

Two of the six outlets currently selling raw milk cheeses said that they had heard comments from pregnant women with one outlet saying that these people were “very well informed”. The other four outlets that currently sell said they had heard no comments about the risk whatsoever.

Views on how consumers are best made aware of the risk

The supplier to other outlets had a strong view that there should be “better labelling” because “people ignore brochures”. Another said “education” programmes while another said there should be pamphlets and fridge magnets as well as a concerted effort to “tell customers”.

Another believed there should be brochures and “workshops for cheeses” where sellers could be educated about the risks and about how to ensure customers were informed.

Most people did mention brochures as a suitable centrepiece for an education programme while one thought that television advertising would be useful. One restaurant owner thought that people should be educated “at the table” ie, told at the time they were considering ordering cheeses.

Thoughts on what the term raw milk means to consumers

Six thought that “raw milk” would be interpreted as “unpasteurised” by consumers with one saying it would be a better term to use in the first place. One of these thought that “unpasteurised” would make people think it was “out of a cow” and therefore “dangerous”.

One thought it would mean “homogenised”, another that it would mean “uncooked and cold”, another that it would mean “straight from the cow”, while another thought it would suggest that it was more “healthy” than other milk products.

Health Centres

Representatives from 10 medical centres in the Wellington region were interviewed:

Whether NZFSA brochure on raw milk cheeses available in clinic

Only two of the centres knew they had the brochure available while one was not sure. Seven were sure that they did not.

Material available on dangers of eating certain foods

All 10 centres did have material available for pregnant women, those with low immunity, etc, on the dangers of eating certain foods.

Whether they make vulnerable groups aware of dangers of raw milk

Five of the centres said that it was standard practice to make vulnerable groups aware of the dangers of consuming raw milk while four said that it was not. One said that they gave out a pack to pregnant women and thought there might be something in that.

How this is done

The five centres that do inform people about the dangers of raw milk said that patients are both told and given written information like brochures. The one that thought there would be information about raw milk in the pack given to pregnant women said the same.

Having information available in languages other than English

Nine of the 10 centres believed that there should be material in other languages with seven mentioning "Asian" and two mentioning Cantonese and Mandarin. Three of these also said "Samoan" or "Pacific Island", two also mentioned "Greek", one "Italian" and one "Malay".

The one that said that English was all that was required at their clinic was because of their type of clientele.

Whether "raw milk" is the best term to use

Four thought that "raw milk" was or probably was the best term to use while two thought that "unpasteurised" was best.

One thought that "untreated" would be best while three did not know or were unsure.

Discernment between fresh milk, raw milk, unpasteurised milk and uncooked milk

Only one thought that people do or could discern between the above terms while the rest were sure that they could not or "probably" could not. The one that did was not sure that people would or could discern the differences when it came to cheese.

One thought that referring to milk as cooked or uncooked would "stump people".

Views on best way to educate or otherwise alert vulnerable groups

All but two said brochures were best or should at least be part of the mix, with one saying the "best is brochures at surgeries".

Seven mentioned television advertising with one saying this was a good way of reaching low income people.

Other recommendations were speaking to “at risk groups”, working through Citizens Advice Bureaus and community centres generally, websites, and advertising in local newspapers.

Section Four - Focus Groups

Introduction

Because the risks associated with consuming raw milk products are greater for certain people, it was decided to run a limited number of focus groups targeting both the potentially vulnerable and those who are likely potential buyers for home consumption of such products.

Five groups were selected:

- mothers of young children
- older higher socio-economic women
- elderly
- diabetics
- HIV positives

Again, the emphasis on the discussions was to be on terminology, consumption, awareness of risk, labelling, and communications.

Methodology

Focus group research is a qualitative methodology involving a facilitator running an open-ended discussion with a few selected individuals. This allows the researcher to explore the subject matter with questions, free of the constraints of quantitative methodology.

Typically the researcher has a series of headings and questions to be used as prompts to facilitate discussion. The researcher tries not to predict the nature and direction of the discussion but simply allows it to flow within the general confines of the subject matter itself.

In this case, the facilitator placed a package of Roquefort cheese on the table for people in the groups to examine ie, looking to see how it was labelled.

Results

What they know

All groups had a fairly clear idea that “raw milk” meant unpasteurised and/or milk in its natural form, or straight “out of the cow”. There was widespread knowledge that pasteurisation involved heat-treating to “kill the bacteria” and meant “boiling out the bugs”.

Some were less clear when it came to raw milk cheese. Some mothers thought the cheese would be made with milk “put through a strainer” or with milk that “has been heated” and that the cheese could simply be called “unprocessed”. One member of the HIV group thought that “raw milk cheese” in itself meant that the cheese itself “had not been heated”.

However, the older women, the elderly, the diabetics and most of the HIV group, did think of “raw milk cheeses” as being made from unpasteurised milk.

Safety, awareness, consumption

All of the mothers and most of the older women were not aware of the risks of consuming raw milk while all of the elderly, the diabetics and the HIV group were aware there were risks for some.

The elderly cited the very elderly, pregnant women and people with allergies as those at risk, the diabetics cited pregnant women and one mentioned the immune deficient, and the HIV group all mentioned the immune deficient, pregnant women and, curiously, diabetics, because of a presentation given to them by the HIV Foundation.

The mothers, the elderly and the diabetics talked about the general management of milk production and thought that this held the key to safety eg, use of technology, refrigeration and good hygiene at farms. The term “commonsense” was used by some to indicate a sensible approach to milk consumption.

Awareness of the actual availability of raw milk cheeses was very low. One of the mothers knew these were available, none of the older women did, all of the elderly did, none of the diabetics (although one had eaten Roquefort without knowing it was made from raw milk), and only one of the HIV group (a chef) did.

The discussion itself excited interest in raw milk cheeses with most in all groups now expressing a desire to try it.

The mothers and the older women would not hesitate to share it with friends and family but would advise of the risks. The elderly said the same but felt strongly that people need to take responsibility for themselves, eg, asking about the cheeses on offer. The diabetics would also share although one said that they would only “if they loved cheese, otherwise I would hide it”. The

HIV group had no concerns whatsoever, particularly after the chef amongst them explained how nice it was and how he used it in various recipes.

No-one had seen any brochures or other material on raw milk products except for the presentation seen by the HIV group and one elderly who thought he had heard something on the radio. Several mentioned seeing material about shellfish. The elderly could recall NZFSA brochures about “fish etc”.

Generally all saw the risk as very low although many thought that “the dangers should be known to consumers”.

Labelling and warnings

The mothers thought that the best descriptive term to use was “unpasteurised”, the older women and the HIV group thought that it should be “untreated”, the older women “natural untreated”, and the diabetics “raw unpasteurised”.

All thought having the identifier on the back of the label was insufficient, with many saying that they would not notice anything on the back. All thought there should be a clear identifier on the front of the package and in large font with the mothers and the older woman wanting also to see the word “warning” or “caution” and a summary of the risks.

Effective communications

Half of the mothers, all of the older women, and the elderly (but this group only if the money was available) thought that TV advertising was the way to go. The other half of the mothers thought that improved labelling alone would be sufficient with the diabetics seeing this as part of the mix.

The elderly liked word-of-mouth “like Logan Brown do”. The elderly and the HIV group mentioned having pamphlets where raw milk products are sold. The diabetics also mentioned newspaper advertising, targeted education for vulnerable groups, and advising people to take responsibility for themselves.

Other

The mothers and the older women reiterated the idea of ensuring that the customer contact staff in restaurants and elsewhere were educated about the risks and told to advise people accordingly.

The elderly talked about the taste of the cheese and their perception that the risks were not great. One said: “You build up immunity anyway. When we lived in Israel we used to buy fresh cottage cheese out of a bucket and we didn’t get sick.” They were more concerned that not more raw milk products were available.

The HIV group too were most interested discussing taste and how good it really is and how the risks were not very significant.

Conclusion

Understanding of the term “raw milk”

The general understanding of the term “raw milk” is that it means unpasteurised or uncooked yet this is far from universal. A third of the general public did not understand the term, believing that raw milk simply meant fresh milk or milk in general.

There was a little confusion amongst some of the people from the other groups, particularly when it came to thinking about raw milk cheeses rather than raw milk as such. Some thought that the cheese making process would make the ingredients “less raw”.

Awareness of availability of raw milk food products and Roquefort as such

Most of the general public and the shoppers were not aware of the availability of raw milk products nor was one of the trade outlets and many of the people in the focus groups.

Awareness of the brand Roquefort was higher than knowing it was made from raw milk.

Consumption of raw milk cheese

At this stage consumption appears limited to those who shop or dine at restaurants where it is sold and some of this is inadvertent ie, people buying Roquefort without knowing that it is made from raw milk. This suggests there is more awareness of the brand than there is of what it is made from.

Yet there is evidence of a growing curiosity about such products as people get to try it or hear about it from someone else.

Knowledge that some raw milk products are not as safe for some groups as pasteurised products

Almost a third of the public thought raw milk cheeses were as safe as pasteurised products and another third did not know or were not sure. Many in the focus groups thought the same. The rest did know that some such products did carry a health risk for some people.

Awareness of education material

There was very low awareness of the NZFSA material on raw milk products as such, even amongst the medical centres. Even awareness of material on food safety in general and material for vulnerable groups on the dangers of eating certain foods and eating shellfish in particular was

patchy. Four out of 10 members of the public said they had not seen any such information anywhere.

Most of the knowledge that there is about raw milk products has come from the news media although word of mouth, brochures and “commonsense” featured as well.

Terminology on labels etc

The predominant view was that “unpasteurised” was a better term than “raw milk” with some adding that an explanatory sentence should be added to make sure people knew what was meant.

Effective communications

Communicating via the packaging was a popular choice with those asked often saying that there should be information in bold on the front and perhaps a warning sign of some sort as well.

Word-of-mouth was seen as important in situations where the package might not be displayed (as in restaurants) and also presentations, workshops, and the like, to and for vulnerable groups, sellers, and other interested parties.

At a more general programme level, many saw that a mix of material and methods with a brochure or brochures at the core would be best. Such a programme could include advertising, website material and the other elements of what is typically “social marketing”.

END

22 May 2009