Raw Milk Producers Association

Raw Milk Guidance Booklets

All members of the RMPA will be given a set of five raw milk guidance booklets. These are currently being drafted and printed in collaboration with the Food Standards Agency, micro-biologists and world leading experts on the safe production of raw milk. These will provide invaluable reading and reference material for everyone producing raw milk or raw milk products. Some of the booklets provide key information, while others also give step-by-step practical guidance. They will not only provide the do's and don'ts, but also what the hazards are and why certain methodologies or precautions should be used. The five booklets are:

1. Biosecurity for raw milk producers

This informative guideline is essential reading for the development of a robust Food Safety Management System (FSMS). It covers the measures necessary to keep diseases out of the farm and to prevent disease spread within the farm. It highlights the risks associated with the introduction of potential disease-causing microbes on the farm that can make your animals or your consumers sick, as well as precaution recommendations to reduce or even eliminate these risks. This guideline also describes the potential disease-causing microbes that may already be present on dairy farms and how to reduce the risk that their are spread as well as prevent them for creating a hazard to a lactating herd, from which raw drinking milk is sourced.

2. Farm management, milking hygiene and milk testing for raw milk producers

This is a practical guideline providing key information on the farm management systems and milking routines necessary to produce safe hygienic raw milk. It takes a holistic approach to hygiene given that the farm environment, husbandry and management system all have an influence on the production of safe, hygienic raw milk. This guideline covers how udder health, metabolic conditions and cow conformation can influence the raw milk quality. It also includes recommendations for cleanliness of and in the milking parlour, udder and teat cleaning procedures, milking and post-milking routines. There are detailed instructions for taking and sending milk samples for micro-biological testing as well as how to interpret the results. There is an explanation of the controls necessary to verify a FSMS is working effectively and how to test shelf life of the final product.

3. The hazards of raw milk

This booklet is all about knowing the enemy. Zoonotic agents are bacteria, viruses or parasites that can be transmitted from animals to humans and cause disease in humans. This booklet is about the zoonotic agents that have potential to make consumers sick. It gives a basic explanation of bacteria such as Salmonella, Campylobacter, vero-toxin producing E. coli, Listeria, Brucella, Mycobacterium and

others. The booklet explains how these can be a risk on a farm, the means by which they can contaminate milk and then be a risk to raw milk consumers. This reference booklet will provide answers to the common questions regarding potentially hazardous microbes. Hopefully you will not stop producing raw milk when you have read this booklet but move quickly onto the next one!

4. The benefits of raw milk

Raw milk has been consumed for thousands of years and it is only in the last century that there has been a global switch to pasteurised products. The pasteurisation of milk saved many lives until we could get dangerous diseases such as tuberculosis and brucellosis under control. As the infectious diseases in humans decreased there was an epidemic increase in diseases such as allergy and asthma and immunologist started to see a link between raw milk consumption and less allergies and asthma. This sparked a renewed interest in raw milk in many countries and consumers started to seek out less processed milk again. This booklet looks at the various studies that have been conducted on raw milk. It also covers milk fats and fatty acids, whey proteins and A1/A2 milk. The impact of heating and homogenisation of milk is also discussed along with the nature of various types of scientific studies and the strength of scientific evidence. It will be a great reference when someone asks about the benefits of raw milk.

5. A Food Safety Management System for raw milk

During 2019 the Food Standards Agency (FSA) will require all producers of raw drinking milk to have a Food Safety Management System (FSMS) in place. This guidance booklet has been written based on FSA documents and will provide the necessary information to create a bespoke on farm FSMS that meets FSA requirements. It is not, however, a ‘fill in the blank’ book, but an ‘evaluate your own risks and tell us what you are going to do to reduce these risks’ book. The information in the booklets on zoonotic diseases, milking hygiene and biosecurity will all be used in developing a bespoke FSMS. As well as how to evaluate and consider mitigation of risks, this booklet will give guidance on what records to keep. However, ultimately the FSMS documents are not going to create safe raw milk. It is on farm actions, attitude and knowledge of the FSMS, evaluation of production systems, the potential risks, possible risk reduction procedures and verification of controls that creates a safe raw drinking milk and derived products for consumers.

These Guidance Booklets are for sale to non-members

These five guidance booklets will be available for sale to non-members. Contact the secretary of the RMPA to order.