

Wisconsin Raw Milk – A Consumer’s Perspective

By Emily Matthews, RN

I am an ER nurse---we see all kinds, and we tend to classify and play demographic games concerning our patients, as in:

- Weak and dizzy’s
- Frequent fliers
- Drug seekers
- Fall down go boom

So I decided to classify raw milk users demographically, and came up with 3 groups:

1. Conventional farmers and their neighbors and family
2. Those who own dairy animals, NOT dairy farmers
3. Those who buy from raw-milk farmers, through cow-share or whatever

Now we can play with these groups: First 2 are those under the wire—could be called black market. Government does not officially know about them, and they are not threatened.

They are also not counted by Government, in terms of the rate of raw milk usage. So the actual rate of use is much higher than the Government will ever know, and this is significant when considering supposed rates of disease.

The last group—the raw milk buyers—are threatened by Government actions, as they have no other access to raw milk—they must buy it.

I will insert here a few questions:

- Why are farmers, and not the buyers, the only ones busted as is the case with a drug deal?

- Does the Government have the right to forbid people getting raw milk?
- Does the Government “grant” us rights, or are we born with them? Who is the ultimate authority, Government or God?
- In other words ARE we endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights? Or are we not? This is something to think about.

Getting back to demographics: consider the groups a different way: Why do they use raw milk?

I believe the first group--conventional farmers, their families, and their neighbors--may not have done a lot of research into raw milk. They use it because it's cheap, and it tastes better. I believe they also take it for granted.

(Now, I make a practice of looking closely at patients' teeth when they come to ER if they are farm workers, and I even ask them if they drink “bulk tank” milk. Usually these patients are in ER for injuries, not illness, and their teeth are always better-looking than the rest.)

Next we consider the latter 2 groups—dairy animal owners, and buyers of raw milk—they are different. They always have a reason for their use. Usually it's a health issue, sometimes they've just read up on the subject, and use it because it's better for you.

Quite often the people who actively seek out raw milk, or buy their own animals, are well-educated. I heard testimonies from those trained in public health, or from people with master's degrees. We are not ignorant people that need to be protected from ourselves. It shows something, that some of us are even willing to put up with being tied to milking our own dairy animals, if that'll get Government off our backs.

Every person here has their own story to tell. You all can attest to health improvements, or better taste. Or even saving someone's life. I recently heard 2 testimonies where doctors had given up on the patient, and raw milk saved them.

I will insert here a bit of caution. PLEASE, whenever there is some Government action, issue, or hearing about raw milk, please remember that though your story is amazing, some scientist-guy is going to roll his eyes and think to himself, "This is anecdotal evidence, and anecdotals can't be counted." Well, why not?

Challenge them! Explain WHY anecdotal evidence must be allowed. For example, who is going to fund a double-blind study on the benefits of raw milk? What corporation is going to fund that study?

Ask them does a person need a study to follow common sense? Did anybody do a study to prove that most babies walk by a year? This technically is anecdotal! You see the point.

Finally, we'll consider where all 3 groups of raw milk users come together. All 3 groups do have certain qualities in common.

1. You are all dedicated. Anyone that knows farmers knows they are dedicated. And their customers are equally so--they are dedicated to doing the absolute best for their families.
2. You all are passionate about this, or you wouldn't even be here. Even the conventional farmer with 80 cows is passionate about taking care of them; there's a lot easier ways to make money.
3. You all have drive. Most people would rather be sick than give up their addictions. E.g. yesterday I had a pt whose teeth are rotting away. She said she'd never had trouble when she was younger; she's only 28. I asked her if she drank soda, and she admitted she did all day long. I said, "Well, that's why your teeth are rotting; it's also weakening your bones." She told me she'd

already broken bones, and I replied that she should give it up. She admitted, “Yeah, I know it’s bad for me,” but I KNOW she has no intentions of giving up her addiction. You are different; you have the drive to make needed changes.

4. You all are determined. You know your enemies, and you will do whatever it takes to remove their iron hand from your back. You will not give up!

5. You all are original. Each person has a story to tell, and some are astounding. Share them with each other!