

## **BETTER MILK FOR OUR CHILDREN**

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There is a good chance that the milk we purchase at the grocery store and try unsuccessfully to get our children to love and consume is a different milk from that which we baby boomers enjoyed in the 1950's. Then, the vast majority of dairy cows were grazing outdoors on green grass, healthy and fit walking about a mile a day in the sunshine and outdoor air, and not severely burdened while producing 4 – 5 gallons per day of rich high protein milk.

Today, half American's milk is produced on 3% of the dairy farms. Those are monoculture confinement factory farms in which cows eat grain from troughs, walk on concrete, crowded hundreds to the acre producing 8 – 10 gallons a day, perhaps boosted with artificial growth hormones. Today's cows have a life span of 3 – 4 lactations, compared with 6 – 8 lactations for yesterdays traditional pastured cows.

Confinement factory dairy farmers suggest that all milk is the same, and that the cows situation is irrelevant to the milk produced. Many may even believe this, but common sense leads consumers to a different conclusion.

We know from human nutrition and health that any range of stresses raises cholesterol, stresses immune systems, and contributes to ill health. We should assume that a cows state of health is reflected directly in the milk which it produces. Milk is very similar to blood, and is produced in the cow with direct exchange of a wide range of substances supplied by the cows own blood to the udder. We can assume that outstanding cow health leads to outstanding milk, and that mediocre cow health leads to mediocre milk.

Over the last 30 years it can be argued that nothing has been done to improve the quality of milk which we purchase at the grocery store. Cows have been pushed to greater output, distribution systems have been pushed to greater distances and time between milking and store delivery. Processing temperatures and times have gradually increased. Two years ago the routine pasteurization temperature used was raised ten degrees, which gives ten times the heat effect. There is increasingly convincing scientific evidence that today's grain fed cows produce milk and meat which is less healthy for humans and may contribute to illnesses.

Farmers receive a smaller proportion of the consumers dairy dollar than ever before in history. The large raw milk purchasing, processing, and distributing industries receive an ever larger of that same milk dollar. The resultant low milk price paid to farmers means the only way to survive is to grow larger, and produce milk less expensively. This has led to any number of compromises. We just do not have a goal of producing better milk.

Anyone who has watched a newborn find their mothers nipple and begin immediately sucking recognizes that we human beings are programmed to respond physically and emotionally to the sweet rich taste of milk in our mouths, and the satisfying fullness in our stomachs. Until we reach puberty and begin to recognize and appreciate the joy of another humans intimate touch and affection, there is little more comforting, nourishing and uniquely satisfying than the mouth feel and flavor of rich whole milk.

I believe that as much as our nations children suffer poor health today since they drink only half the milk which we did as baby boomers, that they also are deprived of an intangible emotional pleasure and comfort when limited to the thinner, and usually reduced fat milk available. It's no wonder they turn away from that "milk lite" and try to find satisfaction in sugary beverages and fatty salted foods. We are hard wired to seek satisfaction and satiety. Whole real milk delivers that at only 4% butterfat. Lacking that, we look for it in 30% fat hamburgers, pizza cheese, French fries, and candy bars.

Most adults do not have a palate for tasting milk. Children's young taste buds quickly recognize the flat stale taste of old, light oxidized, and overly heat treated milk. They may not say that it tastes bad, but they react accordingly. I know from raising my children that the freshness and richness of the milk in our refrigerator has a dramatic affect on the milk consumption. Rich fresh whole milk from local pasture grazed cows is gulped down glass after glass. The bland light oxidized, lower component older milk available at grocery stores is sipped at, as is weeks old sterilized organic milk. We must chide them to finish their first glass at the end of the meal.

Organic milk, and its ever growing market, have done much good. All those dairy farms have reduced and/or eliminated their fly sprays, pesticides, artificial hormone, and antibiotic use. Unknown tons of unnecessary toxins have not been produced and put into our environment. Family owned local organic dairy farms practice sustainable agriculture and thrive while promoting biodiversity. Unfortunately, at twice the price of grocery store milk, organic milk still only enjoys about 10% of the market. That's not really enough to change the world.

We believe the way to provide a better milk is to return to dairy farming and milk production with the attributes of outdoor grass grazing and lower production per cow. This milk can then be processed and packaged on the farm for immediate delivery to local grocery stores and retail grocers distribution centers. We believe that this milk will be more wholesome, more enjoyable for our children to drink, even while it is being produced with more sustainable farming practices, and is more efficiently distributed to a local area.

The farmer who practices these superior dairy farming methods can negotiate and sell directly to the local grocery store so this superior milk can be sold for the same price as today's commodity grocery store milk. When this can be accomplished, this particularly good and fresh drinking milk can quickly grow to a market share far beyond the current limited organic milk 10% market share.

Now that's contributing to our children having a better milk!

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