

Ministry of Agriculture
BRIEFING NOTE FOR MINISTER FOR INFORMATION FOR MEETING WITH THE B.C.
HERDSHARE ASSOCIATION

Ref: 187296

Date: January 24, 2018

Title: Meeting with Katherine Dittus from the B.C. Herdshare Association about raw dairy distribution.

Issue: The B.C. Herdshare Association would like to propose a model that would allow raw dairy products to be distributed which is currently prohibited under federal and provincial legislation.

Background: Raw milk is regulated federally under Canada's *Food and Drugs Act* and Regulations which prohibits the sale of raw milk in Canada. Raw dairy products are any dairy products made from raw milk that has not undergone a 'kill step' (usually pasteurization in a dairy processing plant). Raw milk is at risk for *E.coli* O157:H7, *Campylobacter*, *Salmonella* and *Listeria*. Many foodborne illnesses and outbreaks can be traced to the consumption of raw milk. The pasteurization process kills the pathogens that cause foodborne illnesses. The distribution of raw dairy products is also prohibited under B.C.'s *Public Health Act* and Health Hazards Regulation and the *Milk Industry Act* and Regulations.

In B.C., The Ministry of Health (HLTH) is the provincial lead on the issue of raw milk. Raw milk has been provincially designated as a 'health hazard' and distribution is prohibited under B.C.'s *Public Health Act* and Health Hazards Regulation. Under B.C.'s *Milk Industry Act* and Regulations, raw milk cannot be supplied unless produced on a provincially-certified dairy farm, sold directly to the Milk Marketing Board, and transported by a licensed bulk tank milk grader. Sheep and goat milk are not regulated under the *Milk Industry Act* but distribution of it is prohibited under B.C.'s *Public Health Act* and Health Hazards Regulation.

There is currently no cost-effective method to test raw milk for safety as each sample is different, and comprehensive testing of every amount is cost-prohibitive. Clinical signs of related diseases are not readily observable in infected dairy animals. Cows can shed the disease and can also be transiently infected while appearing healthy, making it impossible to predict animal or site-specific risks to humans.

Discussion: The designation of raw milk as a health hazard in B.C. is unique in Canada. It was made in the interest of public health given observed health impacts. The BC Centre for Disease Control states that raw milk is "not safe to drink," and documented approximately 50 raw milk-related outbreaks in the United States and Canada from 2000-2012. The Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Perry Kendall, has issued many public health warnings regarding the harms associated with drinking raw milk. B.C.'s current Chief Veterinarian, Jane Pritchard, confirms that where dairy producers live on site there may be greater immunity to raw milk hazards due to frequent exposure, but that off-site consumers would not have the same potential immunity to potential foodborne illness.

Some B.C. citizens have expressed positive experiences with raw milk and concern about its regulation and designation as a health hazard in B.C. The most recent B.C. legal case featuring raw milk and a herdshare was pursued by HLTH under B.C.'s *Public Health Act*. The ruling went against the sale and/or distribution of raw milk (even through the cow share), but did not prevent the owner from consuming raw milk herself. A herdshare is an operation where individuals can purchase shares in a cow, and have access to the raw milk the animal produces without it being considered a sale of raw milk.

B.C. would have to lobby the federal government to pursue changing the legislation to allow the sale of raw milk in Canada [s.13,s.16](#)
[s.13,s.16](#)

Suggested Response:

- I recognize that some British Columbians have expressed positive experiences with raw milk and have expressed concerns that it is not regulated in B.C.
- It is important to note that raw milk is regulated federally under Canada's *Food and Drugs Act* and Regulations which prohibits the sale of raw milk in Canada.
- The federal government has not expressed an interest in pursuing changing the legislation to allow the sale of raw milk in Canada.
- In B.C., raw milk is recognized as a health hazard under provincial health legislation.
- There no cost-effective method to test raw milk for safety as each sample is different and many foodborne illnesses and outbreaks can be traced to the consumption of raw milk.

Contact: Thom Dennett, Policy Analyst, 250 356 1671

DIR LH ADM DM

Ministry of Agriculture
BRIEFING NOTE FOR MINISTER FOR INFORMATION FOR JOINT MINISTERS MEETING
with the BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program

Ref: 187458

Date: February 24, 2018

Title: BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program

Issue: The BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation is seeking additional funding from the Ministries of Agriculture, Education and Health to support the BC School Fruit & Vegetable Nutritional Program.

Background:

- The BC School Fruit & Vegetable Nutritional Program (BCSFVNP) was initiated in 2004 to provide BC students with fresh, local fruit and vegetables in their schools. Modeled after a similar program in the United Kingdom, there is no other program like it in North America.
- The overarching goal of the BCSFVNP is to improve the nutritional health of BC children by working collaboratively with produce partners to deliver fruits and vegetables directly to all BC schools. Additional objectives of the BCSFVNP include:
 - Increasing the acceptability of, exposure to, and willingness to try fruits and vegetables;
 - Increasing awareness of local fruits and vegetables;
 - Increasing the awareness of safe handling practices for fresh produce;
 - Increasing the availability of local fruits and vegetables in BC schools;
 - Supporting the local economy through business for farmers and distributors; and,
 - Building relationships and collaborate with produce and industry partners.
- The BCSFVNP has grown from an initial launch of 10 schools in 2006 to 1,456 BC K-12 public and First Nations schools in the 2017/18 school year. With the help of more than 1,200 volunteers and partners, BCAITC provides fresh fruit and vegetable snacks every other week, 13 times in the school year, to more than 500,000 students.
- Recent program enhancements include BC milk for children in K-5 (“+Milk”) in partnership with the BC Dairy Association and the “Fresh to You” fundraiser where students sell seasonal BC produce bundles to raise funds for their school.
- The 2013 BCSFVNP program evaluation found that overall, students and schools participating in the program benefited, as did produce partners. Some specific findings were:
 - There were demonstrated changes in the willingness of students to try fruits and vegetables though results were more pronounced in elementary as compared to secondary students.
 - 99% of program coordinators and teachers indicated that the increase in produce availability at their school was notable.
 - 13 grower/processors reported the program was profitable, allowed them to reach new markets and that their involvement drove new business or helped them reach new markets.
- As a registered non-profit, BCAITC publishes an annual report with audited financial statements. From the 2016 report, total annual revenue was \$5.5 million. Of note, \$3.65 million of the funds support the purchase of BC agriculture products.
- The BCSFVNP is currently funded \$2.5 million by the BC Ministry of Health (MOH) through the Healthy Families BC initiative. The total annual cost to run the program is \$4.8 million, in previous years additional end of year funding from MOH has augmented the program.
- The BC Dairy Association contributes 50% of the cost of the “+Milk” program enhancement, at cost of approximately \$350,000 annually.
- The First Nations Health Authority has provided approximately \$74,000 annually for the delivery of the program to First Nations youth.
- There are also other industry partners and sponsors who help to support BCAITC’s programs.

Discussion:

- MOH initially provided funding to build and scale BCSFVNP which now operates in 95% of BC schools. These operational funds have declined over time to approximately \$500,000.
- BCAITC has expressed concern over when they receive their MOH funding. The 2017-18 \$2.5 million was sent in late December 2017 and only supports the program's operation until June 2018.
- s.13
- s.13,s.17
- While the Ministry of Agriculture (Ministry) has supported this program since its inception in 2005, this has been primarily through in-kind contributions such as the provision of office space, expertise and leadership roles on management committees.
- In 2014, the Ministry provided a one-time, cost-shared amount of \$55,000 to help promote the tenth anniversary of the BCSFVNP as well as to launch the "Fresh to You" fundraising program.
- s.22
- The Ministry of Education has not provided funding to the program though it has provided BCAITC and the BCSFVNP access to teachers and BC schools.
- 's.13

Suggested Response:

- The Ministry does not have additional resources to assist with funding of the program at this time.
- The Ministry would be interested in seeing the results of a program evaluation to better understand how the BCSFVNP is meeting program goals/objectives and identify opportunities to create linkages between Grow BC, Buy BC, Feed BC and the BCSFVNP.
- The Ministry appreciates the work BCAITC is doing through the program, and we look forward to continue working closely with them to support increased consumption of local fruits and vegetables in classrooms across the province.

Contact: Lindsay Bisschop, Manager of Partnerships & Outreach, 604-556-3103

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