

# Dairy UK submission of 23 February 2023

## PE1978/B: Allow raw milk to be sold in Scotland

Dairy UK is a trade body representing producer co-operatives, processors, manufacturers and distributors of dairy products within the UK. We welcome the opportunity to provide comments to the petition PE1978 which calls on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to allow raw drinking milk (RDM) to be sold in Scotland.

Dairy UK agrees with Food Standards Scotland (FSS)'s view that raw drinking milk has in the past posed a significant risk to the public, as evidenced by several food poisoning outbreaks in Scotland. As also stated by FSS, compulsory pasteurisation has addressed this problem and we feel it is important to continue to prioritise food safety and public health.

The potential public health impact of pathogens being present in raw drinking milk is high, especially in specific vulnerable groups. Effective enforcement of the controls of RDM provides a level of public health protection but cannot remove completely the risk associated with the unpasteurised product.

Importantly, allowing sales of RDM appears to increase the risk of illness and outbreaks associated with RDM consumption – in 2018 the Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Foods [concluded](#) that “*the microbiological risk associated with consumption of raw drinking milk in the UK has increased since the issue was last considered in July 2015*”. They also added that: “*The increased risk reflects greater levels of exposure due to increases in the number of registered producers and volume of production and consumption alongside an increase in the number of outbreaks of human illness associated with RDM [...]*”.

Consumer safety is the first priority but, beyond that, potential issues arising from consumption of unpasteurised milk could have a tremendous negative impact on reputation of the whole dairy sector.

The dairy industry is proud of its high standards of food safety and works hard to ensure that consumption of milk is safe, healthy and nutritious. Pasteurisation is a very important tool for achieving this and the safest option for public health.

To conclude, Dairy UK does not support the request lodged through PE1978. We believe that compulsory pasteurisation has helped to protect consumers in Scotland and should continue to be in place.