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FOOD SAFETY ADVISORY

Raw Milk/Dairy Products Cannot Be Sold at Indiana Farmers Markets

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The recent rash of food-borne illnesses in Michigan and Northern Indiana stemming from consumption of raw milk serves as a reminder to farmers' market operators and vendors that selling unpasteurized dairy products is illegal in Indiana. At least 18 confirmed cases of campylobacter have recently been linked to an unlicensed Elkhart County dairy farm.

Campylobacter is just one of many illness-causing pathogens that could be found in milk and dairy products that have not undergone pasteurization. These organisms can cause severe illness, or even death, particularly in susceptible populations like the very young, very old, pregnant or immune-compromised. Pasteurization is a heat-treatment process that kills illness-causing pathogens without affecting the nutritional value of the milk.

All dairy products sold in Indiana must originate from a state-licensed and inspected farm, with appropriate processing, packaging and labeling at a state-inspected processing facility, including those operated on farmstead sites. This standard applies to all dairy products, including milk produced by cows, goats and sheep.

The only exception to this law is an allowance for certain raw milk cheeses that are produced under official state inspection under very specific aging processes.

Dairy producers interested in selling milk or dairy products should contact the Indiana State Board of Animal Health's Dairy Division at 1-866-747-3038 or go online at www.boah.in.gov and click on "Dairy & Milk" under the "Food Safety and Inspection" menu.

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