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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **New Law Will End Raw Milk Sales in California**

On January 1, 2008, California raw milk producers will face new requirements for bacteria counts in the milk they sell to consumers. All raw milk must have 10 coliform bacteria or fewer per milliliter under the new law signed October 8<sup>th</sup> by California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger.

“This new law limits the sale of perfectly healthy, pathogen-free milk,” says Mark McAfee, owner of [Organic Pastures Dairy](#), the largest raw milk dairy in the United States. “Most batches of our milk will not comply with the new legislation. By about January 20<sup>th</sup> under the new law, our milk will be available to consumers intermittently at best. Thousands of our customers who visit 300 stores in California each week will be without a source of raw milk.”

Coliform bacteria are a diverse family of bacteria, the vast majority of which are non-pathogenic and do not cause illness. They are killed by pasteurization.

The pathogenic forms of coliform bacteria can be tested for independently. The new law requires no tests for pathogens.

“My customers’ choices are now being limited by a law that makes no sense. Why test for coliform bacteria when you can test for pathogenic bacteria directly?” McAfee asks. McAfee’s dairy already tests for *E. coli* 0157:H7 and *Listeria monocytogenes*, the primary human pathogens in the food supply.

According to raw milk activist Sally Fallon, “Officials cite health risks to raw milk but once milk has been pasteurized, all the anti-microbial and immune-supporting components are reduced or destroyed.” Fallon is the founder of *A Campaign for Real Milk*, which promotes raw milk on its website <http://www.realmilk.com>.

Fallon adds that until the recent legislation, California has been a leader in providing consumers with choice at the supermarket. “The legislation is obviously aimed at getting rid of raw milk in California using standards that are unnecessary and impossible to meet.”

AB 1735, introduced to the State Assembly on March 15, 2007 and passed nearly seven months later, targets the raw milk industry specifically. During deliberations over AB 1735, legislative records show that legislators discussed raw milk dairies. However, raw milk producers were not consulted on the new legislation.

“Had they asked, I would have cited a 2004 study in the *Journal of Dairy Science* that shows 80% of raw milk would not meet this new law,” added McAfee. “That is a whole

lot of perfectly good milk wasted that my consumers would want to buy. No one asked them about this legislation either.”

Section 35928f of the California Food and Agriculture Code protects raw milk with the statement “*the state does not intend to limit or restrict the availability of certified raw milk.*” AB 1735 appears to redefine the standards of milk sanitation so that most raw milk will not be considered “certified raw milk.” It will be illegal to sell healthful milk to consumers on January 1, 2008.

McAfee has begun a voice mail, email, and letter-writing campaign to state officials and has called for raw milk consumers and supporters to attend a press conference at the Fresno Farmer’s Market on Saturday October 27 at 11:00 a.m. (on the corner of Shaw and Blackstone).

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