

What do I need to do to be a “Legal” Dairy in Colorado, and Why Join RMAC?

Here's the scoop for producers:

Colorado Statute requires that you:

1. Register with CDPHE (form available on our website)
2. Label your milk "Unpasteurized" (jar labeled or written on form w/jar)
3. Keep on file a copy of Bill of Sale & Boarding Contract for each shareholder (We have a great Boarding contract & Bill of Sale – annotated so it’s easy to understand. This comes free with your Producer membership.)
4. Inform your shareholders of your Herd Health practices - this can be as simple or as detailed as you like - it just needs to be documented.
5. Inform your shareholder of your Milk Handling procedures (same as above)
6. Inform your shareholders of test results and explain to shareholders what they mean (CO does not require that you test; only that you explain results of any tests).

This statute was designed for self-regulating dairies, which take responsibility for their production processes and enjoy open honest communication with their shareholders. Other than the CDPHE registration, there is no requirement by the health department to monitor, inspect or regulate raw dairies. They do have responsibility to investigate disease outbreaks, however.
No outbreaks, no problems... We’re all counting on each other to self-regulate!

RMAC Standards require that you:

1. Conform to Colorado statute, as above.
2. Test herd for TB & Brucellosis before distributing milk (and send RMAC a copy of results, if you seek RMAC certification)
3. Test monthly for SPC, Coliform, Salmonella & e.coli 0157:H7 (lab sends you results, RMAC Milk Test Administrator makes an anonymous (no names listed) group report and sends it out to all RMAC participating dairies so you can see how your results compare with others. Sometimes there is peer correspondence about results, where producers can share info and help each other. Sometimes you’ll want professional help, and we have volunteer veterinarians and microbiologists who have agreed to consult with you one-on-one.
4. As of October 2008, we use Microbial Research Inc, out of Ft. Collins, to test our milk samples. We get a terrific discount if we all send our samples in on the same day. You’ll receive a reminder note before the test day. (usually, 2nd Tuesday of the month.).

After we receive your registration and annual dues, you will be authorized for the lab discount and receive the free Boarding contract and Bill of Sale contract. You will also be added to the Producer email list, which includes news about raw milk, Colorado raw dairies, and related articles.

You'll also receive some literature in the mail; "Raw Milk Production Handbook" for

producers, and "Safe Handling" for consumers. Please read these documents; whether you produce cow milk or goat milk; there is valuable information about herd management, pasture management, milk handling & testing. We hope to have a separate handbook for goat producers soon, but meanwhile, use this little handbook!

Other raw dairy products - yogurt, ice-cream, cheese, etc - this is a 'grey area' of the law and has not been challenged yet in CO. Still, proceed at your own risk...it may be legal to charge for your services to process shareholder's raw milk – but to produce and sell actual dairy products is illegal according to the Pasteurized Milk Ordinance (PMO). We have a contract that you and your shareholders can sign, so that it is clear that you are being paid for your services and expertise to make these products rather than selling raw milk products. You can also write this into your boarding contract.

Final word about boarding fees - Joel Salatin contends that farmers ought to make at least \$20/hour. We realize start-up costs are high, and you also have to offer competitive prices, but your goal should be to make a reasonable profit and command respect for the valuable product you offer. You are nourishing people, and taking special care to produce a stellar product. You deserve to be well-compensated for it!

-Blair McMorran

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