



Slow Food[®]

Manifesto in Defense of Raw Milk Cheese 2001

Raw-milk cheese is more than a wonderful food; it is a deeply embedded expression of our finest traditions. It is both an art and a way of life. It is a culture, a heritage and a cherished landscape. And it is under threat of extinction. Under threat because the values it expresses are in opposition to the sanitation and homogenization of mass-produced foods.

We call on all food-loving citizens of the world to respond now to the defense of the unpasteurized cheese tradition. A defense of a food that has for hundreds of years inspired, given pleasure and provided sustenance but is now being insidiously undermined by the sterile hand of global hygiene controls.

We call for an end to all discriminatory regulations from the European Union, World Trade organization, United States' Food and Drug Administration and other government institutions that needlessly restrict citizens' freedom of choice to purchase these foods, and threaten to destroy the livelihood of the artisan craftsmen who produce them.

We deplore attempts by regulatory authorities to impose unattainable standards of production, in the name of protecting human health.

We believe that such impositions will have the adverse effect of that intended. The bacteriological health of our unpasteurized dairy products is destroyed by over-zealous sterilization procedures. So will the health of human beings be destroyed through a diet of sterile food. Without any challenge, our immune system will fail and our medication become ineffective.

Moreover the unique flavor and aroma of the cheese are conserved by non-pasteurization.

We therefore call upon those who have it in their power to safeguard the diversity and complexity of our regional foods and the health and stability of our rural communities to act now and ensure a flexible, fair and appropriate regulatory framework; sensible controls and a positive disposition concerning the future.

Be aware - that once the knowledge, skills and commitment of this culture have been lost, they can never be regained.