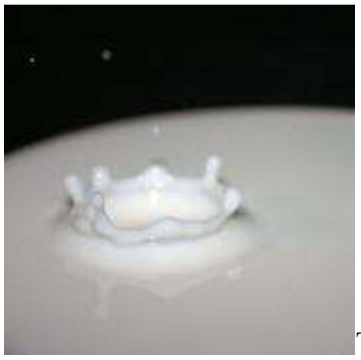
Pasteurization does not harm milk components

Geni Wren, Bovine Veterinarian Magazine | April 18, 2012

 The reports of illnesses related to the consumption of raw milk are increasing on an almost daily basis. In Boone County, Mo., this month, several people, including children, have developed *E. coli* infections from consumption of raw milk from the same farm.

Also this month in Oregon, five patients (all younger than 15) are involved in an *E. coli*outbreak traced to raw milk.

Recently in Kansas and Pennsylvania, *Campylobacter* outbreaks associated with raw milk sickened individuals, over 70 of them in Pennsylvania.

In addition to those pathogens, raw milk can contain and/or transmit enterotoxigenic *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Salmonella* spp, *Listeria monocytogenes*, *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, *Mycobacterium bovis*, *Brucella* spp, *Coxiella burnetii*, *Yersinia enterocolitica* and other bacteria.

Heat does not degrade components

Still, those who drink raw milk are passionate about it. Raw milk advocates continuously state that pasteurization destroys important components in milk that promote good health. But research in a chart by Jeff LeJeune, DVM, PhD, Dipl. ACVM, Ohio Agriculture Research and Development Center, in a 2009 *Bovine Veterinarian*article explains what pasteurization/heat treatment does – and more importantly doesn't do – to those components in milk.

Raw-milk advocates claim that pasteurization fundamentally changes the structure of milk components, rendering it less healthful. However, said LeJeune in the article, "The claims of raw-milk advocates are mostly anecdotal and are not supported by scientific literature. The work looking at the effects of pasteurization that is published is subject to peer-review and unequivocally demonstrates that milk that has been pasteurized retains its valuable nutritional components."

Read the *Bovine Veterinarian* article here.

View the chart on pastuerization's effects on milk components here.