

Medical Milk

The Untold Story of Milk by Ron Schmid, ND
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Reviewed by David R. Moore

The best thing about growing medical marijuana, for me, was its gateway effect. I started out focused on one subject and wound up with a better understanding of our whole society, which is disconnected from nature and disrespects nature.

An important step in my journey was meeting a soil scientist who turned me on to “*The Untold Story of Milk*” by Ron Schmid. How could I not see parallels to the untold story of marijuana?

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Just as cannabis was bred for thousands of years to benefit mankind, so were cows. Just as cannabis was highly prized by the early settlers and founders of our country, so were dairy herds. Just as cannabis prohibition was imposed at the start of the 20th century (and took until the 1930s to become almost total), so did the prohibition of raw milk. And just as the medical benefits of cannabis have been rediscovered by a small but growing group of people in recent years, so have the medical benefits of milk that comes from contented cows grazing on good pasture.

The prohibition of raw milk came in the name of public health: universal pasteurization. Today, retail sales of raw milk are illegal in all but four states and violators are routinely prosecuted. There are 25-30 states where on-farm sales are allowed with various restrictions.

Pasteurization is the heating of milk to kill the bacteria it contains—including those that cause fermentation and souring. In the process, enzymes in the milk, which aid in digestion, are also destroyed. Proponents of pasteurization argue that our own stomach enzymes are sufficient, we don’t need to be taking in enzymes that exist in raw food. Sound science and ample anecdotal evidence suggests otherwise.

The masses of immigrants who settled in America’s increasingly crowded cities in the 19th century did not have access to fresh milk from pastured cows. Urban dairies had developed in conjunction with distilleries—the cows living in strict confinement in unsanitary conditions and fed on grain in the form of distillery waste. The unwholesome and often contaminated milk was responsible for outbreaks of diptheria, typhoid fever, hoof-and-mouth disease, and tuberculosis. “The milk problem” was publicized by muckrakers and pasteurization promoted as the solution. Nathan Straus, the founder of Macy’s department store, made pasteurization his life’s cause and was hailed as a great philanthropist and benefactor of the urban masses by the media, led by William Randolph Hearst.

A different solution to “the milk problem” was advocated by a committee of New Jersey doctors led by Henry Coit, MD, who sought to impose standards of sanitation on the producing dairies. The farsighted doctors were advised by the state dairy commissioner “Such a radical reform as you desire in the production and handling of milk may not be accomplished in our generation.”

David Moore in 2000 founded the Men-doHealing Collective, which grew cannabis in Mendocino County (with the approval of the sheriff) and distributed it to more than 2,000 documented patients in San Francisco at low “farm direct” prices.

The doctors then took it upon themselves to create a “Medical Milk Commission” that would contract directly with “proved and trustworthy dairymen possessing honor.” The dairymen would produce milk under specified conditions. The doctors would inspect the farms, the cows, the employees; they would test the raw milk for pathogens and certify its purity.

Even Straus acknowledged, “If it were possible to secure pure, fresh milk direct from absolutely healthy cows there would be no necessity for pasteurization. If it were possible by legislation to obtain a milk supply from clean stables after a careful process of milking, to have transportation to the city in perfectly clean and closed vessels, then pasteurization would be unnecessary.”

Why did pasteurization prevail? “Businessmen had invested large sums of money in plants and equipment for the new technique,” Schmid writes, “and further implementation of the technology promised sizeable returns.” A British observer explained, “The enthusiasm of the large milk distributors for pasteurization arises out of one economic fact: this modified sterilization prevents even dirty milk from going sour. After many days of travel and storage the milk is still sold as ‘fresh.’” In other words, profit took priority over public health.

A small group of doctors kept fighting to preserve access to raw milk

As pasteurization became the norm, a small group of doctors kept fighting to preserve access to raw milk for certain patients (including mothers who couldn’t breast feed) and for themselves and their families. They cited numerous articles in the medical literature documenting the health benefits of the so-called “milk cure” for patients with diabetes, diseases of the kidney, and various gastro-intestinal problems.

Among those documenting the health benefits of raw milk was J.E. Crewe, MD, a founder of the Mayo Foundation, who for many years ran a small sanitarium that featured the milk cure. In a 1929 article, “Raw Milk Cures Many Diseases,” Crewes wrote, “No one would expect health benefits from an exclusive pasteurized milk diet... Medical enthusiasm for milk as a therapeutic agent suffered an abrupt ending with the advent of pasteurization and its killing of milk enzymes... When one takes enzymes away from milk, it loses some of its health value and most of its curative properties.”

Ironically, tuberculosis was one of the conditions for which raw milk was especially beneficial. At a conference of British milk distributors, a member described supplying a TB hospital with unpasteurized milk: “For such an institution, it would be criminal to do otherwise. Pasteurized milk is an unbalanced article of diet. Even in the healthiest of individuals it produces great vital strain. Due to their lessened margins of safety, it can be deadly for tubercular patients.”

Weston A. Price

Just as very few Americans have heard of William Woodward and the other doctors who challenged the prohibition of marijuana, few know about Weston A. Price, a dentist who warned that our nutrient-deficient diet was endangering public health. Price is a hero of Schmid’s

book and of the reborn Medical Milk movement.

As a practicing dentist at the start of the 20th century, Price observed a dramatic decline in the health of his patients from one generation to the next—the children had more cavities and more crowded, jagged teeth than their parents, the result of a narrowing dental arch. Price attributed the inferior teeth to deficiencies in the (urban) diet. While mainstream dentistry focused on bacteria as the cause of decay, Price undertook a study of so-called primitive peoples in whom teeth did not decay. He studied Swiss in an isolated mountain region; Gaels on islands of the Outer Hebrides; Eskimos in Alaska; Native Americans in Canada and Florida; Melanesians and Polynesians; Africans; Aborigines in Australia; Malay and Maori tribes; Peruvians.

Price reported his findings in numerous articles for publication in medical, dental, public health and nutrition journals. Price’s book “Nutrition and Physical Degeneration” documenting his studies of non-industrial populations was required reading for anthropology students at Harvard for many years.

Price’s findings had implications beyond dentistry. The condition of the teeth reflects our overall state of well-being. Not only did the “primitive” people have uniformly healthy teeth, their general health was excellent.

Among the Eskimos, for example, not a single case of cancer had been observed among those relying on their traditional diet. When natives eating the white man’s foods developed tuberculosis, those who returned to their native villages and native foods usually recovered. Similarly, Native Americans developed diabetes on the white man’s diet but were restored to health when they stopped eating processed foods.

Price collected thousands of samples of native foods for analysis in U.S. labs. They were found to have more than four times the minerals and water-soluble vitamins and 10 times the fat soluble vitamins (found uniquely in animal fats) as equivalent components of the U.S. diet.

Price routinely asked why people ate the foods they did and the answer was always “to make perfect babies” or words to that effect. The foods that various groups considered essential were:

1. Seafood: fish and shellfish, fish organs, fish liver oils and fish eggs.
2. Organ meats from wild animals or grass-fed domestic animals.
3. Insects.
4. Fats of certain birds and one-stomach animals (sea mammals, guinea pigs, bears, and hogs).
5. Egg yolks from pastured chickens and other birds.
6. Whole milk, cheese and butter from grass-fed animals.

Seafood and dairy foods were fermented and thus rich in enzymes. Cooked or raw they are rich in the fat-soluble vitamins A, D and E, and in essential fatty acids and other essential nutrients.

Animal fats have been blamed by the modern food industry for the very problems caused by refined sugar and other processed foods. We’ve all been taught that foods high in cholesterol, such as butter and cream, are “bad for the heart.” This is the opposite of the truth. (Just as in the case of marijuana, which is actually beneficial for many.) Schmid demolishes the case for cholesterol-lowering drugs and cites some worrisome data suggesting that statins may cause cancer.

In the name of progress

A century ago about half of all Americans lived on small family farms and produced much of what they ate. Today

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only 2% of us are involved in farming. The number of dairy farms has plummeted from 3.7 million in 1950, when most of the cows ate grass in pastures, to 105,250 in 2000, when most of the cows were confined in stalls and ate grain. As of 2002, 24 dairy farms were going out of business every day. The transition has been made in the name of “progress,” but more and more of us are realizing that the progress was illusory.

Conditions for the cows in many confinement facilities are horrendous. In 1950 cows lived 12-15 years. The lifespan of a confined cow is 42 months. They stand around on concrete and go lame. (When they can no longer stand they are ground into hamburger.) Pushed to maximum productivity with bovine growth hormone, their udders often become infected and they are given massive doses of antibiotics.

Factory farming has transformed milk from an amazing medicine to a toxin. Modern milk must be pasteurized because it comes from sick cows and is full of pathogens. Pasteurization enables the sellers to leave in feces, pus and blood. Irradiating meat and vegetables will achieve the same economy for the corporate factory farms.

The corporate media deflects attention away from the real problems and continues the propaganda war against raw milk. During the recent *e coli* scare in California, a raw-milk producer, Organic Pastures, was falsely accused. (Organic Pastures tests for *e coli* more frequently than required by law and posts the results on their website.) State tests confirmed that Organic Pastures’ milk did not contain *e coli*, but the “retraction” was buried on the back pages.

It’s not just our meat and dairy products that are contaminated. The fish farming industry (dominated in the Northwest by Moonies) also relies on antibiotics so that fished penned in with their own poop don’t get infected. The meat of fish-farmed salmon is gray and has to be injected with red dye prior to marketing. Wild fish swim by the pens and are exposed to rare disorders against which they have no protection.

In concert with the pharmaceutical companies, the food industry has spent a century taking away our sources of well being. No wonder we are increasingly prone to obesity, diabetes, heart attacks, cancer, and mental disorders. If a farmer had a herd of cows with the cancer rate we, the American people have, he’d stop operations immediately and figure out what was wrong, what was causing it, what to do about it.

An important first step for us as health-conscious citizens is education. The Weston A. Price Foundation has local chapters that will help you find grassfed, humanely raised local beef, free range chicken and eggs (from birds that roam the ground where cows have enriched the environment with manure), and raw medical milk from small family dairies with cows at pasture. Their website is www.westonaprice.org.

