

Appendix A

Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) Plans and Testing Procedures

Our aim as Presidium members is to produce high quality raw milk cheese that is safe to consume. To this end, we voluntarily institute HACCP plans that ensure the entire cheesemaking process, beginning with animal health and ending with cheese packaging and sales, results in a safe product without requiring pasteurization or thermolization of milk.

Artisan cheese production methods vary according to the region of production, the local climate, the animals being milked, the type of cheese produced, and other considerations. For similar reasons, each producer's individual HACCP plan will vary, and may also evolve over time along with changes in production methods, scale, or other variables. Presidium members will assist and support each other as we develop our individual HACCP plans, which will include the following considerations:

ANIMAL HEALTH We will test our livestock for animal diseases which may affect humans, for example *Mycobacterium bovis*, (tuberculosis in cows) and *Brucella abortus* (undulant fever).

MILK QUALITY We will test milk at minimum for the following parameters: somatic cell count, standard plate count, *E. coli*, *S. aureus*, *L. monocytogenes*, and *Salmonella spp.* Milk quality and cheese quality will be correlated and testing parameters will be refined to ensure the safety of each cheese being produced.

CHEESEMAKING We will include monitoring for physical and chemical parameters that affect product safety. This will include speed of acid development; pH at various times during production and ripening; temperature at various times during production and ripening; and percent salt or salt in moisture. Results from these tests will be correlated with the quality of the finished cheese to refine testing parameters to ensure the safety of each cheese being produced.

PRODUCTION ENVIRONMENT We will test our facilities for environmental pathogens. Our individual HACCP plans will at a minimum include testing for *L. monocytogenes* in our milk storage rooms and equipment; cheese production rooms and equipment; ripening rooms and equipment; and packaging rooms and equipment.

FINISHED CHEESE Finished raw milk cheeses will be tested to meet the following minimum standards:

Cheese Tests and Permitted Values

	Recall Required	Presidium Requirement	Ideal Value
<i>E. coli</i>	>10,000 cfu/g	<100 cfu/g	<10 cfu/g
<i>Staph. aureus</i>	>10,000 cfu/g	<100 cfu/g	<10 cfu/g
<i>Staph. enterotoxin</i>	Positive	Negative	Negative
<i>L. mono</i>	Positive	Negative	Negative
<i>Salmonella</i>	Positive	Negative	Negative



American Raw Milk Cheese Presidium

Presidium Mission & Protocol for Presidium Members

July 2006

Mission

The human palate appreciates complexity. As artisan producers of raw milk cheese and as members of this Presidium, we are committed to making distinctive cheeses of complexity, high quality and safety, and with the depth of flavor that raw milk provides. We believe the following:

- Cheeses attain the greatest complexity when they are produced through processes that stem from biological diversity;
- Technology and scientific understanding can be used to guide and monitor rather than to control and dominate. By respecting the diversity in our soil, pastures and woodlands, our herds and flocks, and the raw milk from our animals, we can produce cheeses that are as nutritious, safe, and wholesome to consume as they are flavorful;
- As makers of raw milk cheese, we assume responsibility for the safety of our product. We therefore endorse HACCP as a means to place such responsibility in our own hands. The specific processes, tests and frequency of testing will be determined by each producer and will evolve as our individual HACCP plans evolve. At a minimum, our HACCP plans will include the considerations and specific standards listed in *Appendix A* of this Protocol.

We are forming a Slow Food Presidium to preserve and advance the art of making raw milk cheese. *The Presidium is a wholly voluntary association.* As Presidium members, we work actively towards meeting the criteria listed in this Protocol. Each cheesemaker who becomes part of the Presidium commits to achieving all of the criteria listed in this document within six years of joining.

Slow Food USA: American Raw Milk Cheese Presidium Protocol for Presidium Members

LAND *We manage our land so that it remains productive for future generations. We adopt practices that:*

- Maintain and increase soil fertility;
- Maintain and improve groundwater quality;
- Maintain and foster biodiversity.

If we do not produce our own milk, we purchase milk only from dairies that manage their land as described above.

ANIMALS *Healthy, well treated animals produce the highest quality milk. Our animals are fed, housed, managed, and treated ethically and humanely. We follow existing and developing humane treatment standards that pertain to the livestock we keep. At a minimum:*

- We select livestock for their longevity, health, milk quality, and other attributes that contribute to their well being and to the flavor of their milk. We do not limit our selection to productivity alone;
- We minimize confinement. While climate, weather, or land management concerns may dictate that animals be housed from time to time, confinement is an *exception* and not the norm;
- We do not give our animals hormones for increased milk production or for growth. Antibiotics and other medication will only be used therapeutically, for individual animals as required;
- We seek to eliminate GMOs from the diets of our animals by using organic feed when economically viable, and intentionally minimize use of grain mixes which may include genetically modified species;
- We do not feed our livestock any animal products or by-products with the exception of milk or whey;
- The HACCP plans we develop as part of this Presidium include monitoring for animal diseases that may affect humans, as described in *Appendix A*.

If we do not maintain our own animals, we will purchase milk only from farms that treat their livestock as described above.

MILK *High quality milk is needed to produce high quality cheese. The milk we use meets all federal and state health and quality requirements and standards and in addition, conforms to the following criteria:*

- All the milk we use is traceable to its source;

- All milk is utilized within 40 hours of milking;
- Milk is never pasteurized or thermolized;
- Milk is taken from animals during the season when they graze or browse freely. When climate, weather, or land management concerns dictate the use of silage, haylage, or other feed it will be obtained whenever possible from our own land or from regional, sustainably managed farms. Milk produced out of season or from imported feed will be the *exception*, and not the norm.
- Milk is tested in accordance with our individual HACCP plans, as further described in *Appendix A*.

CHEESE MAKING *We produce cheese by artisanal methods, using technology and equipment as helpful components of the cheesemaking process, but not as substitutes for human guidance and input. We ensure that all cheeses are safe for consumers by following production and testing parameters that meet or exceed existing government requirements. At a minimum:*

- Our cheeses are produced without using shortcuts, techniques, or additives to increase yield or shelf life at the expense of quality;
- We prefer using traditional coagulants, such as animal or vegetable based rennet. We will label our cheeses to specify, *without ambiguity*, which coagulants we use;
- We develop and use regional, proprietary, or *terroir* place names. We discourage the use of classical European place names, except as descriptors;
- We do not sell any cheese aged less than what is required by federal law;
- We institute and comply with a HACCP plan as described in *Appendix A*, and we obtain and maintain licensing as required by local, state, and federal regulations.

CHEESE QUALITY *We consider cheesemaking an art and strive continuously to perfect our knowledge and skills. The cheeses to be promoted via this Presidium will have balanced flavors that express the complexity inherent in raw milk. Working with Slow Food USA, we will create a panel to:*

- Select new cheesemakers for admission to the Presidium, based on their fulfilling objective standards of balance and quality;
- On an annual basis, review all cheeses represented by the Presidium with the aim of providing feedback to cheesemakers;
- If needed, remove cheesemakers from the Presidium if they consistently fail to meet objective standards of balance and quality.

The panel will not in any way rate or rank cheeses; its aim will be solely to provide feedback that is useful to cheesemakers.