



Cow Share Canada

When Michael Schmidt's trial ended in early 2010 with a dismissal of all contempt of court charges, interest in food rights and specifically access to raw milk increased dramatically. It became increasingly clear that this interest is part of a larger movement, as individuals become more aware of the increasing restrictions and greater difficulty in getting

clear information about the food they are putting into their own and their loved ones' bodies. The pressure on those who know how to safely produce raw milk and are willing to develop cowshare programmes is immense. And under the existing legal framework, these farmers are not permitted to advertise, so finding them is a hit-and-miss affair.

There are other moves underway to further restrict access to basic foods. You can blame the power of the food industry lobby, multi-national conspiracies, the apathy and ignorance of ordinary consumers, the greed of producers, the reliance of government on industry-sponsored science, or a combination of these factors. The result is that independent farmers and those who value quality over quantity are in the process of being eliminated.

One farm can only accommodate a small number of consumers and is further restricted by legislation and by the distances some consumers would have to travel in order to obtain fresh products within the current legal requirements.

We have been looking for other ways to make sure that consumers have access to the foods they want. We've received enquiries from farmers who want to produce raw milk under the cowshare program and we are intending to help them, too. It's very clear that we can't do this alone.

Therefore, in order to meet the needs of both groups, we have formed **Cow Share Canada**, a grassroots association that puts consumers in touch with producers across Canada.

It is paramount to realize that there is currently no infrastructure that will allow consumers to access raw milk. We have to build a network to connect consumers and farmers. In order to achieve that, we need the support of both consumers and producers.

We also need to ensure that producers know the differences between producing for pasteurization and producing for direct consumption. We are all responsible – consumer and producer alike – to ensure that we have the knowledge and information necessary to make our own decisions about what constitutes safe and high-quality foods that are safely produced and handled. That information is not widely available any more. Those with direct involvement are the best to consult.

With a strong member base, we can develop together the infrastructure to connect you with a producer in your area. In fact, *without* your involvement, there simply won't be an organization like this: the network can't develop and there is not, to our knowledge, any other way to make the farmer/consumer connection at the present time.

The initial cost to join Cow Share Canada is \$50, which includes the membership fee for Year 1, then \$25 annually. This covers the establishment and maintenance of a member directory and your access to it. It includes updates on the legal and regulatory status of cowshares as well as educational offerings, to bring together farmers and consumers connect to learn more about food rights issues, and specifically about raw milk production. In years to come, we will be able to expand our services, too. This is an association for those who want to secure their food rights now and for the future. Cow Share Canada is committed to food rights and especially the right to access raw milk for you and your family. Join us.

Cow Share Canada represents both consumers and producers.

We are a grassroots organization that ...

Educates and informs all stakeholders in the safe production of raw milk, food rights issues and cowshare programme elements that comply with existing regulations

Develops an infrastructure to allow producers and consumers to locate each other, and develop or find a cowshare programme that fits their needs, and

Ultimately, will give food rights a strong and unified voice in advocating access to safe, healthy, high-quality foods, including alternatives to industrially produced food.



Cow Share Canada Membership

There are three types of membership:

	Consumer	Producer	Supporting Stakeholder
Definition	Individual or family living under the same roof that are committed to food rights.	Farmer currently engaged or intending to be engaged in a cowshare or other direct relationship arrangement with consumers and who is committed to food rights. Producers may join as Provisional Members until they have completed the CSC credentialing process, They are then eligible for full membership and their contact information distributed to consumer-members.	Suppliers, retailers, and organizations that are interested in supporting small scale farms in Ontario and are committed to food rights.
Benefits	<p>Membership card and notice of current educational and training events.</p> <p>Access to contact information for Cow Share Canada producers' network</p> <p>Quarterly Cow Share Association e-newsletter</p> <p>Advance notice of Association events</p> <p>10% discount on educational and conference fees</p> <p>Participation in/access to results of advocacy and research initiatives</p> <p>Updates on results of food freedom movement</p>	<p>As for consumer, plus</p> <p>Contact information listing, if desired (farm listing plus 50 word description of farm, philosophy and accreditation information) on future Association website</p>	<p>As for producer, plus</p> <p>Listing of business or organization in e-newsletter</p>
Initial membership fee	\$50		
Annual fee	\$ 25		



Cow Share Canada Membership Application - 2011

Please this form with your payment.

Name _____

address _____

telephone [] _____

email _____

type of membership (see descriptions) Consumer _____

 Producer (farmer) _____

 Supporting stakeholder _____

receipt required? (check one) Yes _____ No _____

I attest that I am not working as an agent for any government, that I will use the information I have access to strictly for my own purposes and that I will not share this information.

Signature

Date

note: if this sent electronically, we require an electronic signature or we will send a copy of this document for your signature before activating your membership. Confidentiality and security is important to us.

Send your cheque or money order to
Cow Share Canada,
393889 Concession Rd 2, RR 1, Durham, ON NOG 1R0.

We'll send you a membership card and information on current qualified producers, along with a listing of scheduled education and training. If you are a qualified producer, we'll also make your contact information available to consumer-members.

This is for us to use – no need to complete

Office use:

Date received: _____ *Payment method:* _____

Membership # _____

Access information sent (date) _____