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“Global food security and food safety:
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Which Route Food Safety or Food Security? Malawian Milk and Milk Products Act (1972) Reviewed

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Abstract

The year 2017 reverted the debate on the sale of raw milk versus processed milk in the Malawian dairy industry. Proponents, for the sale of raw milk, agitated that the legislation (Milk and Milk Products Act) limits the sale of raw milk and hence capacity of smallholder producers to earn income. To the proponents for raw milk sale, the legislation was against efforts of attaining food security as farmers and their neighbours are not allowed to consume the milk before processing. Considering that milk processing facilities are not within reach of the farmers, the legislation was interpreted as limiting consumption of milk and milk products for the majority of Malawians. The Milk and Milk Products Act (1972) was viewed as pro-elitists. The supporters for the legislation (no sale of raw milk) were concerned with public health matters which arise with raw milk consumption. Food security without food safety takes us back to square one, they said. Milk, if not processed is a good medium for zoonotic diseases. Such diseases are deadly and very retrogressive to the growth of the dairy industry in Malawi. Employing a desk review, workshops for stakeholder consultations and country visits, the researchers put to review the milk and milk products Act (1972) of Malawi. The objective was to note areas that should be changed for the law to remain relevant to the noted concerns and safeguard the milk and milk products industry. Systematic and content analysis on the data and information collected revealed that the legal provision on milk and milk products in Malawi serves to safeguard food safety and food security of the consumers and producers. Lack of implementation of the legislation was revealed as the most pressing issue and exposed both producers and consumers to risks associated with food related diseases. The review of the milk and milk products Act (1972) posits a conclusion that Malawi has a good piece of legislation on milk and milk products handling for food safety and food security if implemented.

Keywords: Food Safety, Food Security, Milk and Milk and Milk Products, Milk and Milk Products Act