Why you can't drink raw milk in Canada ... unless you own the cow!

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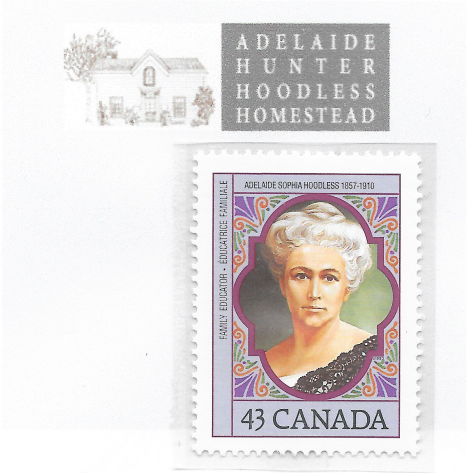
Canada is the only G8 country that doesn't allow the sale of raw milk. This may be the legacy of one woman - Adelaide Hunter Hoodless.



Born in 1858, Addie Hunter was the youngest of ten children, living on a farm that is now a National Historic Site. In 1881, she married the heir to a successful furniture business. As Adelaide Hunter Hoodless, she had access to people with power and influence. She began her lifelong work to forge connections and inspire improved health through education. In 1897, she accepted an invitation from the local Farmer's Institute to speak at Ladies Night. She encouraged the women present to form an organization devoted to educating rural women, and developing leadership skills. They listened, and formed the first branch of the Women's Institute - or WI - in Stoney Creek, Ontario.

The objectives of the WI included promoting the knowledge of Household Science, improving Home Sanitation and raising the level of health in the population. Members passed resolutions promoting change to various levels of government. When her youngest child died in 1889 after consuming impure milk, Adelaide Hoodless urged governments to pass pasteurization laws, knowing that what Louis Pasteur did for wine in the 1860s could be done for milk.

Adelaide Hoodless established Canada's first school of domestic science in 1894, and convinced the Ontario government to add domestic science to public schools in 1897. She literally wrote the book on Domestic Science with her 1898 textbook *Public School Domestic Science*. In 1903 she led the formation of the Macdonald Institute of Home Economics, which later became part of the University of Guelph. The WI was nurtured by the provincial departments of agriculture across Canada. The government provided paid staff to help the WI organize more branches and manage the distribution of educational materials by mail. WI members advocated fiercely for pure, safe milk for the country's children.

Adelaide Hoodless died in 1910. The WI continue to expand. Ontario's updated agricultural legislation included the prohibition of raw milk sales in 1938. In 1991, federal health legislation banned the sale of raw milk everywhere in Canada. Members of the WI continue to advocate for pasteurization whenever the idea of legalizing the sale of raw milk is raised in public. In Ontario from 2010 to 2012 their efforts again helped prevent relaxation of the rules. In 2022, the WI in Canada is celebrating its 125th anniversary.

FOR HOME AND COUNTRY

Stamps from top to bottom: Joe Fafard's Cow, Scott C2522, 2012; Hoodless - Prominent Canadian Women Scott C1456, 1993; Louis Pasteur, semi-postal fundraising for "Unemployed Intellectuals", Scott France B53, 1936; Macdonald Institute, Scott C1976, 2003; Scott C256, 1942; Right: historic logo of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario, still in use.