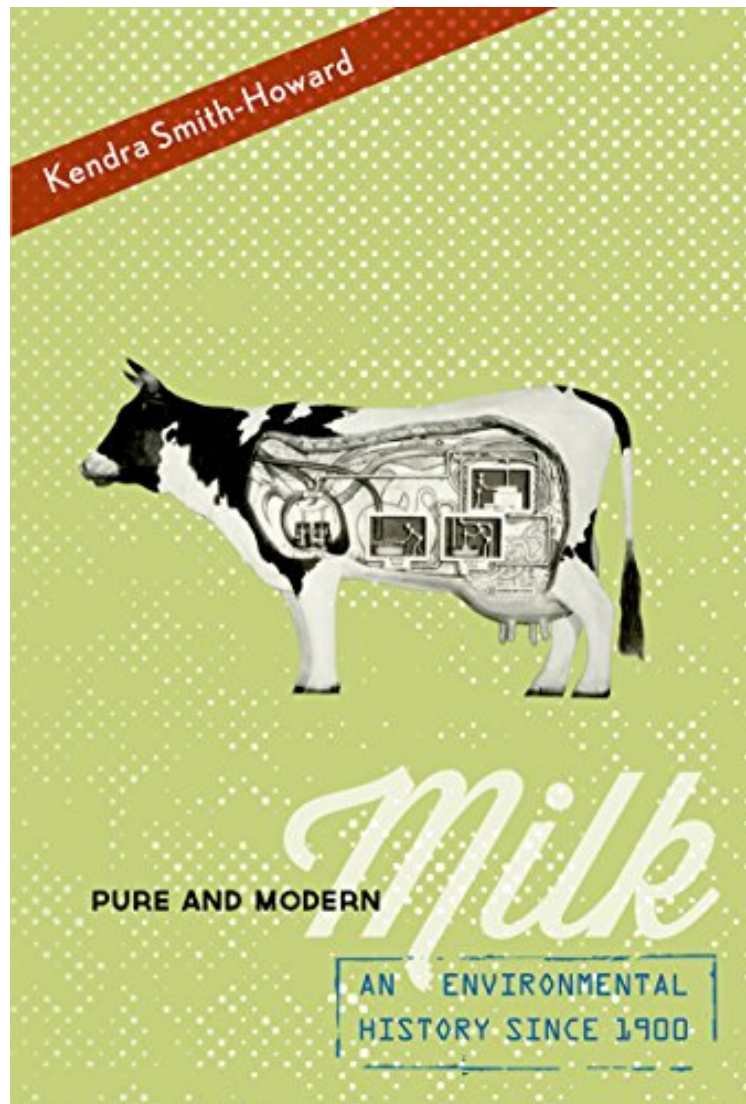


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Pure and Modern Milk: An Environmental History since 1900

Kendra Smith-Howard

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Kendra Smith-Howard : Pure and Modern Milk: An Environmental History since 1900 before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Pure and Modern Milk: An Environmental History since 1900:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Book Not Exactly on the Mark By Linda J. Goodwin The book interested me because I spent the first 30 years of my life on a small NY dairy farm. I owned, milked, showed, judged, bought and sold Ayrshire cows. I was active in 4-H, FFA, and Dairy Lea Cooperative. I was surprised by the large amount of statistical information in the book, taken from issues of Hoard's Dairyman, and I don't think the author made any allowances for the "lag" of the adoption of technology. I remember taking milk cans to the creamery in

Cherry Valley, and that was during the 1960's. It wasn't until about 1967, that my family built an addition on the barn and changed to a bulk-tank system because the local creamery closed. I was also surprised to read so much about Grade B dairies, those which were not considered "clean" enough to produce Grade A, fluid milk. In NY all dairy farms are considered Grade A. Fresh out of college, I worked as a part-time milk tester for over 10 years. On that job I heard one farmer say, more than once, "The solution is dilution." At other farms I learned the heavy use of Chlorine was the best way to keep the bacteria count down. And I visited some farms that were so "filthy" that I didn't think I would ever drink milk again! The book mentioned artificial insemination as being used to increase productivity. But there was no mention of embryo transfer which was practiced quite widely in the 1980's and beyond. There was also no mention of milk pricing, or the term "butter-powder plants" or the government's hand in determining milk price, but I was not surprised. Overall I think the book provided an acceptable review of how milk has been perceived from a consumer's point of view.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating history of milk
By Alecia Gift for my husband and he says it is fascinating.
5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Specialist but interesting
By Darren Ingram_dot_com Milk is pure isn't it? After all it comes straight from the cow. Well technically yes, but this book takes a deep look at a product that nearly everybody consumes, which is fairly uniform and yet it can vary tremendously. The product we get from the store - even allowing for small differences in packaging and the amount of fat present - has changed tremendously after being dispensed from the cow. There is a whole raft of regulations and requirements from different authorities and even suppliers to comply with, involving expensive and complex processes that make small but subtle changes to the "product". Milk is also delivered in many different forms other than just plain milk too and that spawns a whole host of different changes. Certainly this is a book that gets you thinking and you get a barrage of information that perhaps you don't strictly need to know yet you will be a better informed consumer along the way. Yet the typical consumer doesn't care as long as they get the type of milk they desire. The consumer trusts that "the authorities" and "the suppliers" follow the rules and deliver a fresh product. Less care as to whether the milk is organic or not or whether the milk comes from one country or another. Milk is milk, they will say, but anyone who has tasted real "from the tap" cow milk will notice a difference. The further it gets along the production chain perhaps the harder it is to differentiate. This is clearly an academically-focussed book with verbose chapter names such as "Reforming a Perilous Product: Milk in the Progressive Era" and "Reassessing the Risks of Nature: Milk after 1950" yet it need not be out of the reach of the average, interested reader. It certainly will have you thinking about the relationship society has to milk and give a great overview as to the changing face of milk and reasons behind many of these changes. Sadly the price might make it less available for the more casual reader but it is very reasonably priced for such a focussed piece of research. The end of the book features a mass of notes and bibliographic references that will surely enable even the most assiduous researcher or student to be kept busy for a very long time indeed. Credit must be given for the book managing to balance the needs for detailed academic writing and the desire of making it accessible to the average reader as this balance can be very, very hard to achieve. This reviewer enjoyed the book and whilst it is clearly not going to be something for everybody, it could be a very interesting and valuable read for people who care about the environment, the source and nature of their food and drink or those who even have an interest in the business side of milk.

Americans have never been more concerned about their food's purity. The organic trade association claims that three-quarters of all consumers buy organic foods each year, spending billions of dollars. Dairy farm families, health officials, and food manufacturers have simultaneously stoked human desires for an all-natural product and intervened to ensure milk's safety and profitability," writes Kendra Smith-Howard. In *Pure and Modern Milk*, she tells the history of a nearly universal consumer product, and sheds light on America's food industry. Today, she notes, milk reaches supermarkets in an entirely different state than it had at its creation. Cows march into milking parlors, where tubes are attached to their teats, and the product of their lactation is mechanically pumped into tanks. Enormous, expensive machines pasteurize it, fortify it with vitamins, remove fat, and store it at government-regulated temperatures. It reaches consumers in a host of forms: as fluid milk, butter, ice cream, and in apparently non-dairy foods such as whey solids or milk proteins. Smith-Howard examines the cultural, political, and social context, discussing the attempts to reform the production and distribution of this once-perilous product in the Progressive Era, the history of butter between the world wars, dairy waste at mid-century, and the postwar landscape of mass production. She asks how milk could be conceptualized as a "natural" product, even as it has been incorporated into Cheez Whiz and wood glue. And she shows how consumer's changing expectations have had repercussions back down the chain, affecting farmers, cows, and rural landscapes. A groundbreaking, interdisciplinary history, this book reveals the complexity and challenges of humanity's dependence on other species.

"Smith-Howard's archival research for this book, truly prodigious, brings forth fascinating new evidence, particularly from dairy farm organizations and individuals from across diverse regions, revealing complex strategies in response to commands from the state, agricultural science, and modernizing trends in the industry, including refreshingly candid personal recollections regarding methods of work and managing livestock... *Pure and Modern Milk* is an exciting,

groundbreaking scholarly achievement, full of important revelations and nuanced insights. By attending to the environment, Smith-Howard has put the farm back at the center of food history." --Deborah Valenze, *Environmental History*"Smith-Howard gives us the best examination yet of why people in rural environments, particularly farmers, willingly embraced industrial agriculture. ... Smith-Howard's meticulous attention to evidence and nuance in her case studies should be applauded...." --*Journal of American History*"STARRED REVIEW. Smith-Howard succeeds as both historian and storyteller in developing an essential narrative about American industrialization and how both nature and technology have been romanticized. Her coherent and complex view of the 20th century is both informative and enjoyable." --*Publishers Weekly*"From cream and cheese to milk bottled, dried and lurking in everything from cake to glue, 'dairy' is ubiquitous. Yet getting the highly perishable, machine-pumped product of lactating cows to consumers has been a hugely complex technological, cultural and political saga. Kendra Smith-Howard deftly traces that trajectory in the United States since 1900." --*Nature*"As a former dairy technologist in three countries and after spending 30 years in university teaching and research in dairy science, this reviewer thought he had read all of the dozens of books that frame the edifice of dairy science. But in *Pure and Modern Milk*, historian Smith-Howard opens a wider window into the past... All segments of the food industry would benefit from a similar illumination by such a scholarly investigator... A fascinating, comprehensive look at the dairy industry. Highly recommended. All levels/libraries." --*CHOICE*"Got milk? If so, then you've got a whole lot else in your fridge as well: a hope, a duty, a highly regulated product, a carton of controversy, and a hand in industrializing America's farms. And you've also got a paradox: a food that is so quintessentially natural that it's become artificial, as Kendra Smith-Howard reveals in this fascinating history of how we have transformed cows, landscapes and ideas of purity in order to make milk keep pace with us as we become ever more modern consumers. With *Pure and Modern Milk*, you get the whole, surprising story." --Douglas C. Sackman, author of *Orange Empire: California and the Fruits of Eden*"Kendra Smith-Howard is one of the freshest and most intriguing new voices in rural and environmental history today. In *Pure and Modern Milk*, she demonstrates a keen command of mountains of previously untapped materials, showing the intimate but often invisible links among rural environments, urban supermarkets, and human health. In stories of milk 'byproducts; (think butter and ice cream, but also whey) and technologies (refrigerators and freezers), Smith-Howard lays out the surprising ways in which the changing formulas for good health and good farm incomes shaped and were shaped by industrialization and regulation of modern life in the late twentieth century. This is an astute and brilliant book, a must-read for anyone interested in food, rural industrialization, or the environment." --Deborah Fitzgerald, author of *Every Farm a Factory: The Industrial Ideal in American Agriculture*"Milk has not always been the purest of foods, and it is certainly not a natural one. But in Kendra Smith-Howard's excellent book, it proves a rich medium for a uniquely American environmental history." --Susanne Freidberg, author of *Fresh: A Perishable History*"Smith-Howard's *Pure and Modern Milk* is a more thorough, focused, and appropriate text for students of American food studies and popular culture."--*The Journal of American Culture*About the AuthorKendra Smith-Howard is Assistant Professor of History at the University at Albany, State University of New York.