



**BBC** NEWS

## **Camels' milk could hit UK shelves**

**Camels' milk could become the latest super food to hit the shelves of health food shops and upmarket retailers.**

The United Nations is calling for the milk, which is rich in vitamins B and C and has 10 times more iron than cow's milk, to be sold to the West.

Camels' milk, which is slightly saltier than traditional milk, is drunk widely across the Arab world and is well suited to cheese production.

Harrods and Fortnum & Mason are said to be interested in the product.

**The potential is massive. Milk is money**

Anthony Bennett

UN Food and Agriculture

## Organisation

As well as its high mineral and vitamin content, research has suggested that antibodies in camels' milk can help fight diseases like cancer, HIV/Aids Alzheimer's and hepatitis C.

And work is on-going to see whether it can have a role in reducing the effects of diabetes and heart disease.

The UN's food arm, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), wants producers in countries from Mauritania to Kazakhstan to start selling camels' milk to the West.

It hopes donors and investors will help develop the market.

### **'Humps in production'**

Meat and dairy expert at the FAO Anthony Bennett said: "The potential is massive. Milk is money."

He said there were 200 million potential customers in the Arab world and tens of millions more in Europe, the Americas and Africa.

He suggested the market could be worth at least £5.6 billion although improvements are needed along the supply chain.

"No one's suggesting intensive camel dairy farming, but just with improved feed, husbandry and veterinary care daily yields could rise to 20 litres," he added.

And since fresh camel milk fetches roughly a dollar a litre on African markets it would mean serious money for the nomadic herders who now have few other sources of revenue, he added.

Tapping the market for camel milk, however, involves resolving a series of humps in production, manufacturing and marketing, the FAO said.

One problem lies in the milk itself, which has so far not proved to be compatible with the UHT (Ultra High Temperature) treatment needed to make it long-lasting.

But the main challenge stems from the fact that the producers involved are, overwhelmingly, nomads.

A spokeswoman for the British Nutrition Foundation said: "Camels' milk could be a

useful addition to the diet as it contains calcium and B vitamins and is lower in saturated fat than cow's milk.

"However, it is more expensive than cows' milk and does have quite an acquired taste that some people may not like."

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