

GENERAL CIRCULAR

This general circular contains important information from the NSW Food Authority for dairy processor and dairy primary production licensees.

Please take the time to read this information.

If you have any queries, please contact
NSW Food Authority Consumer & Industry Helpline on 1300 552 406

General Circular 03/2011

To: All Dairy Processor and Dairy Primary Production licensees

Subject: Antibiotic notification and milk cooling temperatures

1. Antibiotic notifications

Action required

Dairy factories need to use form RES001 to notify the NSW Food Authority of antibiotic or other residues in raw milk.

Background

The Authority is seeking to standardise the mandatory notification information provided to them by dairy processors who detect antibiotics in raw milk. This was raised as a specific issue for all state dairy authorities following the last EU audit of the Australian system. The Authority has seen an increase in detections of antibiotics over the last two years, and better information may help identify the cause of the increase, particularly repeat occurrences from farmers. The information will also be used to prevent product with antibiotic residues being exported.

Mandatory notification

It is law for any tested sample that fails to meet the standards set out in the NSW Food Safety Schemes Manual to be notified to the Authority orally within 24 hours, and in writing within seven days (under Clause 53 of the Food Regulation 2010). The attached form must be used for all antibiotic notifications. It must be completed in full and submitted to the Authority following each antibiotic detection. For antibiotic detections that occur on a weekend or public holiday, the notification can be in writing on the next business day without a verbal notification.

2. Milk cooling temperatures

Action required

Farms and factories that choose to implement the new milk cooling system described below will need to update their food safety program to reflect the change in target times and temperatures, and be able to demonstrate validation of their systems.

Background

Milk must be cooled and stored at a temperature that prevents or reduces the growth of microbiological hazards in the milk (under Food Standards Code Standard 4.2.4 *Primary Production and Processing Standard for Dairy Products*). Traditionally, farm vats have been required to meet the cooling requirements of AS 1187 – *Farm milk cooling and storage systems* in which the temperature of the milk is to be reduced to 4°C or less within 3.5 hours from the start of milking. However, the individual circumstances of each farm and the scheduling of tanker collection runs may make this requirement difficult to achieve.

Milk cooling project

In 2009, Dairy Australia commissioned the Food Safety Centre at the University of Tasmania to undertake a study of the different raw milk temperature practices and the impact on the safety of the product. The study found that the Australian requirements are more stringent than those in New Zealand and those listed by Codex. It also found that recognition of equivalent practices as an alternative to the Australian standards would not compromise the safety or the quality of milk and milk products.

Implementation of the milk cooling project

The Authority has accepted the outcomes of the Milk Cooling Project for cooling of raw milk. Using the Codex Manufacturing Milk Model, raw milk should be cooled to 8°C within two hours after the completion of milking.

Both of the milk cooling systems satisfy the Authority's food safety requirements. The Authority strongly recommends that those dairy farmer licensees who wish to utilise the '8°C within 2 hours after the completion of milking' system, discuss the proposed changes with their milk processing company.

Update of food safety programs

Farms and factories that choose to implement this system will need to update their food safety program to reflect the change in target times and temperatures.

Audit reviews

Factories will be required to demonstrate validation of the systems that they have in place. Checks of farm milk temperatures for repetitive hot milk collection will be reviewed during audit and factories will be expected to be able to demonstrate effective corrective action to the auditor. A lack of corrective action may result in sanctions under the Authority's audit policy.

Enquiries

Please direct any enquiries to:

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