

Dairy Product Safety and Security

*The industry remains committed to security and safety
and continually evaluates the milk supply chain to keep America's milk supply safe*

The dairy industry takes food safety and security very seriously. Throughout the years, dairy farmers and processors have worked closely with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and state regulatory officials to establish safety regulations and practices including the *Pasteurized Milk Ordinance (PMO)* and the *Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP)* system.

Since the events of Sept. 11, 2001, the dairy industry has been working closely with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, FDA, U.S. Department of Agriculture and other government departments to further safeguard the milk supply from a variety of possible threats.

As a result, American milk and dairy products are among the safest and most highly regulated foods in the world.

Testing and Regulation

- The PMO is a set of requirements for milk production, milk hauling, pasteurization, product safety, equipment sanitation and labeling. It is one of the most effective tools to protect the safety of milk; less than 1 percent of food borne illness outbreaks in the U.S. involve dairy products.¹
- Every tank load of milk entering dairy processing plants is strictly tested for animal drug residues and quality assurance factors. The U.S. dairy industry conducts nearly 4 million tests each year to ensure that antibiotics are kept out of the milk supply. In 2009, less than one-tenth of one percent (0.026%) of tanker loads tested positive for animal drug residues. Any tanker that tests positive is disposed of immediately, never reaching the public.^{1,2,3}
- HACCP is a structured and scientific process used throughout the food industry to help ensure food safety. Processing plants identify critical steps throughout the manufacturing process and establish plans to monitor and minimize any risks. HACCP plans are reviewed, approved and enforced by food safety agencies.

Pasteurization

- Pasteurization is a simple, effective method to kill bacteria without affecting the taste or nutrition of milk. It involves heating raw milk to a certain temperature for a specific period of time.
- In the United States, pasteurized milk must be heated to a minimum of 145°F for 30 minutes or to 161°F or more for 15 seconds.¹
- Since its introduction more than a century ago, pasteurization has been recognized around the world as an essential tool for ensuring that milk and dairy products are safe.

Security Measures

The dairy industry has worked diligently to implement a wide range of measures to secure facilities and the milk supply. These measures include:

- New standards for sealing milk tankers; any unauthorized opening of a tanker before its delivery to a processing plant is immediately evident.
- Additional pasteurizing safeguards, which address the threat of toxins such as botulinum.
- Proactive steps to increase awareness among employees about security measures at the farm and in processing facilities, including increased security of milk storage areas.
- Dairy plants have applied a variety of new protections that can include secured entry systems, employee screening programs and restricted access on the plant floor.
- Packaging operations are automated, enclosed and secure.

Sources:

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Food and Drug Administration. *Grade "A" Pasteurized Milk Ordinance...2001 Revision*. No. 229. Washington, D.C.: USDHHS, PHS, FDA. May 15, 2002. www.cfsan.fda.gov/~acrobat/pmo01.pdf Accessed July 16, 2004.
2. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition. National milk Drug Residue Data Base. Fiscal Year 2003 Annual Report. February 15, 2004. <http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov/~ear/milkrp03.html>. Accessed July 19, 2004.
3. National Milk Drug Residue Database, FY 2009 Report. <http://www.kandc-sbcc.com/nmdrd/fy-09.pdf>.

For more information, contact:

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