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**EVERYTHING
YOU WANTED TO KNOW
ABOUT THE MILKHOUSE LAW**

(AND WEREN'T AFRAID TO ASK)

**MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
DAIRY INDUSTRIES DIVISION**

INTRODUCTION

This booklet is a compilation of questions asked by Dairy Industry Personnel at several informational meetings that were held throughout the State. Answers have been provided by staff members of the Dairy Industries Division.

Questions have been grouped according to categories included in the inspection form wherever possible. The last section of the booklet contains procedural questions about the implementation of the program.

We hope you will find this booklet useful in answering questions about the Manufacturing program and will assist you in preparing your farms for certification.

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WATER SUPPLIES

- Q. Are the construction standards for farm wells tougher for Manufacturing Grade Milk than for Grade A?
- A. No. The standards of the Minnesota State Health Department Well Code applies to both equally. However, in the Manufacturing Grade Milk Program, a well may be permitted to be used, even though the construction requirements are not met, provided the water sample is tested safe annually.
- Q. How long are the water sample results good for?
- A. Test results are valid for one year if well does not meet construction requirements. Three years if a well does meet construction requirements.
- Q. Can a farm use an in-line chlorinator?
- A. The State Health Department requires a safe water sample, before an approved chlorinator can be installed.
- Q. What is the proper method for taking and handling water samples?
- A. The methods will be the same as those for Grade A, for additional information contact your area dairy sanitarian or the laboratory.
- Q. When a plumber works on any water supplies, must he follow the well code?
- A. Yes. Dairy producers should remind their plumbers that all work must meet the well code.
- Q. Will an approved sewage disposal system be required?
- A. All producers must dispose of milkhouse wastes in a safe and sanitary manner.
- Q. Can a well be located in a milkhouse?
- A. Yes, if the well tests safe.
- Q. Must you have a satisfactory water test result from an approved laboratory before a farm can be certified?
- A. Yes. The new standards require that all water supplies must test safe before the farm can be approved.

WATER SUPPLIES

Q. Can milkhouse wastes be disposed in a manure pit or a gutter?

A. Yes, provided they are disposed of in a sanitary manner and do not become a breeding area for flies.

Q. Will the sanitarian be looking for submerged inlets in stock waterers?

A. Although submerged inlets are debited as part of the Grade A Program, only recommendations to correct them will be made when they are observed on mfg. farms.

Q. Can you use a septic system for milkhouse wastes?

A. Yes. A Septic System is acceptable if there are no human wastes connected to the system.

Q. Will a sample from a Rural Water System be required?

A. Yes, sampled once every three years.

Q. Can a farmer take his own water sample?

A. No.

Q. Can a well be located in a barn?

A. Yes, provided water sample tests safe.

Q. Who will be responsible for water samples after July 1, 1985?

A. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture will be collecting samples after July 1, 1985.

MILKHOUSE

- Q. Can you have milk cans in a milkhouse if you have a bulk tank?
- A. Yes. They cannot be used for milk storage. If used to transport milk, cans must be in good condition.
- Q. Will farms be required to have a double wash vat?
- A. No. A single wash vat with a drain will be sufficient. However, a double wash vat is recommended.
- Q. Does the wash vat have to be stainless steel?
- A. No. Well-tinned metal, fiberglass or plastic are acceptable if they are free of rust and stains and have a drain.
- Q. Can you have an insectaway or other similar automatic fogging device in a milkhouse?
- A. No. At the present time, these are only approved for use in barns, holding areas and milking parlors in which teat cups are not stored.
- Q. Where should medicines be stored?
- A. All cow medicines should be kept in a cabinet or other similar storage facility.
- Q. Can medicines be stored in the milkhouse?
- A. Yes, if stored in an enclosed cabinet, and the cabinet is not located over the bulk tank, or other milk contact surfaces.
- Q. Do milkhouse walls have to be painted?
- A. No. However, we would strongly recommend that some type of paint or sealer be used to protect them from moisture, for they must remain in good repair.
- Q. What is adequate lighting?
- A. Adequate lighting is enough natural or artificial lighting to be able to properly clean all milking equipment and for the sanitarian to visually inspect the facility.
- Q. Explain how doors will be looked at?
- A. All doors must be solid, tight-fitting and self-closing. All screen doors must open outward.
- Q. Can my milkhouse be located away from the barn?
- A. Yes, provided it is a reasonable distance and milk is protected from contamination when it is carried there.

MILKHOUSE

Q. Is there a size requirement for milkhouses?

A. No, only adequate to handle the milking operation, see page 11 "Quality Milk Production."

EQUIPMENT

- Q. Does a farmer have to use an approved pail or bucket to carry milk to the bulk tank?
- A. Yes. The pail or bucket must be in a good repair with an appropriate cover. Plastic containers are not approved at this time.
- Q. If a farmer is milking on two separate farms, must he have a milkhouse with cleaning facilities on both farms?
- A. Yes, but milk can be transported to one storage facility, provided approved containers are used and the distance is not excessive.
- Q. What are acceptable methods of providing hot water for cleaning?
- A. Refer to Page 17 - water for cleaning - in Quality Milk Production Booklet.
- Q. Can milking equipment be carried to the house for cleaning?
- A. No. All milking equipment must be cleaned and stored in the milkhouse.
- Q. Must all strainers be stainless steel?
- A. No, but they must be cleanable and in good repair.
- Q. Must all milking equipment be stored in the milkhouse?
- A. Yes, and proper racks and or storage facilities must be used.
- Q. Can you use the plug style covers for milk cans?
- A. These are no longer approved, all covers must be umbrella style. However, as long as they remain in good repair, MDA will not mark them off. Replacements will have to be the new style.

BARN

- Q. Do you have to have a solid wall between cows and chickens if they are in the same building?
- A. Yes. You must have a solid, tight fitting wall between the milking barn and all poultry or hogs.
- Q. Can you have a door between the cows and chickens?
- A. No. There can be no direct openings between the milking area and the poultry or hog housing area.
- Q. Can you have chickens in the hay mow?
- A. Yes. If the hay mow floor is tightly sealed and free of cracks that would allow any manure or dust to enter the milking area. Also, remember there can be no direct openings from the milking area into the poultry housing area.
- Q. Does the entire barn have to be cemented out?
- A. No. Calf pens and maternity pens can be dirt floored. Please remember though that the milking area must be cemented.
- Q. Can you have wood over the gutter?
- A. No. Only metal may be used to cover the gutter. Wood is not permitted over any portion of the gutter.
- Q. Do barn walls and ceilings have to be whitewashed?
- A. No, but all barn walls must be clean and in good repair, and we would recommend whitewashing.
- Q. Can you keep horses in the same area of the barn as cows?
- A. Yes, but we would request that they be kept in one designated area and not mixed in with the milking cows.
- Q. Can there be cobwebs in the barn?
- A. Barns must be kept clean and this means relatively free of cobwebs.
- Q. Do barns have to have gutters and or gutter cleaners?
- A. No, provided that manure is removed daily and that it will not prevent maintaining of clean cows.

YARD

Q. What will happen if a producer can't get his cowyard into better condition?

A. If the producer meets the minimum certification requirements, the cowyard could be acceptable, even though it may have been debited on the inspection sheet.

Q. Why are cowyards being inspected?

A. To produce high quality clean milk, clean cows are required. It is impossible to have clean cows unless the cowyard is properly maintained, well drained and reasonably clean.

Q. How will yards be scored if there has been a lot of rain just before the farm is inspected?

A. The sanitarian will take weather conditions into consideration under these circumstances, provided the cows are in relatively clean condition so there is no danger of contamination of the milk supply.

Q. Do cow yards have to be concreted?

A. No, as long as they are maintained in good condition and the cows can be kept clean.

MILKING PROCEDURES

Q. Can feed be stored in the milking facility?

A. Feed storage rooms are to be separated from the milking area. However, up to one day's feed supply maybe stored in the milking barn (not parlor) providing this area is well maintained.

Q. Can colostrum milk be stored in the milkhouse?

A. Colostrum milk may be stored in the milkhouse provided, it is stored to insure that it does not contaminate the milk offered for sale and that it is stored in a covered container and it does not contribute to objectionable odors, overcrowding and unsanitary milkhouse conditions. Storage in an operating refrigerator is the best.

Q. Will you be scoring for clean cows and why are they so important?

A. Yes. High quality milk can not be produced from dirty cows.

Q. Will 10c be debited if no teat dip is present?

A. No, 10c is the washing and drying of the udder prior to milking.

Q. Explain the overall farm score necessary to be certified?

A. Each category must score at least 70% and the total score must be at least 85% of all items evaluated.

Q. Will a producer have to be re-inspected if his somatic cell count fails to meet the 3 out of 5 test?

A. No, but he will be off the market until the problem is corrected.

Q. What must a producer with a high somatic cell count problem do to be re-instated?

A. Before producers milk can be accepted, a milk analysis must show that the problem has been corrected.

Q. What is meant by the "Abnormal Milk Program" under Item Number 10, Milking Procedures?

A. At the time of inspection, a determination will be made if Colostrum, Mastitic, and Antibiotic Milk is being properly handled and not getting into the milk offered for sale.

Q. Are the somatic cell standards different for Manufacturing Grade Milk than for Grade A?

A. No. The Somatic Cell requirements for Grade A Milk and Manufacturing Grade Milk are both the same (1,500,000 per ml.).

MILKING PROCEDURES

- Q. Must a producer be inspected at milking time to be certified?
- A. No. However, if the certification inspection is conducted at milking time, the "Milking Procedures" items on the Inspection Sheet would be applicable.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Q. Can a fieldman "shut-off" a producer?

A. Yes, for various reasons a dairy plant may exercise its right to refuse the purchase of milk from any of its patrons.

Q. Can a plant decertify a producer?

A. No. The only way a producer could lose certification is through action taken by a MDA Dairy Sanitarian.

Q. When will the Department have the official quality records?

A. We would anticipate that all quality records would be sent to this office by January 1, 1985, but in no case later than July 1, 1985.

Q. How will the pesticide residue program be handled?

A. Representative samples of all milk will be taken on an annual basis at the dairy plants by our dairy sanitarians.

Q. What is probation?

A. A limited period of time following the failing of an inspection in which producer must make necessary improvements to meet certification requirements in order to continue marketing milk for human consumption.

Q. How long must a producer be "off-the-market" before he can be reinstated?

A. There is no specified "off-the-market" time period. A producer may be reinstated any time after the certification requirements are met and the dairy sanitarian can arrange to make the reinspection.

Q. Will the Department be furnishing the necessary forms for inspections and certification requests?

A. Yes.

Q. What is the re-instatement procedure for producers who lose their certification?

A. After corrections have been made and verified by dairy plant fieldman, "Request For Certification" form is completed and submitted to Dairy Sanitarian.

Q. Can a producer be "shut-off" because he has been adding water to his milk?

A. Yes. Any plant can refuse to accept milk that has been adulterated. In addition, the Department may initiate legal proceedings against the producer.

Q. Can a producer still sell milk while on probation?

A. Yes.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Q. Who will certify the farms?

A. The Area Sanitarian, following a request to do so signed by the producer and the plant field service representative.

Q. Will consecutive violations on the inspection sheet result in a farm not being recertified?

A. No. Only if they would result in a category scoring less than 70% or a total score of less than 85%.

Q. Will sanitarians help field service with questions that may occur?

A. Yes.

Q. What happens when a Grade A producer is degraded?

A. After July 1, 1985, a degraded Grade A producer must meet Manufacturing Grade Milk Certification requirements at the time of degrade, or be placed on probation status.

Q. Will the sanitarian and the fieldman be traveling together on farm certifications?

A. Yes. We will require that a plant representative accompany the dairy sanitarian on initial certification.

Q. Must a new producer be certified before he can begin shipping milk?

A. Yes, after July 1, 1985.

Q. Will a sanitarian certify a farm if the producer has not completed the pink request form?

A. No. The Department will not certify any farm until the producer requests it and the plant representative has determined that the farm is ready for certification.

Q. Will all B Bulk Farms have to be certified even though they had been approved to ship bulk milk earlier?

A. Yes, previous bulk tank inspections had applied only to the milkhouse. The new standards apply to the barn & yard in addition to the milkhouse.

Q. How long does the probation period last?

A. Up to 30 days, depending on the seriousness of the problem and the farmers ability to correct it. In some instances where major construction changes are required, the sanitarian may extend the probation to a longer period if required.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

- Q. What happens if a producer refuses to co-operate with the fieldman in getting his farm ready for certification?
- A. Farm certification is ultimately the producers obligation. If he chooses to ignore or refuse to co-operate he will be unable to market his milk after July 1, 1985.
- Q. Could a producer be inspected twice before July 1, 1985?
- A. Yes. All certifications are good for one year.
- Q. Will a plant be charged for any follow-up inspections if a producer fails certification?
- A. No. The inspection fee will not be increased if a producer fails a certification.
- Q. Will all producer records be computerized and available from the St. Paul Office?
- A. Yes.
- Q. What happens if a farm fails to pass his initial certification inspection? Will that farm be placed on probation?
- A. No, providing the initial certification inspection is conducted prior to July 1, 1985. However, another inspection for certification will be required prior to July 1, 1985.
- Q. Is the Department certifying farms or farmers?
- A. Farms.
- Q. What happens if a farm is sold or rented to someone else?
- A. If major equipment change takes place, recertification will be required. In any case the Department should be notified of Name Change.