

Inhibitor and Drug Residue Update

Source: Kelly Mauthe, Member Services Specialist

The raw milk quality testing program in Alberta includes tests for bacteria, somatic cells, added water, and inhibitors. These test results are used for the Provincial Alberta Milk Quality Award, quality bonus, and penalty programs to reward producers who have minimal infractions and conversely, to penalize producers whose quality has slipped below the prescribed levels.

The 2009-10 dairy year saw a record low number of loads discarded for positive inhibitors. This continues a trend in the reduction in positive test results from the previous dairy year.

Producers are reminded that all their shipments must meet the requirements of the Dairy Industry Regulations (AR139/99) with respect to raw milk quality. Specifically:

Milk, cream standards

43 *If a producer's milk does not meet the requirements of Schedule 2, the milk may be rejected in accordance with this Regulation.*

Schedule 2 - Standards for Raw Milk

Inhibitor and drug residues as determined by approved methods must meet the requirements of the Maximum Residue Levels prescribed by the Food and Drugs Act (Canada)

The Central Milk Testing (CMT) lab, as a requirement of the Dairy Industry Regulations (47(1)), tests all producers randomly at least once a month with a broad spectrum inhibitor tests (disk assay). Processors in Alberta, as a requirement of the Dairy Industry Act (19(1)), test every load delivered using at least one but often a variety of quick inhibitor tests (Charm). Recently, some processors have added a quick test for tetracycline as well as the tests for beta-lactams (penicillin family), and sulfa drugs. A producer will be penalized under the Milk Grade and Price Program if the CMT lab confirms the presence of any inhibitors.

A producer who ships milk that tests positive for inhibitors will be notified by Regulatory Services Division and will be suspended until it can be confirmed that their milk meets the requirements of the Dairy Industry Regulations.