



Food Safety Programs on Dairy Farms

On farm food safety programs are essential to demonstrate the effective management of the food safety risks associated with milk harvesting. The management of hazards from microbiological, chemical or physical sources must be documented in food safety programs and support programs detailing good farm management practices. Support programs may include calibration, cleaning, good hygienic practice, training, identification and traceability, record keeping, pest control and maintenance.

Milking sheds

The dairy must not be used for any purpose that may compromise food safety.

Construction & equipment

Milking sheds must protect milk from contamination. To fulfil this outcome the food safety program must detail how often maintenance reviews are conducted. All maintenance non-conformances must be rectified. The construction, maintenance and use of the milking shed, vat and equipment must protect milk from contamination during milking, storage and collection.

Cleaning & sanitising

The surfaces that raw milk comes into contact with must be corrosion resistant and easy to clean/sanitise.

Methods for cleaning and sanitising, and the frequency of conducting these tasks, must be detailed in the food safety program. Non-conformances to the cleaning and sanitation program must be rectified.

Cleaning and sanitising chemicals must be suitable for their purpose and used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. These chemicals must be labelled, handled, stored securely and disposed of in such a way that food safety is not jeopardised.

The milk vat and milking equipment must be cleaned, disinfected, rinsed and drained, and the water used must not contaminate the milk. Hot water must be at a temperature sufficient for effective cleaning.

The effluent from cleaning and sanitising must also be disposed of in such a way that it does not jeopardise food safety or the environment.

Water

The food safety program must describe the source, treatment and use of water used in the dairy, along with a water management plan. Water used on dairy farms, e.g. water for cleaning udder and teat surfaces, must not contaminate milk or jeopardise food safety. Stock must not consume or have access to contaminated water that is likely to cause disease.

Milk chilling

Milk must be chilled to minimise contamination by pathogens and pathogenic toxins. A food safety program must identify how milk chilling capability is checked and how frequently checks occur. Records must be kept that document checks and demonstrate that milk has been chilled to 5°C or less within 3.5 hours from the start of milking, and maintained at this temperature.¹ The food safety program must also specify how thermometers are calibrated, and how often, as well as the appropriate records being kept.



Farm Management

Agricultural & veterinary chemicals

Farm management practices must ensure safe milk production. The food safety program must detail the identification of animals with veterinary chemicals, as well as the identification of pastures and feed treated with agricultural chemicals.

Records for agricultural chemicals and veterinary drugs must be kept and must include the date, the person who applied or administered the chemical, the chemical used, the rate or dose of application, what was treated and the withholding period or clearance date. These chemicals must be suitable for use, used in accordance with the manufacturer's or a veterinarian's written instructions, and labelled

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and stored appropriately. Veterinary drugs must also be managed appropriately in dry and lactating animals, and in herd replacement animals. The food safety program must contain procedures used to isolate milk from animals treated with veterinary drugs.

Traceability

All animals must be permanently identified. The food safety program must describe how animals are identified. Records must be kept of milk leaving the farm including time, date, quantity, and name and address of milk recipient. Records for other farm inputs that can impact food safety must also be kept to facilitate traceability.

Stockfeed

The food safety program must include stockfeed declarations including name of supplier, description of feed and date of supply, chemical residue status and withholding periods. Stockfeed must not pose a risk of contamination to milk. Stockfeed fed to ruminants must not contain material derived from animals with the exception of tallow, gelatine and dairy products.

Pest control

If pest control is managed through the use of pesticides, the food safety program must describe how these chemicals are used. Records for pesticide use must be kept detailing the date, person using the pesticide, pesticide used, rate of application and area treated. Pesticides must not pose a risk of contamination to milk, must be used in accordance with instructions, and must be labelled and stored appropriately.

Infectious diseases

Animals with infectious diseases must be segregated and their milk withheld from supply. Milking areas must be kept free of undesirable animals which may pose a risk of contamination to milk.

The food safety program must also contain procedures demonstrating how to isolate milk supplied from animals showing evidence of diseases that are infectious to humans.

Competency

To ensure that people involved in dairy farming do not jeopardise food safety, people involved in activities such as milking, applying agricultural chemicals or administering veterinary drugs must understand how their actions impact on food safety.

Responsible person/s

To ensure accountability for food safety, the person/people responsible for the implementation of the food safety program or sections of the food safety program must be specified. The person with the responsibility for overall implementation of the food safety program must have the appropriate authority and control to deliver the required outcome.

Management of non-conformances

Non-conformances with the food safety program must not jeopardise food safety. The food safety program must describe where non-conformances are recorded. Records for non-conformances must include date identified, action taken to control and prevent the non-conformance, and the proposed date the action/s will be completed.

References

1. Australia New Zealand Dairy Authorities' Committee (January 2006) 'Guidelines for Food Safety – Dairy Farms.'

Further information

On Food Safety Programs for dairy farms refer to 'Guidelines for Food Safety – Dairy Farms.'¹

Other Dairy Food Safety Notes are available at www.dairysafe.vic.gov.au

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