



Date: December 17, 2002

Topic: Changes to General Specifications

Numbered Memorandum PS-02-2

On August 28, 2002, Amendments to the *General Specifications for Dairy Plants Approved for USDA Inspection and Grading Service* became effective. As a result, certain changes in how we assess dairy plant quality programs and determine plant eligibility under our approved plant program were made. The following points summarize the amendments:

1. ***Abnormal Milk Program (7 CFR 58.133)***: The maximum somatic cell count for producer herd milk was reduced from 1,000,000 cells per milliliter (ml) to 750,000 cells/ml.
2. ***Testing for Drug Residues (7 CFR 58.133)***: The drug residue section was amended to provide greater consistency with the Pasteurized Milk Ordinance.
3. ***Producer Herd Milk Bacteria Testing Requirements (7 CFR 58.135)***: The maximum bacterial estimate for producer herd milk was reduced from 1,000,000 bacterial cells/ml to 500,000 cells.
4. ***Follow-up procedures for High Bacteria Estimates on Producer Herd Milk (7 CFR 58.135)*** were changed to increase uniformity between follow-up procedures for high somatic cell counts and high bacteria estimates.
5. ***Commingled Milk in Plant Storage Tanks (7 CFR 58.143)***: The maximum bacterial estimate for commingled milk was reduced from 3,000,000 bacterial cells/ml to 1,000,000 cells.
6. ***Equipment Requirements (7 CFR 58.128)***: The general specifications now requires that new, replacement or modified equipment for which there is no 3-A Sanitary Standard must meet the requirements of the *USDA Guidelines for the Sanitary Design and Fabrication of Dairy Processing Equipment*.
7. ***Etcetera***: Minor changes were made to update other sections.

These amendments will affect Page A, Item A19–Raw Products Testing, which will be updated to reflect these changes. Copies of the updated information will be made available soon.



When reviewing producer records during a survey, verify that a bacteria test is performed monthly and the results are less than 500,000 cells/ml. When the review finds that tests are not performed monthly, assign the deficiency to category D. When the review finds that there are producers with bacteria counts above 500,000 cells/ml without the proper follow-up, assign the deficiency to category C.

Likewise, verify that the abnormal milk program meets the requirements of the general specifications. Somatic cell counts are to be performed four times in each six month period. Assign deficiencies in the abnormal milk program using the above guidelines for the bacteria counts.

Note that the sediment requirements have not changed. Verify that a sediment test is run on each producer every month at irregular intervals.

Also review the plants drug residue testing procedures. All milk received shall be tested, prior to processing, for beta lactam drug residues. A sample shall be taken from each tanker load prior to further commingling. For can milk, a composite sample shall be formed at the plant, using a sampling procedure that includes milk from every can on the vehicle. In addition, individual producer samples shall be obtained from each milk shipment. These samples do not have to be tested unless the load sample is positive for antibiotics. The plant shall notify the State regulatory agency of any positive sample and all milk from the producer responsible shall be rejected until milk from a subsequent milking does not test positive. When the review finds the tests are not performed on each tanker, or lack of proper follow-up, assign the deficiency to category A.

Dairy operations receiving or processing milk will be subject to the Direct Microscopic Clump (DMC) count test to verify that the bacteriological quality of commingled milk in storage tanks does not exceed 1,000,000 bacterial cells/ml. The record of a plant's commingled milk quality, as determined by official DMC test, is an integral factor in assigning plant status. A DMC average of one million or under for the current survey shall be considered satisfactory. If more than one million, the plant status is directly affected.

Please review the attached information from the July 29, 2002 Federal Register and apply the new criteria immediately. If you have any questions contact me at philip.wolff@usda.gov or (202) 720-9386.

/s/ Philip S. Wolff
Philip S. Wolff
National Program Coordinator