

## Editorial on Milk Quality and Safety

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### EDITORIAL

According to the Food and Drug Administration, raw milk can harbor dangerous microorganisms, such as salmonella, *E. coli* and *Listeria*, which can pose serious health risks to you and your family. Outbreaks of tuberculosis have been traced back to the consumption of raw milk. From a present day perspective, the milk processors' concerns include food safety, food quality, environment and sustainability, technical innovation, the ability to supply 'niche' milks and the ability to drive cost efficiency. The mechanism for the delivery of these is then reviewed in the context of milk supply contracts, and there follows a consideration of what processors may be looking for in addition to this base level.

Good-quality raw milk has to be free of debris and sediment; free of off-flavours and abnormal colour and odour; low in bacterial count; free of chemicals (e.g., antibiotics, detergents); and of normal composition and acidity. The quality of raw milk is the primary factor determining the quality of milk products. Milk quality in the industry is determined by a low bacterial and cell count. One of the biggest factors for determining the quality of milk is its bacterial count. High bacterial counts can arise from organisms which pass into the milk or from bacteria contaminating equipment. Many factors influence the composition of milk, the major components

of which are water, fat, protein, lactose and minerals. Buy milk and other dairy products toward the end of your shopping trip so they spend less time out at room temperature. Store milk and other dairy products in the coldest part of the refrigerator, never store milk in the refrigerator door where it is susceptible to warmer air from opening and closing the door. Good production and herd management practices help ensure low bacteria counts and reduce the risk of the presence of pathogens in the raw milk. While the legal limit for total bacteria in farm raw milk is 100,000/ml, milk with counts of 10,000 or less is considered desirable and achievable by most farms. The rate of growth of harmful bacteria increases as the temperature at which the milk is stored is increased. ... Harmful bacteria cannot grow in milk when the temperature it is kept at is below 45 F. At higher temperatures, the rate of growth of harmful bacteria is very fast. The federal government banned the sale of raw milk across state lines nearly three decades ago because it poses a threat to public health. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Medical Association all strongly advise people not to drink it. The quality of raw milk is the primary factor determining the quality of milk products. Good-quality milk products can be produced only from good-quality raw milk. The hygienic quality of milk is of crucial importance in producing milk and milk products that are safe and suitable for their intended uses.

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