



# Food safety is everyone's business

## in the primary production of milk

### Importance of food safety

Milk provides a multitude of nutrients, making it an important part of the diet of many of the 8 billion people on the planet. But milk needs to be safe. Raw milk can cause foodborne illness as it may contain dangerous pathogens. Unsafe milk and dairy products not only adversely affect people's health and well-being, but also have a negative impact on livelihoods as well as economies.

On World Food Safety Day (7 June), hold a workshop or run a refresher course for farmers on good animal husbandry and hygiene practices to enhance their knowledge of and attitude toward food safety.

Farmers must ensure that they produce milk that does not contain unsafe levels of microbial and chemical contaminants, antimicrobial residues or residues of other veterinary drugs. The following advice is for producers with access to cold chain.

#### THE COLD CHAIN IS ESSENTIAL!

Milk should be kept at  $\leq 6^{\circ}\text{C}$  before it leaves the farm when collected daily or  $\leq 4^{\circ}\text{C}$  when stored on the farm for longer. After the farm, collectors, processors, distributors, retailers and consumers all have a role to play in maintaining the cold chain.



# What are the benefits of food safety?

## FOR PRODUCERS

- Increased milk yield and product quality;
- Less milk wastage;
- Increased consumer confidence.

## FOR CONSUMERS

- Access to safe milk and dairy products;
- Better health due to improved nutritional status and reduced occurrence of foodborne illness.

# How to achieve food safety

## PRODUCERS

- Use safe animal feed.  
**Ensure** that animal feed does not lead to the introduction of contaminants, such as aflatoxins or residues, that may be transferred to the milk.
- **Practise** good animal husbandry.  
Apply good hygiene, biosecurity and herd health management on the farm.
- **Prevent and control** mastitis.  
Routinely analyse milk to detect and control mastitis. Always test the milk of newly acquired animals to prevent spread of diseases.  
Use pre- and post-dipping during the milking routine. Clean the udder before milking.  
Milk cows with mastitis last. Have fresh feed and water available to discourage cows from lying down immediately after milking.
- **Practise** good hygiene.  
Wash your hands with soap and water after visiting the toilet or handling animals or manure. Cover cuts, lesions and wounds. Keep animals clean to the extent possible; good udder hygiene ensures milk quality is not affected by dirty teats.
- **Use** clean equipment, milking and storage facilities.  
Clean and sanitize milking equipment and carry out routine maintenance.  
Keep milking area clean and ensure storage containers are clean and well maintained.

- Only **use** antimicrobials and other veterinary drugs when needed to treat sick animals.  
Prevention is better than treatment in the case of any disease, in particular mastitis. Contact a veterinarian (or other professionally trained animal health worker) before starting any antimicrobial treatment. Always respect the recommended withdrawal period of any treatment.

## AUTHORITIES

- **Encourage** good animal husbandry practices (GAHP) and good hygiene practices (GHP).
- **Facilitate** farmer access to veterinary services to control zoonotic diseases like tuberculosis and brucellosis.
- **Adopt** legislation and promote the implementation of **Code of Hygienic Practice for Milk and Milk Products** and other relevant **texts** on milk production.
- **Enforce** regulations and undertake routine farm inspections.

For additional guidance: [FAO Gateway to dairy production and products](#)