



Official milk testing in 2019

The official milk-testing programme (MP) is anchored in public law. The testing centre Suisselab AG in Zollikofen is commissioned to carry out the tests. The Milk Testing Ordinance (SR 916.351.0) and the FDHA Ordinance on Hygiene in Milk Production (SR 916.351.021.1) provide the legal framework for the tests.

1 Investigations

The MP is an important means of ensuring that the hygiene requirements for raw cow's milk are met. Moreover, it is a prerequisite for the exportability of Swiss milk and milk products. The MP requires that cow's milk from every milk producer be tested twice a month based on the following criteria.

Table 1: Criteria for Milk Testing

Criterion	Requirements	Method
Microbial count at 30°C (per ml)	< 80,000 cfu	fluorescence optical count ¹
Somatic cells (per ml)	< 350,000 cells	fluorescence optical count ¹
Inhibitors	not detectable	microbiological inhibition test

¹ Calculated geometric mean of two samples per calendar month. If, exceptionally, only one result is available in any given month, this is used instead of the geometric mean.

2 Results

Milk samples used in the analysis were from Switzerland; samples from France (zone milk) and the Principality of Liechtenstein were not taken into account. The results for the full year were as follows:

Table 2: Comparison of the 2018 and 2019 full year results for microbial counts

Microbial count	2019	2018
Number of analysed samples	426'640	436'409
Median (cfu/ml)	5'184	5'281
Mean, arithmetic (cfu/ml)	10'537	11'166
Number of samples exceeding the limit	3'370	3'747
Number of samples exceeding the limit (%)	0.790%	0.859%
Number of bans	12	19
Number of bans (%)	0.003%	0.004%

Source: TSM

Table 3: Comparison of the 2018 and 2019 full year results for cell counts

Cell count	2019	2018
Number of analysed samples	427'828	438'583
Median (cells/ml)	130'109	131'544
Mean, arithmetic (cells/ml)	130'397	133'498
Number of samples exceeding the limit	12'390	13'827
Number of samples exceeding the limit (%)	2.896%	3.153%
Number of bans	49	67
Number of bans (%)	0.011%	0.015%

Source: TSM

Table 4: Comparison of the 2017 and 2018 full year results for inhibitor detection

Detection of inhibitors	2019	2018
Number of analysed samples	428'850	426'314
Number of bans	270	231
Number of bans (%)	0.0630%	0.054%

Source: TSM

3 Milk delivery bans and their abrogation

For every positive inhibitor test and every third rejection within four months in the case of microbial count and every fourth rejection within five months in the case of cell count, the competent cantonal authority imposes a milk delivery ban.

If the milk delivery ban results from a positive inhibitor test, the ban cannot be lifted until the milk producer has shown evidence to the authority that appropriate action has been taken to remedy the causes and that the result of the inhibitor detection test for the milk that is ready to be delivered is negative. The competent authority decides on a case-by-case basis whether an additional inspection is necessary.

If the milk delivery ban results from repeated rejections due to increased microbial or cell counts, the competent cantonal authority has to perform an on-site inspection. In addition, the milk has to meet all legal requirements.

4 Comparison of the 2018 and 2019 data

A comparison of the 2018 and 2019 data shows a reduction in the total number of analysed milk samples, as in previous years. This is attributed to the decrease in the number of milk-producing farms. The percentage of samples that exceeded the acceptance limit and of milk delivery bans in 2018 is at a higher level than in previous years. However, as this difference is minimal, no measures need to be taken.

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