



Official milk testing in 2016

The official milk-testing programme (MP) is anchored in public law. The testing centre Suissselab 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 2015 and 2016 full year results for microbial counts

Microbial count	2016	2015
Number of analysed samples	468,505	484,739
Median (cfu/ml)	5,527	5,508
Mean, arithmetic (cfu/ml)	11,570	12,019
Number of samples exceeding the limit	3,860	4,346
Number of samples exceeding the limit (%)	0.824%	0.897%
Number of bans	21	27
Number of bans (%)	0.004%	0.006%

Source: Suissselab/TSM

Table 3: Comparison of the 2015 and 2016 full year results for cell counts

Cell count	2016	2015
Number of analysed samples	469,784	485,424
Median (cells/ml)	130,387	130,788
Mean, arithmetic (cells/ml)	130,885	131,111
Number of samples exceeding the limit	13,917	14,595
Number of samples exceeding the limit (%)	2.962%	3.007%
Number of bans	69	58
Number of bans (%)	0.015%	0.012%

Source: Suisselab/TSM

Table 4: Comparison of the 2015 and 2016 full year results for inhibitor detection

Detection of inhibitors	2016	2015
Number of analysed samples	470,286	485,957
Number of bans	212	267
Number of bans (%)	0.045%	0.055%

Source: Suisselab/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 2015 and 2016 data

A comparison of the 2015 and 2016 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 percentages of samples that exceeded the acceptance limit and of milk delivery bans in 2016 are at the same level as in 2015.

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