



Official milk testing in 2020

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

¹ Calculated geometric average of at least 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 2019 and 2020 full year results for plate count

Plate count	2020	2019
Number of analysed samples	409'419	426'640
Median (cfu/ml)	5'391	5'184
Mean, arithmetic (cfu/ml)	10'569	10'537
Number of samples exceeding the limit	2'907	3'370
Number of samples exceeding the limit (%)	0.710%	0.790%
Number of bans	15	12
Number of bans (%)	0.004%	0.003%

Source: TSM



Table 3: Comparison of the 2019 and 2020 full year results for somatic cell counts

Cell count	2020	2019
Number of analysed samples	408'368	427'828
Median (cells/ml)	131'569	130'109
Mean, arithmetic (cells/ml)	133'949	130'397
Number of samples exceeding the limit	12'810	12'390
Number of samples exceeding the limit (%)	3.137%	2.896%
Number of bans	50	49
Number of bans (%)	0.012%	0.011%

Source: TSM

Table 4: Comparison of the 2019 and 2020 full year results for inhibitor detection

Detection of inhibitors	2020	2019
Number of analysed samples	411'901	428'850
Number of bans	261	270
Number of bans (%)	0.0634%	0.0630%

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 plate count and every fourth rejection within five months in the case of somatic 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 2019 and 2020 data

A comparison of the 2019 and 2020 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 resulted in a milk delivery bans in 2020 is at a slightly higher level than in previous years. However, as this difference is minimal, no measures need to be taken.

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