



## **Dairy UK Guidance on Tanker Loads of Milk which have failed an industry Antibiotics Screening Test**

1. It is the responsibility of the milk producer to ensure that raw milk, at the time of its collection, meets the requirements of The Dairy Products (Hygiene) Regulations 1995, and in particular must not contain antibiotic residues exceeding permitted levels. Purchasers of milk carry out regular testing of individual milk supplies using independent testing laboratories, and producers whose milk fails the purchasers' antibiotic screening test are subject to severe cost penalties. As a consequence the incidence of individual milk supplies failing a screening test is very low. The results of Statutory Surveillance by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate are published both quarterly and annually, and confirm the absence of antibiotic residues above the relevant Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) or Action Limits.

2. In addition to these legal requirements, milk processors may choose to screen tanker loads of milk for antibiotic residues.

3. If a tanker load of milk on arrival at establishment A is tested for antibiotics and fails this test, the establishment may reject the tanker load as being outside its commercial standards, or if the establishment is already the owner of the milk, may sell the milk to establishment B. In this latter case the original owner need not decide that the milk is not suitable for human consumption but can leave this decision to the new owner. The load of milk should, however, be appropriately described (e.g. milk which has failed "X" antibiotic screening test).

4. Establishment B should test the milk/dairy products for antibiotics using an antibiotics screening test, and if the milk/dairy products passes and satisfies the requirements of The Dairy Products (Hygiene) Regulations 1995, the milk can be used for human consumption. Establishment B should, however, carry out occasional surveillance of such milk or dairy products, using reference methods, to ensure that there is no systematic presence of illegal residues such as chloramphenicol, or residues above the MRL.

Note a). It is not permitted to obtain a test pass by diluting the milk from the original tanker load with other milk.

Note b). If milk contains residues at levels which would not allow it to be used in human food, it would also prohibit use in animal feed. Disposal of milk or dairy products exceeding legal limits for antibiotic residues should meet the requirements of category 2 material in the Animal By-products Regulations (Regulation 1774/2002).

Note c). Industry screening tests for antibiotics do not necessarily operate at the MRL, and are also subject to false positives and negatives. Consequently failure in such a test is not evidence that residues exceed the MRL, but is an indication that further investigation is required.

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