

## **Dairy UK Position Paper Chlorates September 2017**

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### **Background**

Chlorate is a by-product of chlorinating agents used for disinfection purposes.

Chlorate residues in dairy products may arise from the following practices aimed at guaranteeing the microbiological safety of food:

- The use of chlorinated water supplied from water companies;
- Further processing of water in dairy plants (hyperchlorination, chlorine dioxide);
- The use of chlorine-based disinfectants that come into contact with food.

The use of chlorate as a pesticide was banned in 2008 in the EU and since then a 0.01 mg/kg default Maximum Residue Level (MRL) has been in force.

The European Commission is now considering a revision of the current MRL, recognising it is too low and does not reflect a practically achievable level for the food industry across Europe.

EU Member States have come to understand that chlorate residues in food are not the result of the illegal use of pesticides and so have agreed that the default level of 0.01mg/kg will not be enforced, and instead new commodity-based MRLs will be set.

### **Dairy UK Position**

It is important to set achievable maximum permitted levels of chlorate residue in food, as many companies depend on treated water for their processing. In addition, alternatives to chlorine-based detergents may not always be appropriate.

The use of cleaning agents and disinfectants is an essential component of Good Manufacturing Practice and the food industry has and continues to use these in a responsible manner. They control microbial, viral and parasitic growth, and as such are essential for ensuring food safety.

British dairy manufactures have been reviewing their supply chains to identify potential sources of chlorates, and implement measures aimed at reducing chlorate levels in final products wherever possible. Above all the dairy industry is committed to ensuring consumers can enjoy products of the highest quality, safety and hygiene.