

Adulterated Milk: Antibiotic Residues

What is adulterated milk?

As it relates to antibiotic residues, adulterated milk is defined in Minnesota State Statutes 32D.19 Subd. 3 as “milk that contains drug residues or other chemical or biological substances in amounts above the tolerances or safe levels”.

Why are antibiotics in milk a concern?

Antibiotics in milk can kill the bacterial cultures that are added during the manufacture of some dairy products, such as yogurt and cheese. From a health perspective, consumers who are allergic to antibiotics can become very sick if exposed to even small doses of antibiotics. Lastly, low-level intake of antibiotics from food could result in resistant microorganisms. These are all important reasons to work toward preventing residues and be judicious in how you use antibiotics on your farm.

How are antibiotics detected in milk?

Antibiotics can be detected in milk during regular testing that occurs in two different ways:

- 1) Every load of milk is tested for antibiotics prior to being unloaded at the dairy plant to ensure no finished product is adulterated; if the tanker is positive, the producer samples are then tested to determine which caused the adulteration.
- 2) Random monthly quality samples are also taken for each individual producer; these are also tested for antibiotic residues, often using a different test.

So you have an adulterated milk violation, now what?

Set up a time to meet with your vet to complete one of the appropriate trainings and sign the [Certificate of Completion](#). Your field representative and inspector will then set up a meeting with you to determine the cause of the adulteration and discuss the consequences of another positive within a 12 month period. The meeting and training must be completed within 30 days of the violation.

How can you prevent antibiotic adulteration in the future?

- **Use antibiotics responsibly!** Use antibiotics only when necessary for the health of the animal; less use means fewer opportunities to have a residue.
- **Keep good records!** Use a recordkeeping and identification system to keep track of treated animals, the drugs that you give, the dates that they are given, and withdrawal periods for both meat and milk.
- **Develop a relationship with your veterinarian!** This helps ensure you have accurate information about withdrawal times and avoid the accidental misuse of drugs on your farm.
- **Respect both milk and meat withdrawal times!** Withdrawal times are based on scientific studies and are created to help you avoid residues.
- **Remove doubt!** When possible, test the product before it leaves the farm and review treatment records to ensure all withdrawal periods have been met.

Last Updated: 1/6/2020

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