

Quality Control on Dairy Farms with Emphasis on Public Health

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Editorial

Developments in food safety pose challenges to developing countries in ensuring adequate supply of safe foods for domestic and international markets. Food scares and changes in international trade have alleviated food safety concerns in international food policy. The recent developments include: increased emphasis on food safety regulations, strict food safety standards, reorientation toward preventive quality management, and a shift toward process-based standards and mandatory Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point. Smallholder production systems and small-medium enterprise characteristics of food processing industries impedes the achievement of domestic and international food safety standards. The proliferation, multiplicity, strengthening, costs of compliance, increasing specificity, and lack of harmonization of international food safety standards are major concerns for developing countries. The most serious challenges have been the costs of failing to meet international food safety standards, but they should be viewed as catalysts toward food safety improvement. Food regulatory infrastructures are inadequate due to limited resources and a multiplicity of agencies involved making management of control measures difficult. Food safety in the domestic market is constrained by inadequate infrastructure and facilities,

resulting in contaminated foods. Increasing incomes, urbanization, literacy, and closer ties to global trends have resulted in domestic consumer-based concerns about food safety.

Consumer concern about livestock production methodologies is increasing over the last decades due to various outbreaks of food-borne zoonoses and animal diseases. Quality assurance programmes in the different production chains have been installed by industry to counteract the problems occurring. The primary producers, like the dairy farms, are not formally comprised in such programmes. Yet, quality control at dairy farm level goes beyond the quality control of the product milk alone. For better safeguarding food safety and public health, as well as animal health and welfare the whole production process on the dairy farm should be addressed. In this paper, quality control according to the concept and principles of HACCP is dealt with. More particularly health and welfare are addressed, while the approach of the Dutch dairy sector is used as an example. It is concluded that based on developments within the dairy sector as well as at the EU political level, it can be expected that the application of HACCP-compatible programmes on the dairy farms will be conducted in the near future. This application will help in identifying and managing the quality hazards and risks occurring in the production process on dairy farms, and in providing the consumer with more certainty about the quality of products of animal origin.

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