

The Dairy Goat Digest

Issue #1

July, 2003

The Dairy Food Safety Unit at OMAF want to keep you better informed of changes and updates to the Raw Goat Milk Quality Program and ongoing quality issues. This newsletter will hopefully provide you with the information you need.

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New Raw Milk Specialists

Mike Foran and Phillip Wilman have joined the Dairy Food Safety Program as Raw Milk Specialists working out of Guelph. Their main responsibilities include delivery of inspection services for goat milk production in the province.

Mike Foran has strong work experience and educational background in agriculture, food science, and dairy farm inspection. Mike comes to us from the University of Guelph Laboratory Services where, for the past seven years, he has worked as a laboratory technician performing analysis on raw and processed food samples. Prior to his work at the lab, Mike was in eastern Ontario, conducting on-farm inspections for both cow and goat milk producers

Phillip Wilman brings a diversity of skills, including an agricultural education and work experience as a Livestock Feed Specialist with the Waterloo-Oxford Co-op and Land O' Lakes. Phillip is a partner with his wife and family in a goat milk production operation near Arthur. He is a member of the American Registry of Professional Animal Scientists. Both are graduates of the University of Guelph, Bachelor of Science in Agriculture programs.

Mike and Phillip are presently training to conduct dairy goat farm inspections, and as well, have been busy collecting and delivering raw goat milk samples to Lab Services Division, during the June Goat Milk Sampling Survey.

Introducing Vanessa Taylor, Milk Quality Assurance Program Lead

The Milk Quality Assurance Program Lead has been very capably held by Vanessa Taylor since January 2003. Vanessa has been very proactive at getting out to dairy goat farms and events and consulting with dairy goat producers to find out how she can assist with improving milk quality.

Vanessa is the lead technology transfer expert on milk quality assurance linking provincial, national, and international research to dairy producers and industry stakeholders in Ontario. She is the liaison between the research community and dairy industry to help identify technology transfer priorities by coordinating research projects within Ontario, writing articles for publication in magazines and newsletters, through speaking engagements, and offering training opportunities for clients, such as workshops. She is a resource for producers seeking information on milk quality and related quality issues, for On Farm Food Safety, and Quality Assurance programs. She also promotes awareness of economic and developmental opportunities for her clients, the dairy producers of Ontario. By working with the Raw Milk Specialists, clients and client groups, Vanessa provides information and assistance where necessary to help improve the quality of milk produced in Ontario.

Who do I contact if I have a milk quality problem?

The inspector's role is to assist with cases on a one-on-one basis with producers. Bruce Hayden or Cherry Allen remain your contacts until the new inspectors are trained and a smooth transition of inspection services is made. Mike Foran and Phillip Wilman will be working together with Bruce and Cherry to assist producers in solving quality problems, and achieving optimum raw milk quality.

New Inspection Forms

A new "Dairy Goat Farm Inspection Report" is now being used by inspectors to report farm inspection information. This replaces the old "Farm Service Report 126" which was designed in 1994 primarily for the inspection of dairy cow operations. The new report form is better organized and designed to capture items which have the potential to affect goat milk quality and safety.

Blue Letters

Unacceptable test results on routine monthly goat milk samples are now being reported to producers on blue paper in order to catch their attention. Unacceptable results include bacteria counts greater than 50,000 cfu/mL and freezing point results greater than -0.567° H. (-0.566° H. to zero). Information sheets listing possible causes and solutions for the unacceptable result will accompany the blue letters.

Thank You for the Feedback

-- By Vanessa Taylor

Over the last few months, I distributed an information booklet entitled "Hints and Tips for High Quality Goat Milk Production". I hope that it is helpful to you in troubleshooting quality problems and/or improving the quality of your milk. I would like to thank Hewitt's Dairy, Pat Marcotte of OGBA, Rose McLean of NEOGMPA, Al Kikkert of ODGCI, and the Mornington Heritage Cheese & Dairy Co-op for assisting with the distribution of these booklets to their members. If you did not receive a copy and would like one, feel free to contact me at the information below.

A survey regarding the "Goat Milk Quality Workshop" was also included in the booklet. Thanks to everyone who responded. All the comments were greatly appreciated. I would like to share with you the results from the survey so far:

Total returned surveys: 41 per cent

Top 5 topics chosen on the survey to be covered in the workshop:

1. Herd Health
2. Nutrition
3. Udder Health
4. Breeding/Animal Husbandry and Comfort Techniques
5. Mastitis Prevention and Control

Top 3 topics chosen on the survey to be covered in the most detail:

1. Herd Health
2. Udder Health
3. Nutrition/Breeding

Overall, I am extremely pleased with the response from the survey. Herd Health was overwhelmingly the most requested (81 per cent of responses), so I am in consultations with a small ruminant veterinarian and small ruminant experts to provide a full day of interactive learning on Herd Health during the Goat Milk Quality Workshop. As one comment received from the survey said, "Healthy goats make healthy milk"!

I am anticipating that the workshop will be covered in two different sessions, one on Herd Health, and the other on Milk Quality (Udder Health, Mastitis Prevention and Control, Milking Equipment, Milking Procedures, Measuring Milk Quality), to be offered over the Fall of 2003 and Winter of 2004. They will be held in various locations in the north, east, and southwestern areas of Ontario. It is going to be different from the general meetings you may have attended before, as it will be interactive with group discussions and problem solving on a "farm-smart" approach. I hope this will be well received by everyone and will generate positive attendance to each session. If you would like more information or have a suggestion for the workshop, you may contact me at:

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MAY 2003 RAW GOAT MILK QUALITY SUMMARY

					Standard Plate Count (cfu/ml)				Somatic Cell Count (cells/ml)				
Month Year	# Sample Tested	Avg Fr. Pt	# Samples Abn. Fr. Pt	# Pos Inhib	Average	(x 1000) < 50 %	(x 1000) 50 – 100 %	(x1000) >100 %	Average	(x1000) < 500 %	(x1000) 500 - 1,000 %	(x1000) 1,000 - 1,500 %	(x1000) >1,500 %
Jan-03	133	-0.588	6	0	58,211	72.2	2.3	22.6	1,464,955	3.0	21.1	36.8	39.1
Feb-03	83	-0.589	4	0	61,163	77.1	6	16.9	1,297,072	3.6	30.1	42.2	24.1
Mar-03	153	-0.586	4	1	50,441	73.9	8.5	17.6	1,188,052	2.0	34.6	43.1	20.3
Apr-03	162	-0.583	6	0	60,084	66.0	11.7	22.2	1,297,771	11.7	48.8	29.0	10.5
May-03	151	-0.583	2	0	76,126	71.5	7.3	21.2	921,887	10.6	53.0	29.1	7.3

June 2003 Goat Milk Sample Survey

A four-week survey of raw goat milk in Ontario is now complete. Weekly producer and load samples were collected throughout the month of June and tested at Lab Services Division for quality and composition. This sampling survey was similar to the one conducted in September 2002.

The objective of this intensive survey is to determine and evaluate the microbiological quality and composition of raw goat milk. The results of this study will help to focus the efforts and resources of OMAF's Dairy Food Safety Unit to help producers with milk quality problems at a time of year when these problems appear to peak. Raw milk quality has a direct effect on the quality and quantity of products manufactured from that milk.

A summary of the June Sampling Survey findings will be prepared and reported back to the industry in a future mailout.

The Dairy Goat News was brought to you by the following OMAF staff:

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 Vanessa Taylor, Agriculture & Rural Division (ARD)