



# News Release

## United Dairymen of Idaho

10221 West Emerald, Suite 180  
Boise, Idaho 83704  
(208) 327-7050  
(208) 327-7054 fax

For Immediate Release

**Contact:** Cheri Storey  
Communications Director  
cstorey@udidaho.org

### **Secrets of a Great Glass of Milk – Cold, Clean, Pure**

Boise, Idaho – May, 2007 — Steam it for a latte, mix it into pancake batter, but mostly, keep it cold. Milk should have a warm berth only a few times in its life — in the cow’s udder, during pasteurization, in the process of becoming cheese or yogurt, and when it is an ingredient. Otherwise, milk stays chilled in its seamless flow from dairy cow to your refrigerator, untouched by human hands.

Along the way, milk is frequently tested to make certain it meets and retains quality standards set by the government and the dairy industry.

“Highly perishable, milk is more carefully regulated and tested than most any other food,” said Marv Patten, Idaho State Department of Agriculture. A certified processor lab tests samples from each tanker before it goes to the milk processor. The processor then runs a batter of tests on the milk and milk products.

#### **No Antibiotics**

The slightest hint of antibiotics, and the entire bulk tanker of milk is discarded and is not used for human consumption. “The Pasteurized Milk Ordinance requires that all bulk tankers be screened for residues before a processor accepts the milk,” said Patten. Dairy farmers are doing a good job of policing themselves. The Food and Drug Administration’s most recent data shows less than one-tenth of one percent (0.067%) of tanker loads are discarded because of antibiotic residue.

#### **Tracking the Milk**

Let’s track a gallon of milk. It takes an average 5 1/2 minutes for a modern milking machine to milk a cow.

- Milk then passes through tubes in which it is cooled instantaneously.
- In the few seconds it takes to reach the refrigerated farm bulk holding tank, the milk’s temperature has dropped from the cow’s body temperature of approximately 100 degrees to 38 degrees.

(more)

- Bulk tanker trucks pick up milk daily or, if a farm is small, every other day.
- Before the milk leaves the farm, the licensed bulk milk hauler take samples for testing.
- If a farmer accidentally contaminates a tanker load, the load is discarded. The farmer loses the income he would have received from the sale of his milk, and if the tanker also carries milk from other farms, he is charged for the value of his fellow dairymen's milk. In addition, he pays a penalty.
- Any contamination is readily tracked because samples from the farm go to a certified lab to be checked for antibiotic levels and other quality checks.
- The refrigerated tanker transports the milk to the milk processor's refrigerated storage tanks.

### **Ready for Processing**

After further testing, including flavor tests, the milk processor accepts the milk into its raw milk storage tanks, which hold 30 – 50,000 gallons. Within minutes or at the most, hours, it is on its way through the processing system. Most plants process milk from the farm to the package daily. They also clean stainless steel lines, tanks and other machines daily to maintain the milk's quality.

### **Pasteurization**

Milk continues to flow to machines that pasteurize it killing pathogenic bacteria. It flows through this system at the rate of 100 gallons per minute into storage tanks for pasteurized milk. More machines homogenize the milk, and finally bottle, label and cap it.

Filled milk containers are packed into milk crates — also by machine and conveyor belt. The milk is temporarily stored on warehouse shelves until refrigerated trucks arrive to carry it off to your market. All of this takes place in refrigerator-cool warehouses, kept below 40 degrees F.

If milk isn't fresh for a week beyond code date, it's likely that it lost its cool somewhere along the route — or after purchase. Keeping it refrigerator-cold is everyone's responsibility.

*For more information about milk quality and dairy products, visit [dairyfarmingtoday.org](http://dairyfarmingtoday.org).*

###

*United Dairymen of Idaho (UDI) is the local planning and management organization responsible for increasing demand for U.S. produced dairy products on behalf of Idaho's dairy farm families.*