

February 24, 2017

Iodine Testing of Raw Milk Samples

Dairy Farmers of Canada (DFC) conducted national testing on raw milk iodine levels in 2011, 2012, and 2013. During those national studies, the producers of BC had excellent results in relation to iodine in raw milk. Since DFC does not have any national testing planned currently, the Board plans a one-time round of testing in BC to provide updated iodine level information that may be of use to producers in managing their farm practices.

Therefore, over the next few months, the Board will be doing additional testing of producer samples to measure the levels of iodine in raw milk. Each bulk tank will have one raw milk sample tested. There are no penalties associated with the results of these tests, however, producers are encouraged to work with experts in the industry to ensure that iodine levels are at industry recommended limits.

Iodine is an essential nutrient for both humans and cows. There are minimum and maximum recommended dietary levels to ensure that deficiencies and over consumption do not occur in either cattle or humans. Iodine levels in raw milk may be affected by a number of sources, including: water, feed and sanitizing agents. Usually forage and grains contain low levels of iodine, but feed supplements can contain very high levels. Elevated iodine levels may also be a result of inefficient pre and post teat sanitizing procedures.

Health Canada recommends that milk iodine levels should be no greater than 500 µg/L. BCMMB staff will contact only those producers whose results show elevated levels above 350 µg/L. There will NOT be any penalties associated with these results. Therefore, if you are contacted by BCMMB staff regarding elevated levels, the Board encourages to use the information as an opportunity to take any necessary corrective measures. Staff will work with producers on any necessary follow-up testing to ensure that farm procedures are improved accordingly.

If you have concerns over the iodine content in your raw milk, it is best to consult your veterinarian, feed representative, and/or dairy supply representatives before any changes are made to your teat sanitization practices or dietary changes.

Producer samples will be tested at random for iodine content over the next 2 months with an expectation to start the week of March 6, 2017.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Kelly Harris at 604-854-4479 or kharris@milk-bc.com ; or contact Woody Siemens at 604-854-4476 or wsiemens@milk-bc.com