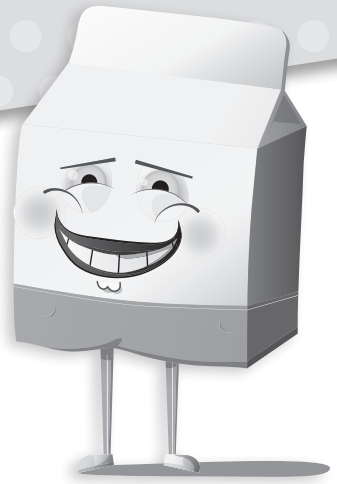


INCR-EDIBLES
FRESH FROM THE
FARM

MILK
PURE, FRESH, LOCAL



MILK: FROM COW TO TABLE RESOURCE SHEET

Milk and other dairy products like cheese and yogurt are among the very safest foods you will find in your grocery store. That's because so many people work hard at every step in the production of milk products to make sure that they are not only delicious and nutritious, but also fresh and safe to eat and drink by almost everyone.

Healthy cows. Like everything else on a dairy farm, dairy product quality begins with the cows. The best quality milk comes from healthy, happy animals. Dairy farm families do everything they can to make sure that their cows are in top physical condition, happy and stress-free. Each cow has a nutritionist who is an expert at planning a healthy, balanced diet for the cow. The nutritionist makes sure that the cow is getting all the nutrients she needs to stay healthy and to produce plenty of high-quality milk. A veterinarian watches over the health of every cow. A cow that shows signs of illness might need to be sent to the farm's "hospital" to be treated. Sick cows are milked while they are being treated. This is necessary to keep them comfortable. This milk is kept separate from the milk of the other cows and destroyed. It would never be used for humans or animals to eat or drink.

No contact. Milk goes from the cow to the carton and is never touched by human hands or exposed to the air until the milk carton is opened. Special machines gently milk each cow. The milk is sent from the milking machine through sealed pipes to a machine that quickly cools the milk from about 100 degrees Fahrenheit (F). to 38 degrees F. Keeping milk cold is important to keep it full of nutrients and tasting good. The cold temperature also prevents the growth of bad bacteria. After the milk is cooled, it then flows to a large, stainless steel tank where it remains at 38 degrees F.

Testing. Every drop of milk sold in the United States is tested many times from the time it leaves the cow to the time it is packaged. This testing makes sure that every drop of milk is free from any harmful bacteria or additives. This process begins at the farm, when the farmer tests all the milk held in his tank. It's tested again when a large milk truck arrives to take the milk to the milk plant. If for any reason the milk is found to be below standard, the truck driver will not take it. The milk is tested again when it arrives at the milk plant. These tests aren't just a good idea, they are the law. The Food & Drug Administration (FDA), a federal government agency, conducts surprise testing of milk at the milk plant to make sure the law is being followed.



Pasteurization. One of the best things we do to milk to keep it safe is called pasteurization. In pasteurization, cold milk is quickly heated to 161 degrees F. for 15 seconds. It is then quickly cooled back down to 38 degrees F. This brief heating destroys any bacteria in the milk that might cause people to get sick. Other than destroying the bacteria, it does not change the milk in any way.

Two days. Another important thing that keeps milk fresh and high quality is speed. Most milk arrives at the grocery store within 48 hours after it’s milked from the cow. Dairy farmers and dairy processors have built a very fast, efficient system for moving milk from the cow to the store to make sure that your milk remains fresh, delicious, nutritious and safe!

Notes:

