

2003 NCIMS Conference Declines SCC Changes, Approves Robotic Milkers

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The 29th National Conference on Interstate Milk Shipments (NCIMS) was held April 26, 2003 through May 1, 2003 in Seattle, Washington. The NCIMS is the body that sets all Grade A rules and regulations governing dairy farms, plants, haulers and laboratories. It also establishes how the Food and Drug Administration and individual states govern the program. The goal of the conference is "To assure the safest possible milk supply for all the people."

There were a total of 150 proposals to make changes to the Grade A milk law or conference proceedings submitted at this year's NCIMS. Most of the proposed changes received "no action," meaning they were not

approved. Some proposals were adopted by the conference, many of which incorporated previously issued FDA interpretative memorandum into the Pasteurized Milk Ordinance (PMO). Most of the other proposals adopted dealt with changes to Grade A plant rules and regulations dealing with new innovations in processing equipment.

On the producer side, two significant well-known proposals to consider lowering the producer legal somatic cell count limit to 400,000 were both defeated overwhelmingly. The NCIMS delegates voted not to lower the legal SCC level because they felt that there was no proven public health benefit to lowering the SCC legal limit. However, all

conference attendees do acknowledge the financial benefits of lower SCC to processors and producers.

One proposal passed by the delegates allows Grade A farms to use robotic milkers. There likely will still need to be modifications to currently available robotic milkers before FDA will give their approval, though. The delegates also approved the use of in-line samplers to sample milk for both bacteria and SCC levels on farms. In-line samplers are used primarily on farms that pump milk directly through milk cooling systems and then directly into transport trucks.

Another action taken was the approval of a study to investigate the feasibility for third parties

MMPA Member Testing Fees

Scheduled Herd Tests: \$1 per sample

- Includes three herd tests within 12 months
- The samples can be tested for any of the following: Culture for Streptococcus agalactiae, Strep non ag, Staphylococcus aureus, coagulase negative staph, total coliform, E-Coli. In addition, samples can be tested for somatic cell count, raw bacteria count, and components.
- All herd tests with more than 10 samples must schedule with the laboratory through your MMPA Member Representative. *Ten or more unscheduled cow samples will be charged at \$2 per sample.*

Mycoplasma Cultures: \$8 per sample

- Bacteriology Cultures: \$10 per sample**
- Includes identification of bacteria and drug susceptibility.

Johne's Milk Test: \$6 per sample

Payment for testing will be made through an automatic milk check deduction.

All tests must be scheduled through your MMPA Member Representative or the laboratory.

Quality Watch

other than state regulatory agencies or FDA to conduct inspections of dairy farms and dairy processing plants in foreign countries. Under the current NCIMS agreement, one way for a company manufacturing products in foreign countries to ship Grade A products to the United States is to determine that they follow practices equivalent to the PMO. In order to determine the "equivalence," the state regulatory agency or FDA must make inspections or surveys of the farms and plants in the foreign country. The pilot study will evaluate if a third party, not a state regulatory agency or FDA, can be effective in determining PMO equivalency. The state contracted third party regulatory inspection pilot program shall: Comply with all of

the requirements of the PMO and related NCIMS documents; Continue to assure at least the same level of milk safety provided within the current NCIMS program; and Provide reciprocity between NCIMS member states for the importation of Grade A milk and milk products from Interstate Milk Shipments listed foreign firms. The study committee will evaluate the pilot project for the next two years and report their findings at the 2005 conference. Delegates at the 2005 conference will then determine whether or not the third party inspection program will be approved under the NCIMS.

There were several proposals that were voted "no action" or not accepted, that dealt with reducing the frequency of inspections,

surveys, check ratings and sampling. Even if the state delegates would have passed these proposals, FDA made it very clear that they would not approve any reduction in these inspection and oversight programs.

Overall, this year's NCIMS conference was well run, dynamic and serves as a model food protection program with the FDA, state regulatory agencies and dairy industry all working together to ensure dairy product safety.



MMPA Quality Premium Program

Somatic Cell Count premiums and deductions (in addition to Federal Order SCC Adjustments computed in the producer pay price) will be paid at the following levels:

• 50,000 or below	+45¢ / cwt.
• 51,000 - 75,000	+40¢ / cwt.
• 76,000 - 100,000	+35¢ / cwt.
• 101,000 -125,000	+30¢ / cwt.
• 126,000 -150,000	+25¢ / cwt.
• 151,000 - 175,000	+20¢ / cwt.
• 176,000- 200,000	+15¢ / cwt.
• 201,000 -225,000	+10¢ / cwt.
• 226,000- 275,000	+05¢ / cwt.
• Over 750,000	-25¢ / cwt.

A payment of 5¢ / cwt. will be added for each of the following, if the count is equal to or below:

- 10,000 Raw Bacteria Count
- 20,000 Pre-Incubated (PI) Count

There will be a deduction of 10¢ / cwt. for the following criteria:

- Greater than 100,000 Raw Bacteria Count

A high raw count deduction will be waived if the producer has received the quality premium the previous three months for raw bacteria count.

To qualify for Raw, PI and Somatic Cell Count premiums there must **not** be any of the following during the month:

- Positive drug residue
- Abnormal freeze points
- High load count shipment or rejected load shipment
- #3 or #4 sediment *
- Raw Bacteria count over 100,000 *

The count levels for raw and PI will be determined on one test run per month.

** Note: These do not affect the somatic cell count premium.*

To qualify for MMPA volume premiums there must be:

- No high load count shipment or rejected load shipment during the month
- No positive drug residue shipments during the month
- No abnormal freeze points during the month
- An average somatic cell count of 750,000 or less.