



The Dairy Standard Agency (NPC) is an independent, expert and objective body funded by Milk SA and related non-statutory income. The vision of the Dairy Standard Agency is to promote the maintenance and improvement of the quality and safety of dairy products in the interest of the dairy industry and the consumer

8 January 2024

The Manager: Environmental Health Services

Attention: Environmental Health Practitioners (EHPs) participating in Dairy Standard Agency (DSA) National Dairy Monitoring Program (NDMP)

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: DAIRY STANDARD AGENCY - NATIONAL DAIRY MONITORING PROGRAM (NDMP) IN COLLABORATION WITH HEALTH AUTHORITIES

The Dairy Standard Agency extend our sincere gratitude to all participating environmental health departments for their unwavering support of the National Dairy Monitoring Program (NDMP). Many of you have been integral to this program since its inception in 2002, marking a significant 22-year milestone in our partnership. As we approach 2024 and celebrate our 22st year together, we anticipate further progress and a heightened commitment to our collaboration and professional service delivery.

The Dairy Standard Agency (DSA) recognises the pivotal role of product compliance in upholding standards for product composition, food safety, and metrology within the dairy industry. Ensuring the quality of dairy products is crucial to preventing substandard items from reaching retail, which could have severe and prolonged consequences for both the industry and consumers. Compliance involves navigating through a complex landscape of regulations related to product composition, metrology, food safety, animal health, animal feed, milking parlors, transportation of milk, processing plants, and storage.

These regulations fall under the jurisdiction of various authorities, including the Department of Health, Provincial Health Departments, Municipal Health Authorities, Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD), and the National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications (NRCS). The DSA's activities, outlined in its Memorandum of Incorporation, focus on monitoring dairy products, communication with industry stakeholders, and providing support services to the dairy industry.

Directors

JC Burger (MD), Prof. PJ Jooste, AP Kraamwinkel (Chairman)

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Since its establishment, the DSA has evolved from being the organized dairy's self-regulatory body to a well-recognized institution by government bodies, primary and secondary dairy industry stakeholders, national consumer bodies, and the retail sector at a national level.

Aligned with its current strategy, the DSA's statutory and non-statutory project activities are designed to balance available resources and expand based on industry needs in the short and medium term.

DSA Objectives, Strategies, and Processes:

Objectives:

- Support and interact with existing government bodies responsible for maintaining standards.
- Collaborate with risk identification structures/initiatives.
- Maintain integrity independent of commercial interests.
- Conduct monitoring (screening) of milk and dairy products for quality risks using legal and voluntary standards.
- Provide primary support to existing government and dairy industry structures maintaining standards.
- Foster liaison and cooperation with organizations sharing similar objectives.
- Support existing government and food industry risk identification structures.

Strategies:

- Establish and maintain a national milk and dairy product monitoring program.
- Operate a fully equipped industry laboratory for reference materials and risk-based testing.
- Implement a remedial (consultation) program for dairy industry stakeholders facing quality problems.
- Identify, evaluate, and propose pro-active effective control measures for risks.
- Establish and maintain an effective communication program with stakeholders.
- Cultivate good working relationships with all concerned stakeholders.

Project 1: National Monitoring of Milk and Other Dairy Products in Collaboration with Health Authorities

Project Purpose:

- Ensure objective screen sampling of milk and dairy products in collaboration with municipal health authorities.
- Analyze screening samples against product compositional and metrology standards to determine risk and compliance with legal requirements.
- Make test results available to DSA project management, relevant authorities, milk processors, distributors, and retail companies.

Project Description:

This collaborative project involves the South African organized dairy industry, DSA, and district municipal health authorities. It focuses on monitoring and evaluating milk and dairy products at retail level to identify possible risks related to food safety, product composition, and metrology standards. Sampling protocols cover products in packed or bulk form in both formal and informal retail sectors.

Working with metropolitan, district, and local municipal health authorities across nine provinces, approximately five hundred samples are taken quarterly for testing by DSA Lab Services laboratory. Test results are shared with Environmental Health Practitioners (EHPs) of participating health authorities, the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD), and the National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications (NRCS). Trend analysis guides decisions on food safety, product composition, and metrological risks.

Due to the limited shelf life of some dairy products, particularly those not UHT or sterilized, prompt action is required in the retail sector for non-conforming products. Follow-up communication with relevant authorities, processors, distributors, and retail is separately managed under Project 5, Remedial Programs with processors, distributors, and retail.

A comprehensive DSA annual statistical report is compiled and communicated during the first quarter of the following year to the National Department of Health, Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD), National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications, and Milk SA.

The attached Work Relations Agreement contains essential information for your reference (Annexure C). Please familiarize yourself with its content to ensure a smooth collaboration.

To facilitate our service to you, please adhere to the rules and requirements outlined in the Work Relations Agreement and the information provided in the quarterly sampling schedules. Appointments will be scheduled with the heads of departments of participating health authorities to discuss and reconfirm the Work Relations Agreement, ensuring the continued success of the NDMP.

For effective communication, kindly refer to the attached contact information per province on the sampling schedules. Update the information if necessary and send it back to deon@dairystandard.co.za.

The DSA extends its sincere thanks to all stakeholders committed to promoting the safe handling of milk and milk products. Rest assured of our ongoing support, and we look forward to a successful collaboration in 2024.

Best wishes to you and your families.

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Operations Manager/Food Safety Auditor

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