

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

No.

2026

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT STANDARDS ACT, 1990 (ACT No. 119 OF 1990)

DRAFT REGISTERED “rBST FREE” SYSTEM AS A MANAGEMENT CONTROL SYSTEM FOR DAIRY PRODUCTS INTENDED FOR SALE AND EXPORT

REGULATIONS RELATING TO THE MANAGEMENT CONTROL SYSTEM IN RESPECT OF THE SALE AND EXPORT OF CERTAIN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

It is hereby made known that the Executive Officer: Agricultural Product Standards has registered the “rBST Free” System as a Management Control System in terms of the Regulations Relating to the Management Control System in Respect of the Sale of Certain Agricultural Products No.R.6634 of 19 September 2025.

Further made known is that the Executive Officer: Agricultural Product Standards, in terms of the Regulations Relating to the Management Control System in Respect of the Sale of Certain Agricultural Products No.R.6634 of 19 September 2025 hereby inserts after Regulation 10, the following Annexure in respect of the “Applicable Minimum Standard for the Registered ‘rBST Free’ system as a Management Control System for Dairy Products Intended for Sale and Export”.

ANNEXURE M

THE APPLICABLE MINIMUM STANDARD FOR THE REGISTERED “rBST FREE” SYSTEM AS A MANAGEMENT CONTROL SYSTEM FOR DAIRY PRODUCTS INTENDED FOR SALE AND EXPORT

1. Type of Agricultural Product

- 1.1 “rBST Free” is a type of agricultural product regulated in terms of sections 3, 4 and 15 of the Agricultural Product Standards Act, 119 of 1990, and that is intended for sale and export.
- 1.2 The “rBST Free” management control system shall apply to:
 - (a) Farms supplying “rBST Free” milk destined for retailer-approved dairy products.
 - (b) Processors receiving “rBST Free” milk from approved farms.
 - (c) All milk tanks, transport, storage, and processing steps forming part of the “rBST Free” milk supply chain.
 - (d) Retailers.
- 1.3 “rBST Free” means the dairy cows are not injected/treated with recombinant bovine somatotropin (rBST), a synthetic hormone that increases milk production by stimulating the mammary glands.

2. Minimum control requirements

- 2.1 A farm map
 - (a) Must be available and regularly updated to reflect the current “rBST Free” operation,
 - (b) Must indicate quarantine areas, all stores containing chemicals, veterinary treatments, feed and supplements, etc.
- 2.2 Supplier Approval Controls
 - (a) Before milk supply can begin a “rBST Free” Agreement (Mandatory Documented Control) must be completed.
 - (b) The written “rBST-Free” agreement signed by the farmer and the processor shall include--
 - (i) confirmation of non-usage of rBST;
 - (ii) herd size and herd composition;
 - (iii) daily milk production volumes; and
 - (iv) history of rBST usage and stop-date (if applicable).
 - (c) The agreement must be stored and retrievable during audits.
 - (d) Farmers must submit a monthly declaration confirming that there is no rBST administered in the herd and no treated cows added to the milk pool.

- (e) Dual and split systems (i.e. “rBST Free” and rBST use) shall not be allowed on the same farm for “rBST Free” cows concerned.
- (f) The following re-entry conditions shall apply when a farmer stops and later resumes supply, acquires new cows or voluntarily discloses rBST treatment:
 - (i) 14-day isolation and separate milking of treated cows.
 - (ii) New “rBST Free” agreement.
 - (iii) Full audit before re-approval.

2.3 Production Monitoring Controls

- (a) Lactation Curve Monitoring:
 - (i) At least 10% of cows between 200–240 lactation days shall be evaluated.
 - (ii) Sample 30 curves per audit and identify abnormal milk increases characteristic of rBST use.
 - (iii) Two consecutive spikes of ± 200 L/100 cows/day above baseline shall be escalated immediately.
- (b) Milk Volume Monitoring (Processor Control):
 - (i) Daily monitoring of delivery volumes.
 - (ii) Automatic alert for unusual increases.

2.4 On-Farm Control

- (a) Veterinary Supply and Medication Controls:
 - (i) No rBST related products or packaging.
 - (ii) No rBST related syringes or applicators.
 - (iii) Annual “No rBST Use” agreement with the farm’s veterinarian.
 - (iv) Verifying invoices and disposal areas.
- (b) Livestock Physical Checks
 - (i) Minimum 20 cows inspected.
 - (ii) 50% overlap with the lactation curve sample group.
 - (iii) No injection marks, swelling, or vulva scarring consistent with rBST use.

2.5 Laboratory testing

- (a) Screening tests:
 - (i) The milk of the farms and processors shall be screened every second month.
 - (ii) A positive test result shall –
 - (aa) trigger an immediate confirmation audit in the case of a non-accredited rBST test method used; or
 - (bb) be confirmed by an accredited rBST test method or laboratory participatory scheme test method.
- (b) Positive confirmed cases shall trigger –
 - (i) immediate suspension of milk supply for “rBST Free” production; and
 - (ii) farmer or processor classified as non “rBST Free”.

3. Traceability

- 3.1 Shall be able to trace “rBST Free” milk from milking tanks, transport, and at the processor.
- 3.2 No use of non-approved milk or the mixing of milk from non-approved sources.

4. Labelling and claims

- 4.1 The type of agricultural products mentioned in point 1 may be presented as “rBST Free” only if it complies to this minimum standard for the registered “rBST Free” system.
- 4.2 Products derived from the “rBST Free” system shall also be labelled in accordance with the regulations and standards for the mentioned products published in terms of the Agricultural Product Standards Act, 1990.

5. Enforcement

- 5.1 The designated assignee/inspectors shall ensure that only farms and processors registered with the Department for the “rBST Free” system as a Management Control System are allowed to pack and label the product, container or outer containers as “rBST Free”.
- 5.2 The List of registered farms will be placed on the department website at <https://www.nda.gov.za/index.php/core-business/agricultural-production/inspection-services/food-safety-quality-assurance>

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