

# GUIDELINES FOR MILK COLLECTION

Notice to All in Milk Collection and Delivery

20 March 2020

*This information is collated with the support of Dairy Australia, Milk Companies and Transport Companies and is consistent with relevant risk management protocols and public health advice, particularly relating to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all in milk collection and delivery. In continuing to navigate the COVID-19 outbreak, the safety of all, working across the dairy supply chain, is of paramount importance.*

## **Dairy industry Food Safety Programs**

All licenced dairy businesses should have a Food Safety Program in place that documents procedures to manage hazards associated with food production. These hazards include, the health status of those involved in the production of dairy products across the supply chain.

Each Food Safety Program should have a section that references how these hazards are managed through procedures that cover:

- excluding personnel suffering from illness,
- specified hygienic operational practices and
- effective sanitation procedures for personnel and equipment.

These programs are intended to manage the risks associated with all human illnesses that may present an impact to food safety or consumer health, including viral pathogens.

With respect to COVID-19, which is not a foodborne virus, these existing programs should manage any risk, per the standing advice from FSANZ, with respect to food safety and in combination with existing government advice regarding social distancing for visiting personnel.

Milking practices on farm produce safe milk – and milk pick up from farms is safe for tanker operators – even if the farmer may be self-isolating without symptoms of infection. The following guidance (Aust Govt Dept of Health) reinforces the need to stay vigilant with hygiene practices.

## **Good hygiene is essential for everyone and can prevent infection**

- Wash your hands often, with soap and water for 20 seconds, or with hand sanitiser
- Washing your hands is more important than ever
- Avoid touching your face without first washing your hands.
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing
- On farm, at factories & elsewhere, avoid congregating to talk, keep 1.5 Metres between yourself & others, as people can spread this virus, before they know they are sick.

If unwell, seek advice from **Coronavirus Health Information Line** on 1800 020 800 for advice.

## **What does Isolation mean? What does isolate in your home mean for farmers?**

If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19, you must stay at home to prevent it spreading to other people. This means not going to public places such as work, school, shopping centres, childcare or university, and staying in touch by phone and on-line with your family and friends.

Family farms are both a home and workplace – but do not necessarily fit the criteria of public places.

While at home, farmers should;

- Observe the principles of self-isolation – avoiding close contact with other people - to avoid the risk of spreading the disease to other people.
- **Not be in the vicinity of** persons other than the people they usually live with, assuming these people have not come into contact with COVID-19
- Not be in the vicinity of older people (60 years +) who are considered at high risk of COVID-19
- While in isolation, only essential farm visitors should be allowed (e.g. service providers, tanker operators) with no contact between farmer and visitors.

*Keep milk flowing without any risk to anyone, by identifying and lowering any risk.*

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- Disinfect all surfaces, such as those which may be touched by a tanker operator, and not be in the vicinity when they arrive.

## For Milk Collection Practices

### FARMERS

- Avoid congregating to talk in groups.
- Keep no less than 1.5 Metres between yourself & others.
- All farmers should stay isolated from the tanker operator– consider being absent from the milking shed/dairy when the tanker arrives

### TANKER OPERATORS

1. Use disposable gloves when you arrive at each farm – dispose of them on leaving farm.
2. Ensure antibacterial spray is in each truck, at farm pickup point and at tanker bay
3. Wipe down all hand contact surfaces and touch points, at the end of your work shift.
  - i. On Farm – Door handles, vat, manual valves, milk vat and CIP control panels, etc
  - ii. On Tanker - Steering wheel, controls, esky handles, all touch points
  - iii. At Factory – Connections, hoses, valves, pump and CIP control panels, etc

Proper recording should be documented to provide to management on collection date and time details.

### How long does the virus survive on surfaces?

In droplet form, the COVID-19 is airborne for a few seconds after someone sneezes or coughs. If droplets fall onto a surface, the virus can survive on surfaces for several hours; hence the importance of wiping these surfaces and handwashing. In terms of prevention, the following guidelines are issued by the Australian Government Department of Health:

- **Symptoms-** Symptoms of coronavirus range from mild illness to pneumonia, and include flu like symptoms including coughing, sore throat, fatigue and shortness of breath.
- **Spreads-** The COVID-19 virus is not a foodborne virus. It spreads from person-to-person through close contact, with droplets from an infected person's cough or sneeze, and touching objects or surfaces such as doorknobs that have infected droplets, then touching your mouth or face.
- **Prevention-** The best prevention is good hygiene; washing your hands with soap and water, cover your mouth if you cough or sneeze, and avoiding close contact with others.
- **Diagnosis-** If you become unwell and think you may have symptoms of the COVID-19, seek medical attention. Call ahead and book an appointment before attending a clinic.

Below is advice as provided through medical authorities, on actions under the following cases.

- **What should I do if I experience flu like symptoms?** Please advise HR of your illness by phone. Please follow the Australian government regulations on COVID-19 testing. If you have been overseas or in contact with an infected person, please advise your GP.
- **What should I do if I contract the COVID-19?** Please follow the Australian government guidelines for isolation and care. Please notify management by phone as soon as possible so appropriate arrangements can be made

**What should I do if I come into close contact with someone with the COVID-19?** Please contact management by phone, so the situation is reviewed cooperatively.

**Should I continue with business meetings as usual?** Where possible, use zoom or Skype for business meetings. We recommend that everyone avoids shaking hands.

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## **What is social distancing?**

Social distancing is one way to help slow the spread of viruses such as COVID-19. This means staying at home, avoiding large public gatherings, keeping at least 1.5 metres between you and other people, whenever possible, and minimising physical contact such as shaking hands.

## **Animal exposure**

The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) have confirmed COVID-19 virus is a result of human to human transmission and no evidence that livestock can contract or spread the disease. Personal hygiene should always be taken when handling sick animals.

If you would like a word version of the protocols for use or adaptation in your own business, please email [c19@dairyaustralia.com.au](mailto:c19@dairyaustralia.com.au) to request a copy.