



Grape Marc as a Source of Stock Feed

Notice to Dairy Farmers

Grape marc can be used as a valuable source of supplementary nutrition for dairy cows, and recent research undertaken by the Victorian Department of Primary Industries have linked the feeding of stems, seeds and skins from wine grapes with potential impacts on methane reduction and milk production. However it does not come without risks and these risks need to be well understood and managed.

As a by- product of the wine industry, grape marc, made up of skins and seeds presents a risk of containing residues of agricultural chemicals. This is due to the use of sprays in the vineyards to control pests and fungal diseases on the grapes. The feeding of contaminated grape marc to dairy cows in turn presents a risk of the residues being transferred into the milk (and meat) supply.

Raw or unprocessed grape marc is considered to present a particularly high residue risk. Grape marc supplied through reputable feed companies will be processed using steam distillation which not only removes excess alcohol and tartaric acid, but is known to reduce (but not remove) the concentration of chemical residues in the grape marc.

In addition these feed companies regularly test the grape marc for chemical residues to ensure the product they are selling as stock feed is 'fit for purpose'. These testing programs underpin the validity of the vendor declarations supplied to purchasers when buying consignments of grape marc.

As with all sources of purchased stock feed, dairy farmers need to continue to seek assurances regarding the suitability of feeds before committing them into the ration. Obtaining vendor declarations or buying from a FeedSafe® accredited stock feed supplier is the way to do this.

If the chemical residue status of a feed cannot be determined and/or a commodity vendor declaration cannot be obtained, the best practice is to avoid using it as stock feed.

If you have any questions on the suitability and use of grape marc as a stock feed, please contact your local Field Service Officer, or:

Craig Miller – Dairy Food Safety Victoria - 0403 194 656

Kira Goodall – Dairy Australia - 0427 544 191

This statement discusses potential residue risks associated with the use of grape marc as a stock feed, and is not intended to make representation regarding the residue status of dairy products manufactured by individual dairy companies in Australia.

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