

FDA provides evidence of milk safety

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS
Capital Press

U.S. milk producers knew they were doing a good job as to the safety of the milk supply, but an analysis by FDA shows milk is free of residues for 31 drugs used on a dairy but not routinely tested for in milk.



Carol Ryan Dumas/Capital Press

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other drug residues in milk based on residues found in meat from dairy cattle.

In March 2010, USDA Office of Inspector General called for Food Safety and Inspection Service to strengthen oversight, especially at plants slaughtering dairy cows and bob veal, which in 2008 were

responsible for more than 90 percent of residue violations.

In 2012, FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine launched a milk survey with a hypothesis that the same practices on dairy farms that led to previous tissue residue violations in meat might result in drug residue in milk, Jonker said.

That hypothesis was proven wrong.

Testing for 31 different pharmaceuticals in 1,912 samples, about half from dairy farms with previous tissue residue violations and half from randomly selected dairies, FDA found 99.3 percent were free of drug residues, Jonker said.

The survey results, released in March, found no statistical difference in the two groups and no systemic issue with those dairies with previous tissue residue violations, he said.

FDA's key message was to underscore the safety of the U.S. milk supply, saying the regulatory system is effective in helping prevent drug residues of concern in milk, he said.

"The milk supply is safe, but we do still have some residues that need to be addressed," Jonker said.

The samples showed positive results for 16 drug residues in 15 samples, 12 from the targeted dairies and four from the random dairies. Ten of the positive samples showed residue of florfenicol, used to treat bovine respiratory disease and foot rot. That drug is not labeled for use in lactating or dry cows, and a producer would need a prescription from a veterinarian for off-label use, he said.

"Some drugs, if used a little different than the manufacturer's recommendations, lead to longer withdrawal time. We think withdrawal time (for florfenicol) in lactating animals is very long, maybe over a month," he said.

Producers using drugs off-label need to be aware of longer withdrawal times, he said.

None of the six drugs de-

tected have an approved label for lactating or dry cows and two can't be prescribed by a veterinarian for off-label use, he said.

Investigation into the earlier violations of tissue residue showed that 70 percent of those farms did not have a valid veterinarian-client patient relationship, he said.

"Clearly, working with a veterinarian is a factor to help prevent residue," Jonker said.

Additional possible reasons for the residue findings in milk include poor identification of cattle — which might have inadvertently been sent to market, failure to keep a written record of treatment, not following the manufacturer's or veterinarian's recommendations on dosage or length of treatment, and administering the drug in an unapproved way.

Ranchers help themselves with photo monitoring

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS
Capital Press

BURLEY, Idaho — A new program offered to Idaho ranchers can help protect their Bureau of Land Management grazing permits and speed up permit renewals.

The cooperative photo monitoring program partners Idaho State Department of Agriculture and BLM to help ranchers monitor rangeland sites, creating a visual record of what's happening on the ground.

The program was launched by a memorandum of understanding between the two agencies last summer, where in ISDA will get ranchers set up and lend technical assistance for collecting photographic data following BLM protocols and BLM will accept the data and use it in its permit-renewal decisions.

Agency range specialists are spending a lot more time in the office wrapped up in litigation and document review and are no longer working with ranchers on range improvements, ISDA rangeland specialist John Biar told ranchers at the Idaho Range Livestock Symposium last week.

That's left a lot of data gaps and not much qualitative data to support grazing decisions, resulting in limited grazing, he said.

Some data gaps stretch 20 to 25 years without current photos, he said.

Recognizing the breakdown in communication, ISDA sat down with BLM to find out what the department could do to help ranchers and the federal agency, he said.

The agencies decided to start off with a fairly easy objective — photo monitoring that ranchers can do on an annual basis to show measurable progress, he said.

Ranchers have three options: monitoring at existing BLM trend sites; establishing new sites in coordination with

Rangeland monitoring workshops

University of Idaho will conduct workshops in May and June to teach ranchers the basics of photo monitoring. Those interested should call the number listed to reserve lunch.

The workshops are planned for:

Malad, May 12, (208) 983-2667

Rigby, May 13, (208) 270-1808

Idaho Falls, May 14, (208) 270-1808

Bear Lake, May 15, (208) 221-3215

Jordan Valley, Ore., May 19, (208) 896-4104

Oreana, May 20, (208) 896-4102

New Meadows, June 2, (208) 253-4279

Malta, June 3, (208) 878-9461

Oakley, June 4, (208) 878-9461

Leadore, June 10, (208) 756-2815

Challis, June 22, (208) 879-2344

Mackay, June 23, (208) 879-2344

Arco, June 24, (208) 527-8587

BLM; and inclusion of permittee-established sites consistent with processes identified in the memorandum of understanding.

ISDA will work side by side with ranchers, helping to locate sites and offering technical assistance, Biar said.

"In today's climate, no one person can do it all. ISDA will work with you until you're comfortable," he said.

At permittees' request, the agency can also be involved with permittees and BLM to review the data for permit renewal.

The agreement "provides a framework that we feel will stand up well to litigation," Biar said.

The photo monitoring program gives ranchers the opportunity to tell the story of their range management and gives BLM data that will stand up in court, said Brooke Jacobson, ISDA range monitoring specialist.

Annual photos at the same place, taken at the same time of year will hold up in court, she said.

Seeing double on McDougall packing line

By DAN WHEAT
Capital Press

EAST WENATCHEE, Wash. — Karon Carlson loads trays of Red Delicious apples into a box at the end of the packing line.

You get closer and look up the line. She's still in the foreground. But there she is again, in the background, placing apples on a tray.

There's two of her! "We didn't know we looked so much alike until we started working here," says her identical twin, Sharon.

"It's the first time we've worked together and it's been a challenge," Karon says with a chuckle.

"The twins," as they are affectionately called by co-workers, turned heads more than once when they started working the cherry line last summer at the Olds Station plant of McDougall & Sons Inc. in Wenatchee.

They enjoyed the job so much and their supervisors liked them enough that they were offered jobs in the fall at the start up of the company's new apple packing line north of East Wenatchee.

"It took our mechanic a good four months before she realized



Dan Wheat/Capital Press

Karon and Sharon Carlson, 62, can keep people guessing as to who's who as they pack Red Delicious apples at McDougall & Sons, April 9.

they were twins," says Brenda O'Brien, packing manager. "She said, 'I thought that woman was just everywhere all the time.'"

There was a mix-up over clocking in one time.

"I said to Hector (Sanchez, her assistant), 'They don't even always know who they are,'" O'Brien said with a smile.

The twins grew up on a farm near Winchester, east of Quincy.

"Our father wanted a boy and he got two girls. That didn't stop him from having help,"

Karon says.

They fed cattle, baled hay and did lots of other chores. They worked various jobs over the years in Seattle and then Wenatchee and never married.

Cherry sorting at McDougall's appealed to them last June because it harkened back to their agricultural roots.

Their 100-plus co-workers love them and had a birthday party for them on their birthday, O'Brien said.

Their birthday is Valentine's

Day. They turned 62.

"We love our co-workers, too," Sharon said. "The majority of gals we work with are 20 to 40 years younger than us, for the most part, but we keep up with them.

"It's a wonderful company to work for. The McDougalls truly care about their employees and they treat them very well. It's passed down through the management staff and creates a happy work environment that allows strong teamwork and friendships."

Increased dyed diesel enforcement looms in Idaho

By SEAN ELLIS
Capital Press

BOISE — Increased enforcement of Idaho's dyed fuel laws will loom as a major topic in 2016.

A transportation funding bill that will raise an estimated \$94 million a year through increased fuel taxes and registration fees is awaiting the governor's signature.

Included in that bill is intent language that instructs the Idaho State Police and Idaho Tax Commission to provide recommendations to the 2016 Idaho Legislature on greater enforcement of Idaho's dyed fuel laws.

Sen. Bert Brackett, a Republican rancher from Roger-

son, is one of several lawmakers involved with agriculture who told the Capital Press they support increased enforcement efforts.

"That's going to be a priority of mine," he said.

Dyed fuel, also known as dyed diesel or farm diesel, is exempt from state and federal fuel taxes and allowed in unlicensed vehicles that are not used on public roads.

The fuel is used heavily in the agricultural, mining, timber and construction industries.

The state tax on diesel is 25 cents per gallon and the federal tax is 24.4 cents per gallon.

Increased education about the law itself would likely

help increase compliance, Brackett said.

"A remarkable number of farmers and ranchers think that just because they drive their pickup off-road, they can use dyed diesel in it. Wrong," Brackett said. "The law is clear: If it's licensed, you don't put dyed diesel in it."

The state penalty for misusing dyed diesel is a \$250 fine for a first offense, \$500 for a second offense and \$1,000 for each subsequent offense.

According to ITC officials, an average of 211 million gallons of dyed diesel are used in Idaho each year and there were four citations issued for violating the law in 2014, seven in 2013 and five in 2012.

Idaho relies on third-party complaints to investigate alleged abuses of the law and doesn't perform road-side inspections like some states do.

Several proposed bills this year sought to increase dyed diesel enforcement but the issue was put on hold until 2016 so lawmakers could get a better grasp of the situation, Brackett said.

"If we do it, we want to do it right," he said.

Rep. Clark Kauffman, a Republican farmer from Filer, said increased enforcement of the state's dyed fuel laws has been talked about for years "and nobody knows quite how to do it. I think that's great intent language. That will be a good discussion to have."

WSU livestock specialist fights false food fears with education

Kuber aims to aid producers, processors, consumers

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

SPOKANE — Washington State University's newest livestock specialist says he is looking for places to help area producers, and beyond.

"When I talk with different people in various counties, I get bits and pieces of things that might be important to them," Paul Kuber said. "What I'd like to do is figure out what we can do that is going to benefit not only a cattle, sheep or forage producer in Stevens County, but also is going to benefit somebody in Pend Orielle or Adams (counties)."

Kuber took over the po-



Matthew Weaver/Capital Press

Paul Kuber, regional livestock specialist for Washington State University Extension, talks about returning to the area April 20 outside the WSU Spokane County Extension office in Spokane.

sition in February. He splits time between WSU Extension offices in Spokane and Davenport, Wash., and recently traveled around the region. He's met with regional

cattle and haygrower groups, and looks forward to meeting with sheep producers.

Kuber is working with a USDA and Utah State University group to reduce and

manage the weeds medusa-head and lupin, with a field day likely for mid-May in Adams County.

Kuber's main priority is developing programs for livestock and forage producers. He's identifying areas of research and potential grant-funding sources and working to provide information.

Kuber works to develop niche markets for producers. He's exploring opportunities with the Cattle Producers of Washington slaughter plant in Odessa, Wash., and the Lincoln County farmers' market.

"I think a lot of people are excited about having somebody as a potential advocate to help facilitate some of these programs, and I'm excited about the potential for opportunity," he said. "If there is something a producer or group of producers would like to do, then we certainly should have the

opportunity to sit down and talk."

Spokane County Cattlemen president Jim Wentland previously worked with Kuber more than a decade ago and was pleased when Kuber was picked for the position. Kuber received his Ph.D. and worked as a teaching assistant in beef cattle production at WSU, and served on the faculty at University of Idaho before moving to Ohio State University as an associate professor.

"I'm sure most producers in the area were very happy about it," Wentland said. "He's extremely knowledgeable in the livestock industry and will be able to work through their problems and answer their questions."

Kuber and WSU will work to deliver educational information about hot-button topics, Kuber said.

Most wolf information is already available, but Kuber

would work to provide producers with new information about wolf management or control as it becomes available, he said.

Kuber considers conventional, organic and all-natural markets as potential niches for producers, and hopes to provide education for producers, processors and consumers in the midst of a marketplace that tends to attack the competition, such as the debate about rBST, or recombinant bovine somatotrophin, a synthetic protein hormone given to dairy cattle by injection to increase milk production.

"If they still choose to go one way versus the other, at least they're still choosing based on an educated decision and not fear," Kuber said. "We have too many people making choices (about) the food system based off of fear, and it's falsified fear, in my book."