

Food Safety



Fact Sheet: Organic Production

The demand for organic products is increasing across Canada and the number of organic dairy farms is increasing to meet the demand. The Food Safety program applies to organic and conventional farms. Some commonly asked questions and answers are listed below:

Does the Food Safety program permit cattle to graze on pasture?

Yes! Cattle are allowed to graze pasture under the Food Safety program; provided that cattle are restricted from accessing manure storage areas (e.g. manure piles).

Does the Food Safety program require all cows to be treated at dry-off?

No! Farmers decide what their treatment protocols and health management procedures are, as long as they use approved products according to the label or written veterinary directions. If a farmer decides to dry-treat a cow, the farmer must follow the label directions and withdrawal times and record the treatment details.

Are homeopathic remedies accepted by the Food Safety program?

The Food Safety program is based on the principle of risk prevention. Livestock treatments introduce possible residue risks; therefore, the Food Safety program has to be assured that a product has been independently evaluated for any risk to human safety by being shown to be safe for use in food-producing animals.

The Food Safety program recognizes that there is a lack of approved animal health products for organic production. As a result, the Food Safety program accepts the use of low-risk health care products and production aids administered either orally or topically. These products must contain only substances that appear on the [Permitted](#)

[Substance Lists](#) and/or excipients on the Natural Health Products Ingredient Database. Products intended for injectable, intra-mammary and/or intra-uterine use are not considered low-risk. Farmers should use an approved product or obtain written veterinary directions for these uses.

For a full discussion on veterinary Natural Health Products, please view the Fact Sheets: “Veterinary Natural Health Products” and “Veterinary Drugs Requirements Summary” on the proAction[®] website (www.dairyfarmers.ca/proAction).

Do organic farmers need to keep two sets of records (i.e. one for organic and one for the Food Safety program)?

The Food Safety program provides flexibility in record-keeping formats. As long as farmers’ records contain all of the required information, they can incorporate the Food Safety requirements into their organic record formats. If you are recording the same information twice, you should be able to simplify your records to eliminate the duplication.

Do any of the Food Safety requirements jeopardize organic certification?

The Food Safety program is focused on food safety and preventing problems from occurring. None of the requirements should contradict the organic standards. Rather, the Food Safety program should be an essential part of your organic farm, and complement your organic objectives.