Risk Advice Guide

Milk Contamination and Spoilage
At FMG we support hundreds of clients every year who accidentally contaminate or spoil their milk. This Risk Advice Guide aims to provide practical on-farm tips to help reduce down-time, stress and lost productivity.

This publication is a convenient guide only and should be used in conjunction with industry best practice and instructions from your dairy company and local by-laws.

Who is FMG?
FMG is New Zealand’s number one rural risk advice and insurance specialist. We have been involved with rural New Zealand for over 100 years and we remain 100% committed to our clients – all those who live on the land, work on the land or support those who do.

How you can contact us
Call us 0800 366 466
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We also provide specialised cover
- Farm and private vehicles
- Farm buildings and contents
- Liability
- Irrigators
- Livestock
Milk contamination and spoilage can result from a range of causes including process, plant and human error. Close to one third of claims FMG pays relate to contamination from antibiotics, with plant failure representing over a quarter of claims.

We also see claims due to process or human error, power failure, machinery breakdown or failure, or wash water and detergents, colostrum, birds or vermin entering the vat.

### Antibiotic Contamination

Almost one third of our milk claims are related to antibiotic contamination.

Avoid contamination by following the advice below:

- Have a consistent and agreed milking process documented and understood by all staff dealing with treated or diseased animals.
- Display a copy of this milking process in the milking shed for new staff and relief milkers to review.
- Implement a staff training programme that includes both induction and refresher training.
- Review any incidents that occur and update your milking process to avoid future incidents.
- Mark suspected animals and remove them from the herd for assessment, treatment and any withholding period.
- Where possible, graze treated animals well away from the herd, to reduce the chance of animals jumping fences to rejoin the herd.
- Visit Dairy NZ website to review best practice information [www.dairynz.co.nz](http://www.dairynz.co.nz)
Spoilage

Every year FMG receives claims for milk that has spoiled resulting from the breakdown of milking shed machinery and equipment, loss of power and human error. Not only does it cause loss of income but also, lost time, increased stress levels and overall inconvenience.

Birds & Vermin

- Ensure all possible entrance ways to the vat are closed as soon as possible after vats are cleaned or serviced.
- To prevent birds from entering and resting in your dairy shed, run a line of fishing nylon above horizontal surfaces that birds like to rest on.
- Set rat bait stations around the shed, but out of reach from children and animals.

Wash Water & Detergent

- Ensure your machine and dairy wash down procedure is displayed in the shed, and include a reminder to check taps have been changed.
- Count the number of cleaning brushes used to ensure none are accidently left in the vat.
- Milk can be diluted if taps are not fully closed, causing milk claims, so remind employees to check taps are closed.
- Use coloured tape to indicate the correct valve position.

Human Error

Remembering to turn on the chiller – it’s simple but easy to forget, and very common! In the last five years, 88% of claims classified as human error resulted from forgetting to turn the chiller or agitator on before they started milking.

Tips:

- Place one of FMG’s milk vat reminder stickers in your shed or near the switch as a reminder to switch on the vat. These can be ordered on our website www.fmg.co.nz under ‘Advice’.
- Install a temperature probe on the vat and have the display unit visible in the milking shed to allow your milking staff to monitor the temperature of the milk entering the vat.
- Number components of your milking plant to eliminate any confusion of starting your milking machinery.
Staff Training and Awareness

It’s important that your employees are well trained and understand your milking process.

- Having a consistent induction programme with new employees including relief milkers, and incorporating an ongoing training plan will help you minimise loss and interruption to your operations. It will also contribute to the professional development of your employees.
- Staff training courses assist in minimising losses – visit www.agito.ac.nz or www.farmsafe.co.nz to find out more.

Plant Failure

Over a quarter of milk spoilage claims result from plant and equipment failure.

- Create and follow a regular maintenance plan for your plant and equipment.
- Consider replacing essential plant and equipment that is showing signs of wear and tear.

Maintenance and Breakdown to Refrigeration and Plant

Plant and critical supply failures are another significant cause of spoilage, commonly due to the malfunction of the chiller unit or agitator. We suggest talking to your provider to negotiate a service contract that guarantees service.

Power Failure

Loss of power can have a major impact to both your ability to milk and to keep the milk in your vat below regulatory temperatures, therefore it is important to have plans in place.

- Include alternative milking options for loss of power or water in your farm contingency plan.
- Consider purchasing a back-up generator to power your milking shed during times of power outages or failure.
- Review Dairy NZs Milk Smart Ideas for more tips to save money, time and effort on your farm.
We are New Zealand wide

To arrange an appointment with your local FMG manager call 0800 366 466