

MICROBIOLOGICAL SURVEY OF RAW COWS' MILK ON RETAIL SALE (1995/1996)

1. A survey was carried out in 1995/96 to assess the microbiological status of raw cows' drinking milk sold in England and Wales and to establish the prevalence of pathogens. This consisted of two separate programmes running concurrently. The first programme was a detailed study which involved regular sampling and analysis of raw milk from 60 retail farms. This provided information on season to season, farm to farm and region to region variation in the microbiological quality. The second programme involved analysing a single sample from each of the remaining 714 registered producers of raw cows' drinking milk.

2. In total 1674 samples were collected. Of these 83 (5%) had undetectable or low levels of phosphatase (phosphatase is destroyed by pasteurisation). These samples could not be considered raw milk and were therefore excluded from the reported results.

3. The microbiological results in programme 1 were similar to programme 2. Statistical analysis of the data from programme 1 indicated that geographical region, farm size (in terms of volume of raw milk retailed) and season had, in some cases, a significant effect on the microbiological status of the milk.

- *Salmonella typhimurium* was isolated from one sample (0.06%)
- No thermophilic *Campylobacter* spp. were isolated.
- *Listeria monocytogenes* was isolated from 32 samples (2%).
- No Verocytotoxin producing *E. coli* were isolated.