



MINISTRY FOR AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES,
FOOD AND ANIMAL RIGHTS
AGRICULTURE DIRECTORATE



Drinking Milk (Cow) *Product Specification*

In accordance to L.N. 467 of 2014 for the purpose of Regulation (EU) No.1305/2013 on support for Rural Development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EARFD)



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1. Scope

The present product specification concerns the production of Drinking Milk in adherence to the Products of Quality National Scheme (PQNS), recognised by the Maltese Government with SL427.90 according to Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013. The present product specification shall apply to animal husbandry, production, filling / packing, commercial marketing and sale of Drinking Milk.

The present product specification lays down additional requirements with respect to the directly applicable and binding rules regarded as pre-requisites.



2. Requirements

2.1 Milk Production

2.1.1 Species and breeds

The dairy cattle herd is to be predominantly of the same breed and has been in the area for at least 25 years.

2.1.2 Authorised Farms

Milk must be supplied by milk producers who together with their farms/production holdings are registered and authorised by the National Competent Authority to deliver their milk to an approved dairy purchaser.

The milk is to come from within a circular area measuring 45 km in diameter; the processing plant is to be located within that circular area.

2.1.3 Cattle feeding

The use of concentrate feeds is allowed.

All feed raw materials used in concentrate feeds for the consumption of dairy cattle shall have an Aflatoxin B1 level that does not exceed 0.005mg/kg (5 parts per billion). Concentrate feeds for dairy cattle must be sourced from manufacturers approved by the National Competent Authority.

Successful feeding of dairy cows requires accurate mixing and delivery of rations so that the diet fed meets the nutritional requirements of the cow at various lactation stages. Moreover, other advantages of having professional advice on farm will contribute to enhancing the following aspects:

- Animal welfare
- Milk quality
- Food safety
- Environmental

For this reason, all milk producers shall manage their feeding practices under the guidance of a qualified animal nutritionist.

2.1.4 Chemical and microbiological characteristics of Milk

Milk intended for drinking milk under this PQNS must satisfy the requirements set forth in EU and national regulations on food safety.



Milk must be delivered from farms which are officially certified to be free from Tuberculosis and Brucellosis.

Milk must have a Total Bacterial Count (TBC) level that does not exceed a rolling 2 month geometric average of 50,000 cfu/ml at point of delivery, with at least three samples being tested per month.

2.2 Milk Processing

2.2.1. Processing Technology

To qualify for the quality mark under this scheme, milk produced under the conditions set in the preceding section (Milk Production) and intended for the production of drinking milk has to be fresh milk. Fresh milk has to:

- be delivered from the farm to an officially approved milk collection centre within twenty-four hours (including Sundays and Public Holidays) of milking;
- be pasteurized to show a negative alkaline phosphatase and remain fresh by showing a positive peroxidase reaction;
- have a printed shelf life on the packaging of not more than 7 days after the day of pasteurisation.

2.2.2 Physical-chemical and organoleptic properties

Drinking milk shall satisfy the same requirements laid down by the relevant national for high-quality pasteurized fresh milk, for pasteurized fresh whole milk, for pasteurized fresh milk with a fat content lower than whole fresh milk but greater than fresh semi-skimmed milk, for fresh semi-skimmed milk and for fresh skimmed milk.

2.3 Commercial marketing and sale

2.3.2 Packaging

Milk must to be packed in accordance with the current EU legislation.



3 Traceability

The Products of Quality National Scheme provides for the adoption of a mandatory traceability system which links raw materials with the end product.

Raw materials must derive from the farms adhering to the value chain agreement and to the control system.

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The dairy farm must adopt a traceability system in order to guarantee the information traceability and their compliance with the present specification.

The traceability system shall allow for keeping track of at least the following set of information:

- The dairy farmer delivering the milk;
- The production capacity;
- The amount of raw materials delivered and processed;
- The amount of end product produced identified by the PQNS.



4 Auto-Control

The operator adhering to the PQNS is responsible for the compliance with the present product specification and for the implementation of the contents of the control plan approved by the Maltese Government.

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The operator adhering to the PQNS must prepare an auto-control plan and carry out periodically inspections and analytical controls.



5 Controls

The product compliance with the present specification is verified by independent control bodies approved according to the current legislation and included in the list of official control bodies for the Scheme issued by the Government of Malta.

Controls are conducted on the basis of the control plans established by the Control Bodies and approved by the Government of Malta.



6 Product Labelling

The product compliant with the present specification shall bear the logo identified under the PQNS regulations and shall include the authorisation code issued by the Government of Malta on the label/packaging in addition to any other required information set forth by the current regulations.

The label will have the indication “Quality Guaranteed by the Government of Malta”