

WORLD DAIRY DIGEST



Italy government to mandate country of origin labelling

Italy's government has signed a legislative decree making origin labels mandatory for milk and dairy products sold in Italy. The law is designed to protect Italy's dairy sector, which has suffered from falling prices, especially since European Union production quotas were abolished in April 2015. The new law means Italian dairy products that include dairy ingredients must list country of origin. The ruling applies to all types of milk, including cow, sheep, donkey, buffalo and goat, and their associated milk products. Food items containing dairy, such as pizza, will not be required to follow the regulations. Manufacturers will have to indicate the source of the raw material used in dairy products, such as cheese, butter and yogurt, as well as the country where the food is packaged and processed. The Italian government conducted an opinion poll of consumers, which showed high interest for including country of origin on dairy products. Roberto Moncalvo, president of Italian producer association Coldiretti, says low prices have led to the closure of 1,500 milking stalls at Italian dairy farms since April 2015, making the country the world's biggest milk importer, with 24 million litres of milk and dairy products imported daily, much of it to make UHT long-life milk and fresh mozzarella cheese. www.justfood.com and dairyreporter.com.

Japan farm near Fukushima nuke plant ships milk again for public sale

A dairy farm near the disaster-struck Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant in northeastern Japan began shipping raw milk again on Jan. 24. It was the first milk shipped for processing and public sale from an area previously designated for evacuation following the March 2011 nuclear disaster at the seaside plant in Fukushima Prefecture, according to the prefectural government. Milk produced at the farm in the Naraha district had been checked for radioactive cesium every week from last May to December, with no reading ever surpassing the government-set limit of 50 becquerels per kilogram. In fact, the readings were below the testing equipment detection limit. Around 400 kilograms of raw milk from 18 cows was shipped on that day. www.scmp.com.

Zimbabwe dairy industry increases production by double digits

Milk production in Zimbabwe increased by 13 per cent to 65 million litres last year compared with 58 million litres recorded in the year prior, which was mainly due to import restrictions and a dairy revitalization project. According to the Zimbabwe Dairy Industry Trust (ZDIT), the increase was in line with the target annual growth of 12 per cent. Although there has been marked improvement in the dairy industry from 2009, it still has a long way to go in meeting national requirements. Zimbabwe requires at least 120 million litres of milk annually, meaning the milk being produced is less than half the national requirement. The industry is now self-sufficient in all dairy products, except for cheese, butter and powdered milk, which it still has to import, ZDIT revealed. www.allafrica.com.

Dairy farmers protest low milk prices in Brussels

Dairy farmers protesting low milk prices sprayed a tonne of milk powder onto a building used by EU leaders for summits in Brussels.

They say a planned sale of milk powder stocks would depress prices in Europe and abroad. The European Union (EU) bought large quantities of skimmed milk powder to stabilize the market but said in November it would start disposing some of it after prices improved.

Farmers protesting in front of the European Council's Justus Lipsius building, where EU governments regularly meet, say they feared putting the milk powder back onto the market would depress prices in the EU and abroad.



» FARMERS spray milk powder in front of European Council building.

The European Commission states only a small amount of the total milk powder stock of 354,000 tonnes was for sale and sales would be made without affecting prices or market stability. www.businessinsider.com.

Phillipines department of agriculture takes measures to help farmers boost herd health, production

For a country that is 99 per cent dependent on imported milk and other dairy products to meet domestic demand, the best way to operate is via assisted reproduction to increase the native carabao herds and boost milk production, states the Philippine Carabao Center-Department of Agriculture (PCC). Department officials expressed concern the Philippines is only one per cent sufficient in milk production, with 99 per cent of the country's dairy product needs being supplied by imports. Of the milk volume produced in the Philippines, 64 per cent is provided by dairy cattle, while carabaos produce about 34 per cent and goats produce just a small amount.

The need to develop the dairy industry is obvious, and is primarily a matter of increasing the size of the country's dairy stock

to keep pace with human population growth, says Dr. Eufrocina DP. Atabay of the PCC. To help address the problem, the PCC has developed an assisted reproduction program to increase carabao herd numbers, as well as improve the genetic quality of the animals. It plans to use artificial insemination as the main technology. PCC staff will also use embryo transfer as another way to improve genetic characteristics.

"As we employ these technologies, we are ensuring the sustainability of the production of our local dairy animals so we can avoid the importation of live animals and avoid the importation of some diseases for a sustainable and globally competitive dairy industry," Dr. Atabay says. www.manilatimes.net.