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EC630 Revised 1951 Grade A Milk

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Grade A Milk

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Introduction - People use and drink milk because they like it, and it is a good food. Producers and distributors of milk are encouraging people to consume more of their product by offering a good-flavored, high-quality, safe milk. Grade A milk is produced and handled according to certain standards established to maintain and protect the fine quality of milk as produced by the cow.

The regulations governing the production and marketing of Grade A milk in Nebraska are determined by city milk ordinances and the state law. City and state milk ordinances are patterned after the Standard Milk Ordinance of the United States Public Health Service. After the ordinance is adopted for a community, a method for farm and plant inspection must be instituted. The inspection work may be done by a full-time milk inspector or by someone employed on a part-time basis that is trained for the work. A community may be serviced by inspectors from the Department of Agriculture and Inspection if the state law requirements are fulfilled.

Grade A milk is the product of clean, healthy cows milked in clean, well-lighted barns. The milk is cooled immediately after milking and kept cold until delivered.

How to start - One that desires to produce Grade A milk needs first to investigate the market in his community. Does the local town have a Grade A milk ordinance or has a local creamery filed an application to qualify according to the state law? Will milk trucks pick up Grade A milk for another market? Can a stable Grade A milk market be developed? A prospective producer should investigate thoroughly the market before converting to Grade A milk production and expecting a premium for his milk.

Producers of Grade A milk have to meet certain requirements in their barns, milk houses, and milk-cooling systems. The man responsible for the local inspection can give assistance regarding requirements necessary to qualify for the markets that he supervises. Fieldmen for dairies that purchase Grade A milk can also assist those that desire to qualify. In addition, the State Health Department and the

County and State Agricultural Extension Service are ready to assist. The most important factor to remember is to check requirements of the local milk ordinance. If no local ordinance applies, check with the field representative from the dairy that will buy your milk.

Below are presented some basic physical requirements for the production of Grade A milk. These requirements are condensed from the United States Standard Milk Code, and will vary for different areas and milk sheds.

Basic Physical Requirements For The
Production of Grade A Milk

1. Cows must be healthy, producing no abnormal milk.
2. The dairy barn should be constructed or changed to include the following:
 - a. Adequate window space, which means 4 square feet per stallion; and artificial lights to provide one light for each three stallions.
 - b. The floors and gutters shall be constructed of concrete, and graded to drain properly. The floor needs to be in good condition so that it is easily cleaned.
 - c. The walls and ceilings need to be painted; the ceiling must be tight. The feed room needs to be partitioned or separated from the remainder of the barn with tight doors. The walls and ceilings need to be kept clean.
3. The cow yard needs to be graded so that it drains away from the barn. All pools or holes need to be eliminated so that wastes cannot accumulate. No swine can be allowed in the cow yard.
4. The manure cannot be left to accumulate and must be disposed of outside of the cow lot.
5. No calves, horses, hogs, chickens, or other animals are permitted in milking portion of barn.
6. The milk house needs to be conveniently located and of the proper size.
 - a. The milk house should have a minimum of 140 square feet of working space, but more working space is desirable. It is suggested that there be 180 square feet of working space.
 - b. The floor should be of smooth concrete, with good drainage and a trap drain.

- c. The walls and ceilings need to be smooth and painted, if not constructed of impervious material.
 - d. There should be good lighting and cross ventilation. The area of the windows should be at least 10 per cent of the floor space. Adequate artificial lights should be provided.
 - e. There should be screens on the windows and door of the milk house and the door should open inward. The screen door of the milk house should open outward.
 - f. The vestibule or entrance between the barn and milk house needs to be 3 feet by 4 feet, with 30-inch swinging doors suggested.
 - g. The water should be safe, and piped into the milk house.
7. The milk house equipment should include an electric cooler, metal can rack, double or triple wash vat 60 inches long, cabinet large enough to hold pads and powders, water heater, washing powders, brushes, filter pads, paper towels, soap, and other necessary supplies. In addition, all cans, buckets, strainers, and milking machines are to be kept clean and in good condition.
 8. Milk shall immediately be cooled in approved equipment to 50 degrees Fahrenheit or less, and maintained at that temperature until delivered.
 9. The general farmstead and surroundings should be kept neat and clean. The toilet should be conveniently located and properly constructed.

The requirements stated above are the important physical requirements necessary for Grade A milk production. These requirements may vary in different milk sheds or areas, as required by health officials.

Costs - The expense of converting the present barn and milk house to meet Grade A requirements will vary. On some farms, new buildings will need to be constructed - while on others, buildings can be remodeled. The local labor supply will cause variation in the costs. Costs have varied from \$1,000 to \$3,000 to meet Grade A requirements. One should milk enough high-producing cows to justify the added cost involved in meeting Grade A requirements.-- County Agricultural Agents have plans available that show barn and milk-house construction, which are very helpful.

In addition, there is an indirect cost in the production and marketing of Grade A milk. Inspection service is necessary, and this service must be paid for. On some markets the service may be paid for by the city or county administration, which means it is paid for by all taxpayers. Inspection, if administered according to the state law, will be paid for from certification and inspection fees, supplemented by funds from state taxation.

In some areas the producers or distributors may be responsible for the inspection service. Many times there are additional marketing costs for the distributors because Grade A milk needs to be kept and processed separately from other milk received in the plant. In a well-organized plant the additional cost may be small and greater volume may absorb it, but it is difficult to completely eliminate this added expense.

Legislative Bill 333 is an enabling act which provides a plan for communities to produce and label milk as Grade A when certain requirements are met. The requirements in general comply with the United States Public Health Code, which is the basis for Grade A milk production in Nebraska. The law is administered by the Director of Agriculture and Inspection who is assisted by a committee of five individuals representing different segments of the industry. A milk plant or creamery, desiring to take advantage of the law, applies to the Director of Agriculture and Inspection at the Capitol Building. A ten-dollar certification fee is required. In addition, an inspection fee of two cents per hundred pounds of Grade A milk will be paid monthly by the creamery or milk plant.

The advantages of this law are as follows: First, it provides a plan for producers, milk plants and creameries in small towns to market Grade A milk; second, it provides an opportunity for consumers to purchase Grade A milk that is standard; third, it provides for inspection at a nominal fee; and fourth, it gives Nebraska producers and distributors an opportunity to ship Grade A milk to other states. The usefulness of this law will depend upon how well it is understood and administered.

Note: A pamphlet entitled "Revised Milk Ordinance Recommended by the U.S. Public Health Service" is published by the Federal Security Agency, Public Health Service, Washington, D. C.