



NMPF BACKGROUNDER ON U.S. DAIRY SAFETY IN RELATION TO CHINESE MELAMINE CONTAMINATION

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Melamine, which can cause kidney stones and kidney failure in babies, has been found in infant formula and other milk products from 22 of China's dairy companies. More than 10 individuals have been arrested for adding melamine to the milk products to make it appear higher in protein. Nearly 50,000 infants in China have been hospitalized, and four babies have died as a result of ingesting the tainted formula.

On Saturday, September 20, the FDA issued a Health Information Advisory to, "Proactively reassure the American public that there is no known threat of contamination in infant formula manufactured by companies that have met the requirements to sell such products in the United States." Although no trace of infant formula from China has turned up in this country, U.S. authorities said they are taking added precautions to keep out tainted milk products. The FDA had contacted the companies who manufacture infant formula for distribution in the United States and received information from the companies that they are not importing formula or source materials from China.

Key Points:

- The current Chinese melamine contamination issue appears to be wholly limited to China and to Chinese-made infant formula and other dairy products. U.S.-manufactured dairy products are not affected.
- The Food and Drug Administration has confirmed that there is no known threat of contamination in infant formula marketed in the United States.
- FDA is sampling and testing milk and milk-derived ingredients and finished food products that could contain these ingredients from Chinese sources. Milk-derived ingredients include whole milk powder, non-fat milk powder, whey powder, lactose powder, and casein. This sampling and testing is done when these ingredients or products are imported into the United States or found during visits to Asian markets. If the products are adulterated because they contain melamine and/or a melamine analog, FDA will take action to prevent the products from entering the U.S. food supply.
- American dairy products are among the safest in the world. U.S.-produced milk and dairy foods go through extensive and rigorous safety and quality

tests before they reach the grocery store. Dairy farms and plants must meet stringent federal and local regulations, including those developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and state regulatory agencies.

- Melamine has never been discovered in the U.S. milk supply or in dairy products manufactured in the U.S.
- Quality and safety are top priorities of U.S. dairy product suppliers. State-of-the-art technology, stringent regulatory standards and years of collaboration with our customers has made the United States a trusted dairy ingredients supplier to both domestic and global buyers.
- Ingredient safety and quality testing protocols in the plant include an integrated and multi-layered system of checks and balances starting with state inspection of dairy farms twice a year, plant inspections by USDA and FDA and adherence to Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs), HACCP programs and the Pasteurized Milk Ordinance (PMO). The PMO contains a set of requirements for milk production, milk hauling, pasteurization, product safety, equipment sanitation and labeling from the farm through processing.

The use of melamine in U.S. dairy products would be considered an illegal adulterant – as it is in China. So, how would we detect a situation like this if it were occurring in the U.S.?

1. It is illegal to adulterate milk and there are multiple controls that are in place to detect adulteration.
2. Farms are inspected regularly by state regulatory officials who are trained to look for illegal activities.
3. Farms are visited by cooperative field staff often to work with them on milk quality and animal health, so the cooperative would see illegal activities if they were occurring.
4. Water addition to increase volume, with the offsetting addition of a compound like melamine to “fool” tests for protein levels, would be detected in the U.S. (as a reminder, the milk collecting agents in China apparently added melamine to milk to mask reductions in protein levels as the result of watering).
5. The daily volume of milk from a farm is generally consistent, so a sudden increase in volume would be detected and seen as an anomaly unless a significant number of cows were added. This would be investigated to see why it is occurring.
6. The U.S. does not rely on a nitrogen or protein test alone to check milk.
7. Added water would be detected through other tests that melamine would not “fool.” Tests for freezing point and fat levels would detect added water easily.
8. Manufacturers of finished products like cheese, yogurt and milk proteins would see an inconsistency in yields versus volume of milk if water were added and would investigate why the inconsistency was occurring.