

Advice 06-2021 of the Scientific Committee established at the FASFC on the evaluation of self-checking guide G-034 for the production and sale of dairy products on a small scale and of the module " Production of dairy products ", a complement of the generic self-checking guide G-044 for the B2C sector

Background & Terms of reference

The Scientific Committee is asked to evaluate both the revision of the module "Production of dairy products", a supplement of the generic self-checking guide G-044 for the B2C sector, and the revision of the self-checking guide G-034 for the production and sale of dairy products on a small scale, and to verify whether these revisions sufficiently and correctly address the hazards related to the activities. Additionally, some questions are addressed regarding some specific points in the self-checking guide and module.

Method

The advice is based on expert opinion.

Advice

The Scientific Committee formulated both in depth and textual comments to improve the draft texts. In addition, recommendations were also made in response to the questions posed to the Scientific Committee. Since certain operators have the choice between the guide G-034 and the module 'production of dairy products' of guide G-044, it is important that after the revision, both texts contain the same message.

Changes to the production schemes are proposed. In order to have a good overview, it is proposed to split up production schemes in case a specific production step has a significant impact on the hazard analysis (e.g. whether or not a pasteurization is performed). The various production schedules currently show time / temperature combinations for flash (High Temperature Short Time) pasteurization for continuous processes and are therefore more applicable to industrial settings. These schedules need to be supplemented with time/temperature combinations tailored to batch pasteurization methods frequently used by small scale homestead producers.

Two options are proposed for modifying the hazard analysis of the self-checking guide G-034. The first option is to revise the severity and probability scores. In the current version of the guide G-034, it is actually unclear what these scores are based on and sometimes the severity of the same hazard is assessed differently. However, since this guide is mainly intended for small scale homestead producers, the second proposal is to only use the critical control point (CCP) and point of attention (PA) methodology, without mentioning the scores.

Requirements and recommendations were formulated so that milk skimming can be done safely in the milk tank room. For example, the infrastructure and hygiene in this room must be up to standard, there must be no exposure to the outside air during skimming and the cream must be moved immediately to another room or closed area.

For cheeses, the Scientific Committee considers that a one-time annual disinfection of the ripening room is adequate, provided that there is no evidence of microbiological contamination in the environment. In addition, the Scientific Committee believes that storing cut cheese wheels for 7 days at ambient temperature (max. 21 °C) is only a safe practice for hard cheese. However, the Scientific Committee is in favor that a piece of the cheese wheel

be cut, according to the consumption at the point of sale, that can remain at room temperature (max. 21 °C) and put the rest of the cheese wheel in the refrigerator. It is also recommended that the cut cheese pieces, which were presented at the point of sale during the day, be returned to the refrigerator after closing time.

For the CCP14 (Ripening of cream in the module "Production of dairy products" in the generic self-checking guide G-044) in butter production, the Scientific Committee proposes different target values for products made on the basis of raw milk (pH < 5.2; at the latest 10 hours after the start of fermentation) and products made on the basis of pasteurized milk (pH < 5.2; max. 48 hours at a temperature between 10 °C and 20 °C). The proposed CCP14 represents a guarantee for the safety of all currently used procedures for the preparation of butters. A deviation from the proposed CCP may be justified on the basis of a case by case scientifically based risk assessment of a well-defined manufacturing process. Further research at the sector level into safe parameters (e.g. time/temperature, pH, etc.) for different common artisanal production processes is useful.

Finally, in terms of analyses, the Scientific Committee recommends conducting analyses on all end products (products based on raw milk and products based on pasteurized milk). These two types of end products carry a risk of post-contamination during the further processing steps. The analyses of products based on pasteurized milk can possibly be performed at a lower frequency compared to raw milk-based products, as the risk of contamination is lower. For example, the frequency of analysis of products based on pasteurized milk can be halved compared to raw milk-based products, with a minimum of one analysis for *Listeria monocytogenes* per year. An in-house pasteurization is as effective as the purchase of pasteurized milk, if the pasteurization process is performed correctly. Therefore, the Scientific Committee proposes that no distinction is made between the use of purchased pasteurized milk on the one hand and the use of raw milk that has been pasteurized by the operator himself on the other hand. In other words, the term "products based on pasteurized milk" should include without distinction both final products based on purchased pasteurized milk and final products based on milk pasteurized by the operator.

Conclusion

The Scientific Committee reviewed the draft texts of the self-checking guide G-034 "Self-checking guide for the production and sale of dairy products on a small scale" and the module "Production of dairy products" of the guide G-044. The Scientific Committee formulates both in-depth and textual comments to improve the drafts. In addition, the Scientific Committee formulates recommendations in response to questions posed in the context of this dossier. The Scientific Committee advises that the recommendations in this opinion be taken into account in the revision of the self-checking guide G-034 and the module "Production of dairy products" of guide G-044.

The full text is available on this website in dutch and in french.