

Maintenance of dairy processing establishments

DAIRYSAFE has an obligation to actively promote food safety learnings that are important to your business.

Key point –

- All dairy processing businesses, regardless of premises' size or age, require a tailor-made Maintenance Program

Producing safe and suitable food is a primary responsibility for all food businesses. This Bulletin is a reminder to all dairy processing businesses that plant and equipment (including fixtures and fittings) need to be designed, constructed and maintained in a manner that facilitates effective cleaning and sanitation, which is the basis for producing safe food.

Every dairy business has a responsibility to undertake regular maintenance and repairs. This includes general wear and tear, rust, flaking paint and damage to silicone joins – all which can provide opportunities for bacteria such as *Listeria monocytogenes* to harbour and grow within the environment.

Challenges faced by dairy processing businesses throughout 2020 have been significant, one of which has been limited access to contractors and tradespeople for routine maintenance. It's important to focus attention on planning and completion of significant maintenance items when the opportunity presents and when production is typically quieter.

We've recently seen instances where maintenance hasn't been kept up to date leading to contamination issues and subsequently lost product and unnecessary cost to the business.

Requirements for Premises and Equipment construction can be found in the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code Standard 3.2.3 – available for download from the Food Standards Australia New Zealand website, www.foodstandards.gov.au.

Regardless of premises' size or age it is essential for every dairy processing business to implement and maintain a tailor-made maintenance program. Poorly maintained plant and equipment can contribute to product contamination by limiting the ability for effective cleaning and resulting in organic material build-up.

Additionally, this bulletin is to inform businesses that maintenance programs relating to plant and equipment, construction and hygiene will be a focus of the coming round of Dairysafe audits. Auditors will be seeking evidence that systems are in place to effectively manage the standard of plant, equipment and construction. This will include the ability for a business to identify, prioritise and complete maintenance to plant and equipment in a timely manner.

Have a safe and prosperous 2021, and please contact our office if you have any questions regarding your maintenance program.

Please contact the Dairysafe team if you have any questions or concerns
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Dairysafe's regulatory management system is certified to the ISO 9001:2015 Quality Standard