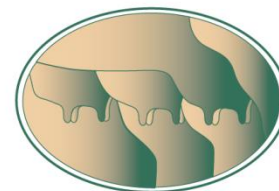


UDDER HEALTH SYSTEMS, INC

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Standard Plate Count & Total Coliform Tests

Standard Plate Count (SPC)

This test identifies the total number of bacteria per milliliter (mL) of milk. The sample should be taken of milk that has been harvested, strained, cooled, and is ready to serve or be processed. SPC is valuable to quantify the total number of bacteria that can come from the udder, contamination during milking, unclean milking equipment, unclean storage containers, or inefficient cooling.

Standard Plate Count is measured in colony forming units (CFU) per milliliter (mL) of milk. Udder Health Systems recommends that the client has an *SPC below 5,000 CFU/mL*. If the SPC is below or above the countable range (<2,500 CFU/mL or >250,000 CFU/mL), an “estimated” count will be given, indicated by an “E” before the count (ex. E<2,500).

Total Coliform Count (TC)

In addition to serving as an indicator of milk quality and food safety, this laboratory test also gives information about the cleanliness of the milk harvesting process. Coliforms can be found in fecal material, water, soil, and vegetation. They may contaminate the milk during the milking process, either by accidental intake of fecal material through the vacuum on the milking unit, or inadequate cleanliness of the udder or teats. Coliforms can cause clinical mastitis. If a cow or goat is not currently infected with coliform mastitis, they should not be present in the milk from the udder.

Udder Health Systems recommends that the *Total Coliforms be lower than 15 CFU per mL*. This is a common regulatory limit for sale of raw milk in states where it is legal, although some states may allow a higher limit.

Additional Information

Only *one 50 mL sample of milk in a sterile vial* is needed to perform both the SPC and TC tests. If the test results are out of range, further testing of a different type may be necessary to identify the source of contamination. Most Homestead dairy clients will have their milk tested monthly to monitor the quality of the milk being consumed by their family or sold to the public.

Though the information is helpful to assess the quality of the milking and cooling process, it's important to remember the potential health risks associated with consuming raw milk. Each state has its own raw milk quality standards and laws, which should be investigated.