

## **SAMPLING INSTRUCTIONS FOR BACTERIAL COUNTS OF BULK MILK**

The test is based on the culture and identification of live bacteria in milk. It is therefore *ESSENTIAL* that for quality and accuracy of results samples are taken and transported to the laboratory with the milk remaining cool.

1. Agitate the bulk tank for 2-3 minutes and check that it's cool (4oc). A minimum of 20mls is required for analysis.
2. Put the sample into the polythene bag and immediately transfer it to the polystyrene box, with one FROZEN ice brick above and one below the sample. Refill the box with polystyrene chippings and seal with tape.

3. Send the sample VIA CARRIER or NEXT DAY DELIVERY to:

Gloucester Laboratories  
Wood Veterinary Group  
125 Bristol Road  
Quedgeley  
Gloucester  
GL2 4NB

Samples must arrive from Monday to Friday and preferably Monday to Thursday. Results will be available within four days.

4. If samples from two or more bulk tanks are sent they will be processed (and therefore charged) as separate items, unless we are specifically asked to bulk them. Please make sure samples are clearly identified.

### **INDIVIDUAL MILK SAMPLES**

A good sampling technique has a very significant impact on the quality and usefulness of results.

- clean the teat (and wash and dry if dirty)
  
- discard the first 4-6 squirts of milk: they commonly contain bacteria which have been growing in the teat sphincter, but which are not causing mastitis, and must be removed.
  
- rub the end of the teat 10-15 times with a swab soaked in methylated spirits
  
- only then should you open the sample bottle, keeping the lid facing downwards and the opened bottle almost horizontal. This prevents particles of dust and bacteria dropping into the bottle.
  
- finally, with the bottle between horizontal and a 45 degree angle, squirt in one jet of milk and replace the cover immediately. Label the bottle with your name, the identity of the cow and the date and quarter affected.

The sample needs to be taken to the laboratory as soon as is reasonably possible, although a delay of up to 24 hours is acceptable, preferably storing the sample in a refrigerator.

A mixed growth of coagulase negative staphs, Strep faecalis, Bacillus species and E. coli is most likely to be a contaminated sample, often because the foremilk was not discarded.