

10/01/2024: SFCU 001.24 - VRD

Guidelines regarding the Rules of 2022 concerning the Production and Sale of Dairy and Traditional Dairy Products.

The following are guidelines to the Legal Notice 321 of 2022 that was published in the Government Gazette No. 20,969 on the 2nd of December 2022 regarding the production and sale of Dairy and Traditional Dairy Products.

These guidelines do not cover the procedure for application to rear, keep and breed sheep, goats, and other animals. For further information on the latter, please contact the Animal Health Unit within VRD on Tel: 22925346.

The rules have been summarised below:

1. The placing on the market of raw milk or raw cream intended for direct human consumption or for further processing is **prohibited**.
2. Any dairy product made from raw milk should abide by relevant labelling directive regulations and should include: “made from raw milk” on the label.
3. No person shall sell dairy or traditional dairy products unless produced and labelled as required and in accordance with these rules.

A. Producers having more than seven (7) registered sheep or goats (12 months and older):

1. Establishments producing milk and dairy products, including traditional dairy establishments must be **approved** by the Department and registered with the Food Safety Commission (FSC), i.e., such establishments will be given an approval number (**DP XXX**) following a series of inspections which will verify whether the necessary criteria have been met.
2. Dairy products and traditional dairy products must originate from an **approved establishment** for them to be placed on the market, sold wholesale or retail, or directly to the final consumer from the farm or from any related premises or from any other place.
3. The establishment must be equipped with a production room that must be used only for the specific use of processing products made from raw milk. The processing of products can be done at a related premises of the producer.
4. Producers also have the option to sell all sheep and goat milk to third parties who are approved to buy the milk as long as this is done by a contract between the two parties. In this case, the farm only needs to be registered.

5. These regulations only concern milking sheep and goats that produce milk intended for human consumption. Accordingly, herds that have more than a total of seven (7) sheep and/or goats that produce milk that is not intended for processing for human consumption, may be exempted from the need for approval. To be exempted, the owner must do the following:
 - a. Go to the e-service website and fill in the declaration form. This is a declaration that all the milk of his sheep and goats will not be put on the market for human consumption.
 - Or
 - b. He makes a declaration through a legal professional such as a notary and submits it to the Directorate.
6. Should the declaration mentioned in point (5) above be found to be false and in violation of any of the provisions of these rules, the VRD Director may impose administrative penalties (fine), and, or, take other steps, including seizure of products.

B. Producers that have less than seven (7) registered sheep or goats (12 months or older):

1. Dairy products or traditional dairy products that are going to be **consumed by the owner of the animals or his direct family** living in the same household as the owner of the animals may be produced on a farm or in related premises **not in the rules** set by Council Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 and Council Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 and the provisions of these rules.
2. Dairy or traditional dairy products may be sold from the farm and, or from an open-air market **if** the farm holding and related premises are registered in terms of Council Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 and they fulfill the hygiene requirements established therein.
3. Producers having less than seven (7) milking livestock, but want to place dairy products on the market need to follow the rules as mentioned in section A.

C. Placing Traditional Dairy Products on the Market

Any person placing traditional dairy products on the market in Malta in accordance with these rules shall also abide by the measures set out in the Schedule:

1. Raw **cow's** milk that will be used for the production of such products must satisfy certain criteria regarding the number of micro-organisms as well as somatic cell count.

2. Raw **sheep and goat** milk used to produce traditional dairy products must satisfy certain criteria regarding the number of micro-organisms.
3. Raw cow, sheep, and goat milk must also be analysed for the presence of antibiotic residues. The milk cannot be sold if such residues are present in the milk.
4. Raw milk analysis must be carried out on an individual sample **every 15 days**.
5. Whenever the result of the analysis exceeds the limits of the criteria established in law, the producer must notify VRD and take steps to rectify the situation.
6. The Director authorises the use of raw milk at a temperature of not less than 37°C if used within two (2) hours from milking for the production of traditional dairy products
7. To enable the continued use of traditional methods for the production of traditional dairy products the following will be allowed:
 - a. sheep and goats can be hand milked as long as this milking takes place in a separate area from where the animals are kept and bred on the farm;
 - b. the milk can be placed in food-grade plastic or stainless steel containers and does not need to be cooled if it is going to be used for the production of traditional dairy products within two (2) hours of milking;
 - c. the milk can be transported without being cooled if the trip between the place where the milking takes place and the place where the production of the traditional dairy products takes place does not take longer than sixty (60) minutes;
 - d. the curd can be placed in a form (*qaleb*) made of foodgrade plastic or cane or reed;
 - e. the drying of dairy products can take place in a '*qannič*' or '*nemmusiera*';
 - f. the storage of the traditional dairy product that has been dried or treated in any other way may take place in a place that does not have temperature control and may be kept at ambient temperature.
8. When a traditional dairy product is placed on the market, it shall be packed bearing an **identification mark** that is placed in such a way that it shall be destroyed when the packaging or the wrapping of the product is opened, or the product must be packed and wrapped in a way that it is sealed.

D. Offences and Penalties

If the rules mentioned above are not observed, the Directorate will take enforcement action according to the Veterinary Services Act CAP 437 which may include administrative penalties (fines) and seizure of milk and milk products. Should the producer contravene any provision of the mentioned Act, or related regulations, and is found guilty, the Court may, in addition to any other punishment, order that those animals, instruments, equipment, products, or substances used in the commission of the crime they are confiscated. If the person is found guilty for the second time, the permit may be suspended.

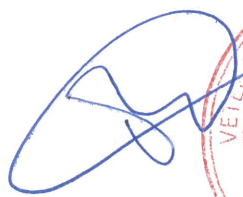
For further details, this Legal Notice has been uploaded to the website and can be accessed via the following link: <https://agricultureservices.gov.mt/en/vrd/Pages/traditionalDairySection.aspx>

For more information, contact the Milk Hygiene Section within the Veterinary Regulatory Directorate between the hours of 07:00-15:00 on: 22925190/22925194/22925336.

You may also send an SMS on 99597785 with your name, address, ID number, permit number and the number of registered sheep and goats located on the farm.

Example:

Mario Brincat
0000000(M)
27, Triq il-Fjuri, L-Ibragg
R0729
8 sheep, 4 goats.



Director VRD

