

Verification - How it works



Every month, Edge travels to various labs in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, Iowa and South Dakota that test our members' milk for components and somatic cells. Labs include AgSource Marshfield, AgSource Menomonie, Eurofins DQCI, Valley Queen Cheese, Brewster Cheese, Foreign Type Cheese Makers Association, Fox Valley Quality Control, Grande Cheese and Dairy Lab Services.

We purchase a set of "standards" that have a wide range of component values. We receive a copy of the "true" numbers for these standards—what the actual fat, protein, lactose, other solids, and solids-non-fat (SNF) are, as well as the actual somatic cell counts. At each lab, four different standards are checked for somatic cells: Low, low/medium, medium/high, and high. Eight different standards are checked for fat, true protein, lactose, and either other solids or SNF.

Samples must be kept cold to ensure they do not deteriorate. When we arrive at the lab, we check the temperature of the samples and transfer them to a hot water bath with a temperature around 42.0 degrees C. The samples are allowed to warm up to at least 38.0 degrees C before testing.

Once samples are at the proper temperature, they are shaken to evenly distribute the components, then run through the machine. The labs we visit use either a FOSS or Bentley, which are machines that test for fat, protein, true protein, lactose, other solids, SNF, and somatic cells. Each sample is tested three times.



Checking sample temperature



Samples warming in the water bath

Pulling milk from each vial



The machine used for testing samples



These results are entered in a spreadsheet which calculates the accuracy of the results compared to the "true" standard value. The fat and protein results must be within a margin of +/- 0.04, and lactose and other solids or SNF must be within +/- 0.06. If the results are not in the acceptable range, we may re-run samples, have the machine recalibrated, or try other samples.

All results are sent to the federal order administrators as a record that we visited the labs. We also send the results to the lab so they have a record of their performance. We keep a copy of the results on file, along with copies of the lab's daily performance checks. These are forms they use to track the results from their machines and record hourly checks to ensure the machines are running correctly.

This is done every month of the year to ensure your milk is tested correctly...which means you are being paid for what is actually in your milk!

If you have questions about the lab verification process, please contact us.

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