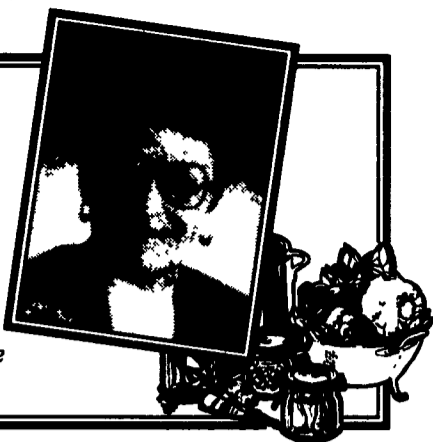


# Quality Starts On The Farm

## Consuming Thoughts

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Encouraged by the new food guidelines depicted in the food pyramid, many Americans are trying to eat more fruits and vegetables.

One of the first fruits to appear in local markets is the luscious strawberry. With more than seven varieties grown locally, the harvest season is generally late May through late June. However, Tristar and Tribute are day-neutral strawberries. They are available mid-June and again from August through the first hard frost. Tribute is one week later than Tristar.

Locally grown fruit has some big advantages in cost, flavor and accessibility. If you decide to go pick your own strawberries, you'll want to select the best variety for freezing and choose the best variety for eating fresh and/or making jams and jellies by asking the grower. Many pick-your-own farms have the Penn State brochure called "Enjoy Nature's Fresh Strawberries," available for the customer. This leaflet has the most popular Pennsylvania strawberry varieties listed, along with information on the harvest season, berry characteristics and uses.

Whether you pick your own or purchase picked berries, you'll want to select fully ripe and appropriate colored strawberries with intact green caps. White or pale pink berries do not become swee-

ter after they are picked and should not be purchased. Strawberries with bruises or without caps do not store well and should not be purchased.

Twelve very large berries or 36 small berries equals a pint. An average of 1 pound of strawberries makes 1 pint of frozen berries. One pint yields about 3/4 cups whole, 2/4 cups sliced, or 1 1/2 cups pureed berries.

Always remove bruised, rotted, or molded berries before storing. Strawberries should be refrigerated immediately after purchasing. Never rinse the berries or remove the caps before storing. Removing the cap early can reduce flavor, texture, and nutrient quality. Strawberries can only be stored for a couple days in the refrigerator. If held longer than this, a grey mold may develop. For optimal refrigeration, place berries no more than two berries deep in a shallow container or tray covered with waxed paper or plastic wrap.

When ready to use the berries remove caps and gently wash berries with cool water just prior to using.

One cup of unsweetened strawberries provides 150% of the USDA of vitamin C and has only 45 calories. Strawberries are high in potassium (247 mg), low in sodium (2 mg) and have 1.3-3.0

COLUMBUS, Ohio — When it comes to food the United States has not only one of the most plentiful food supplies in the world, but one of the safest.

Perhaps the safest product of them all is milk. Consumers can be assured that milk is safe, because it's the most monitored product in the entire food supply, according to the National Institutes of Health.

The milk safety inspection system involves a series of tests by federal and state inspectors and by the dairy industry itself to confirm the safety of all milk and dairy products. From the cow to your store, at least 10 checks, tests and

grams of dietary fiber.

Fresh, frozen or sliced they make just the right topping for cereal, waffles, pancakes or French toast. Forget the syrup and orange juice for a while. Also try stirring finely chopped strawberries into softened cream cheese and spread on bagels or toast.

Make a refreshing strawberry cooler by combining equal amounts of sliced strawberries, yogurt, and milk in a blender. Sweeten with honey to taste.

Dip whole, rinsed strawberries into melted semi-sweet chocolate, then place on waxed paper and chill until chocolate hardens. Or try making strawberry butter by beating together 1/2 cup pureed strawberries, 1 tablespoon honey and 1/2 cup butter or margarine. Spread on toast, muffins, pancakes, rolls, broiled chicken, or fish. Strawberries can also be used in many desserts, salads, sauces, and drinks, or just eaten plain.

For additional information on freezing strawberries, contact your local Penn State Cooperative Extension Office and ask for the "Let's Preserve Strawberries" fact sheet.

inspections are made to ensure that consumers have only wholesome, healthy and safe products from which to select at their local supermarket dairy case.

### Quality Starts On The Farm

The continuing high quality of milk starts on the dairy farm. Even beyond natural pride, producers have a real incentive to produce the safest milk possible. If they don't, they lose money. Dairy farmers work closely with their herd veterinarian to practice sound disease prevention, conduct careful medical treatment and maintain timely accurate records. State and federal regulations require on-farm cleanliness and equipment sanitation. Many dairy producers even do their own on-farm testing to further ensure milk quality.

Milk delivered to the dairy plant is tested before it is unloaded. Any load that does not pass inspection is dumped without ever entering the plant. Recent studies have shown that well over 99 percent of all milk delivered by farmers passes inspection.

### FDA Supervision

Two branches of the Federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) work to ensure the safety of dairy foods. The Milk Safety Branch enforces the Pasteurized Milk Ordinance, the basic federal reference for all milk-testing programs. The FDA Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM) reviews all animal medications to be used on milk-producing cows. Test medications must meet stringent CVM standards regarding effectiveness and safety before being approved. FDA doesn't just rest there. Above and beyond all other tests, last year alone FDA also made 5,500 random tests of milk samples inspected by state regulators to ensure testing accuracy. In addition, FDA distributed 5,000 medication-specific test kits to state regulators for their use.

### Additional Protection

In addition to federal testing, each of the 50 states, as well as the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, carries out extensive dairy-safe and milk-quality tests. Each state also tests pasteurized milk and milk products. Dairy farms and dairy plants handling fluid milk production are covered by the National Conference on Interstate Milk Shipments, an organization of federal and state health officials and regulators, state agricultural regulators and representatives of the dairy industry. This group make recommendations on strengthening the Pasteurized Milk Ordinance and coordinates voluntary efforts of local, state and federal regulatory agencies as they oversee and ensure the production, processing and handling of quality milk and dairy products.

### Finished Milk Testing

As milk is processed, pasteurized and homogenized, laboratory checks are made to evaluate the color, odor, appearance, temperature and taste of milk. Butterfat content is analyzed for accuracy and tests are conducted to ensure proper pasteurization.

Next, a laboratory runs additional tests to ensure safety. Shelf-like testing is conducted to ensure that the code life is correctly stated. Routine tests are also made to ensure package integrity and weight, and to offer a final check for the presence of animal medication residues or added water.

Finally, there's the ultimate test. Consumer satisfaction. Each day, millions of Americans give their stamp of approval to wholesome, healthy and safe milk.

To learn more about the extra steps your dairy is taking to ensure your safety and to complete your satisfaction with dairy products, call Mid East United Dairy Industry Association at 614/890-1800.

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- dispels misconceptions about dairy products through the media
- generates positive dairy articles in newspapers (worth \$275,000 in 1994)
- increases dairy product awareness through media tours and special events
- extends publicity messages through local dairy princess program



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