



# Arizona Department of Agriculture

Physical: 1110 W. Washington St., Ste. 450 Phoenix, Arizona 85007  
Mailing: 1802 W. Jackson St., Ste. 78 Phoenix, Arizona 85007  
(602) 542-4189 FAX (602) 542-4194

**Updated: July 2023**

**To: Interested Parties**

## **Guidelines for Small Dairies and Milk Processors**

*Note: It is recommended that any parties interested in starting a dairy facility first contact the Dairy Control Program to discuss requirements and the licensing process. The Dairy Program may be reached at (602) 542-4189.*

A *milk plant* is any place, premises or establishment where milk or milk products are collected, handled, processed, stored, pasteurized, packaged or prepared for distribution.

A *dairy farm* is a place or premises where one or more lactating animals are kept for milking purposes, and from which a part or all of the milk is provided, sold or offered for sale to a milk plant.

The establishment of a dairy farm or a dairy processing facility in Arizona is regulated by the Arizona Department of Agriculture (AZDA). The AZDA Dairy Control Program administers and enforces dairy rules and regulations designed to protect the public health and to maintain standards for the dairy industry. Dairy facilities must be inspected and approved by AZDA before they can be licensed and before the sale of any milk product can be made.

## Rules and Regulations

The following rules, regulations and standards are used by ADA as requirements for the various types of dairy facilities and products manufactured:

*Grade "A" Pasteurized Milk Ordinance (PMO)*

*Arizona Revised Statutes, Title 3, Chapter 4 (ARS)*

*Arizona Administrative Code, Title 3, Chapter 4 (AAC)*

*USDA General Specifications for Dairy Plants*

*3-A Standards for Construction of Dairy Equipment*

*Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 21 & 7*

## Submission of Plans

The starting point of licensing a dairy farm or processing plant is the submittal of plans for the facility, to Dairy Control. A dairy sanitarian will review the plans for compliance with applicable requirements and a written response letter will be sent either approving or disapproving the plans or requesting further information. The purpose is to give the Department a look at what the facility will consist of so that any issues can be resolved early in the process. This makes the final inspection for a license less stressful for everyone involved.

The plans submitted should include details, such as, the basic floor plan and dimensions of the facility, location of doors and fixtures, placement and identification of equipment ( storage tanks, pasteurizer, filler ) , toilet facilities, utilities ( water heaters, cooling systems, cleaning systems) and a finish schedule.

Depending on staff availability and distance to your location, visits may be made during the construction process to monitor progress. Once construction is completed, the facility operators contact Dairy Control to do the licensing inspection. If approved, the facility submits a license application and any license fees required. The applications can be found on the Departments' website: <https://agriculture.az.gov> under "Form Finder" or by clicking the "Apply/Renew" button.

## Additional Requirements

*Pasteurizers-* If your facility is required to pasteurize dairy products, the pasteurizer(s) must meet the standard established by the 3-A organization. The approved equipment must be properly designed, installed and operated in order for the product to be pasteurized.

*Antibiotic Testing-* Most processing plants are required to test milk for antibiotic residues prior to processing it, as required in *Appendix "N"* of the PMO and by the *USDA Specifications*. Processors

are approved to do testing by the State Agriculture Lab (SAL), which assures that testing is conducted properly, using FDA approved tests. Contact information for the SAL can be obtained from the Dairy Control Program.

*Milk Cooling-* Milk and milk products, in general, must be maintained at or below 45°F, unless being processed. After pasteurizing, Grade “A” milk and milk products must be cooled immediately to 45°F or less, to control bacterial growth. A milk cooling system or other approved method must be available to accomplish this. Once packaged, milk products must be maintained at or below 45°F, in an approved refrigeration. Delivery vehicles must also be able to maintain products at or below 45°F.

*Bottling-* Bottling/Packaging of milk and milk products must be done in a sanitary manner, on approved mechanical equipment. Hand capping is not allowed. Grade “A” milk and milk products must use containers and closures obtained from manufacturers listed in the Interstate Milk Shippers (IMS) List.

Labels must be submitted to the Dairy Control Program for review. It is recommended that label proofs be submitted for review before printing to avoid printing labels that cannot be used. Labels must comply with applicable FDA requirements, the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), PMO and Arizona regulations.

*Water Supply-* The water for dairy facilities must be from a supply that is protected from contamination, properly located, easily accessible and of a safe, sanitary quality. Individual water supplies will be sampled before licensing and regularly afterward to ensure compliance. The water supply must be protected from possible sources of contamination in the facility (submerged inlets, backflow, and back-siphoning).

*Herd Health-* Dairy herds must be tested for Brucellosis and Tuberculosis before a permit can be issued to a raw milk bottling facility. Additional testing may be required, at least annually and depending on the type of animal being milked.

These are a few examples of dairy requirements for someone considering starting a dairy-related business and not a complete list. If there are further questions about starting a dairy farm or milk processing plant, please contact the Dairy Control Program at (602) 542-4189.