

# U.S. Dairy Supply Safe

URBANA, ILL.

**P**roblems such as those experienced with China's milk supplies are not likely to occur in the United States, said a University of Illinois Extension dairy specialist.

"China is back in the news with the recall of milk products due to the addition of melamine, an industrial chemical used in plastics and fertilizer production," said Mike Hutjens. "This contamination of milk has led to a crisis in China leading to the death of babies, 340 children hospitalized with kidney disorders, and 54,000 infants exposed to the dangerous compound."

Milk has been pulled from stores and formal apologies extended by the Chinese government and the firm responsible.

"The take-home message for U.S. consumers is that the U.S. dairy supply is safe due to the constant testing and regulation for food safety," he said. "No antibiotics, pesticides, herbicides, or other chemicals can be added to U.S. milk. And all milk is monitored, regardless of type – organic, natural, and conven-

tional."

Melamine, the additive that caused problems in China's milk, contains nitrogen which increases the protein content in milk when tested. By adding this compound, milk appears to have a higher protein content and nutrient value. The addition was an attempt by some Chinese dairy operations to artificially provide their product with a higher nutrient level.

Because Chinese milk products can be found in numerous food products sold in the world, including the United States, such as candies, cakes, and baked goods, these products have been recalled, he noted.

"U.S. dairy managers know the importance of guarding milk quality and following safe practices when feeding and managing dairy cows," Hutjens said.

"Consumers should continue to monitor where their food sources are coming from as these problems continue to occur in the food chain, including products such as vegetables, spinach, and lettuce." Δ