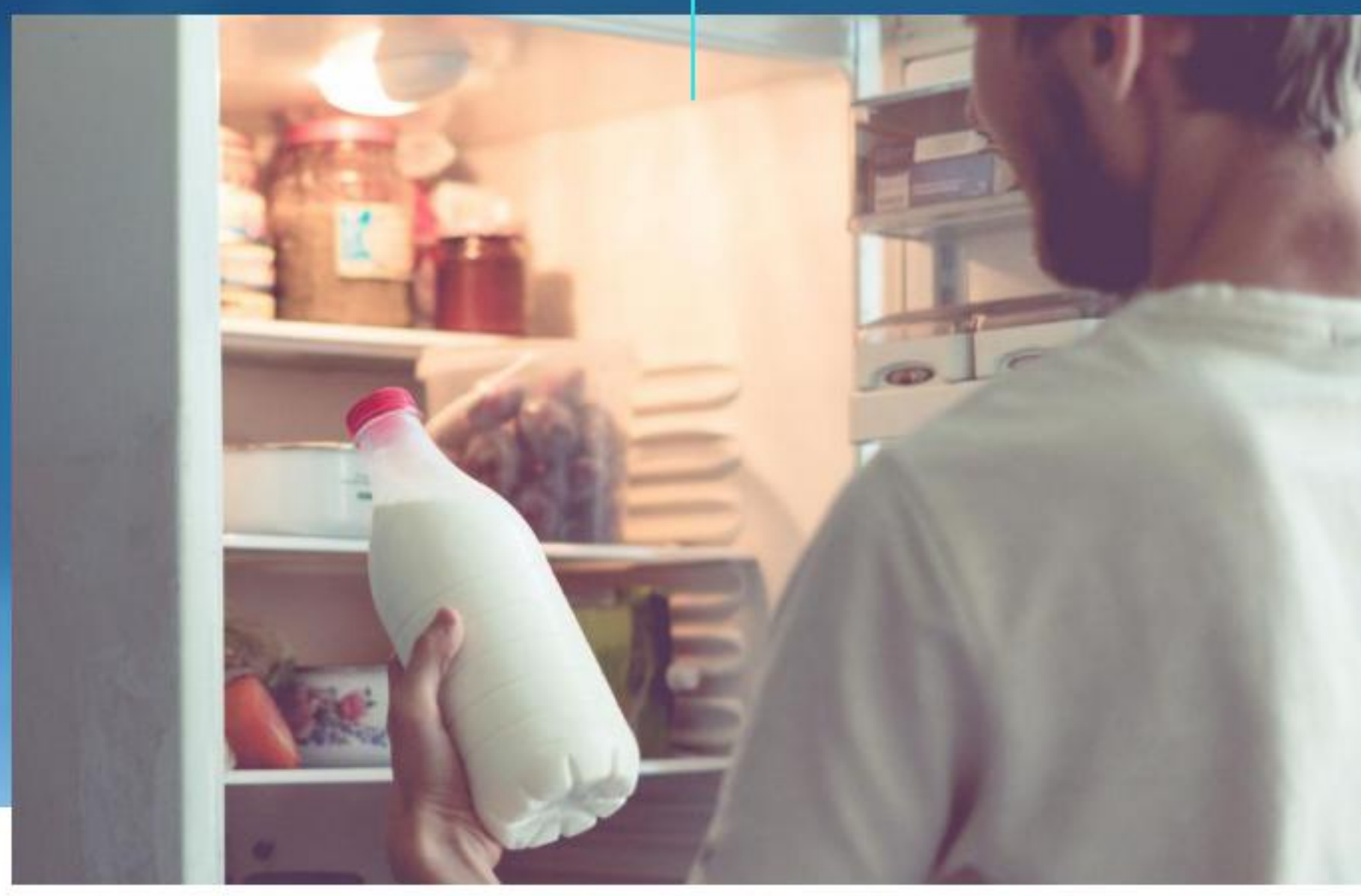


WITHOUT A TRACE. MILK IS NO PLACE FOR ANTIBIOTICS.

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Antibiotics can make you feel better after fighting a bacterial infection, but you don't want them in your food. Canada's strict dairy regulations ensure milk is free of antibiotics and clear of any contamination before making it from the farm to your fridge.

BY DFC - PLC, COMMUNICATIONS TEAM



HIGHLIGHTS

- Canadian dairy farmers and veterinarians must follow strict guidelines when treating a sick cow with antibiotics
- To ensure the Canadian milk we buy is free of antibiotics, milk is tested before leaving the farm and before being accepted at a processing plant

There's a time and place for antibiotics, and it's not in your dairy products.

When you choose Canadian milk, you can be certain you're getting pure and natural Canadian dairy that's free of any trace of antibiotics. Canada has strict dairy regulations that closely monitor milk from its raw form on the farm through production and into the cartons that make it to your fridge.

Let's take a closer look at the quality control behind Canadian milk and why you can feel confident the milk you're drinking is full of goodness and nothing more.

Antibiotics and cows: in sickness, not in health

Farmers take the safety and health of their cows very seriously. Like us, cows can get sick from time to time. In some cases, a veterinarian may decide to prescribe antibiotics, but **that is the only circumstance in which antibiotics are allowed.**

If a cow is given antibiotics to treat an illness, there are very strict rules that the farmer and veterinarian must follow:

- The cow being given antibiotics must be clearly identified and monitored so that her milk can be immediately discarded.
- Sick cows still need to be milked, but the milk must be discarded for a mandatory withdrawal period set by Health Canada, that allows the cow's system to be clear of traces of antibiotics.
- All milk leaving the farm is then tested to verify that there is no trace of antibiotics or other contaminants.



Taking good care of our cows means providing antibiotics only when a cow is ill and only when advised by a veterinarian.

Canadian milk makes the grade

Canadian milk must pass a series of strict quality control tests from the farm through production to ensure it is completely clear of antibiotics and other contaminants before making it to grocery store shelves.

It starts with milk truck drivers. Canadian milk truck drivers must complete and pass the **Bulk Tank Milk Grader Certification** (BTMG) Program. The program is administered in each province to ensure these drivers are qualified to test and evaluate milk in its raw state before collecting it from the farm.

As certified graders, their responsibilities include:

- Grading and measuring the milk
- Evaluating its appearance and odour
- Recording the volume and temperature of milk
- Taking a sterile sample which can be traced back to the farm

Graders have the authority to accept or reject milk from a farm's bulk tank based on their evaluation and tests.



Just after milking, the milk from the cows is stored in a bulk tank and kept between 0 and 4°C.



Every 2 days, milk is collected and tested.



In Canada, **all** milk must be tested for antibiotic residues before a processing plant will accept it.

Once the milk truck arrives at the plant, it is kept in the receiving bay. Before the milk can be unloaded from the tanker truck, it is sampled to go through sophisticated and highly sensitive tests – so sensitive that they can measure in parts per billion, which means they could find a drop in an Olympic-sized swimming pool. The chance a trace of antibiotics makes it through these tests? As slim as your chances of winning a gold medal in diving at the next summer Olympics (in the aforementioned swimming pool). Unless you're a really great diver...but you get the point.

Of the 2.2 million milk pickups at farms in Canada every year, less than 0.009% turn up positive for antibiotics.

On the rare occasion that the milk tests positive for antibiotics, the truck driver takes the load of milk elsewhere to be discarded. That milk never reaches consumers. The farm responsible for shipping it is traced back and is held responsible for related costs and fined.

Canadian milk is sampled, traceable and tested, and must meet strict quality and food safety regulations before making it to your fridge. When you choose Canadian milk, you can be certain it's free of antibiotics. Now doesn't that make you feel better?

SOURCES

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