



Improvement of dairy quality and safety

(PRJ-0424-2026)

Dairy Standard Agency

Quarter 1 2026 (January 2026 till March 2026)

Project goals

Goal 1 - National monitoring of milk and other dairy products in collaboration with Health Authorities

Achievements

Through Project 1 monitoring, the DSA actively collected samples from targeted regions, ensuring representative coverage. This approach provides access to milk from specific areas, enabling comprehensive analysis and supporting risk-based monitoring across the industry.

The sample run activities (cycle 95) for this quarter were completed as scheduled, and the number of samples per product is indicated in Table 1 below. The product scope for cycle 95 was milk (raw and pasteurised) and fermented products.

Table 1 Number of samples per product collected

Batch	Products	Sub Totals	Totals	
A	Milk (Packed Pasteurised)	68	182	
B	Milk (Packed Unpasteurised)	4		
C	Milk (Bulk Pasteurised)	24		
D	Milk (Bulk Unpasteurised)	86		
E	Cultured Milk	88	266	
F	Cultured Buttermilk	26		
G	Drinking Yoghurt w/added Foodstuffs	36		
H	Yoghurt w/added Foodstuffs	45		
I	Dairy Snacks	28		
J	Yoghurt (Plain)	37		
K	Strained yoghurt	6		
M	Strained yoghurt w/added Foodstuffs	0		
	TOTAL	448		

The samples obtained during this cycle were submitted to the DSA Laboratory Services in accordance with established standard procedures. The test results for milk were benchmarked against legal standards in the domains of food safety, compositional analysis, and trade metrology. These standards fall under the Foodstuffs, Cosmetics, and Disinfectants Act of 1972 (Act 54 of 1972), the Agricultural

Product Standards Act of 1990 (Act 119 of 1990), and the Legal Metrology Act of 2014 (Act 9 of 2014).

Food safety non-conforming results were assessed and communicated to the participating municipal health authorities for further action. Contact details of participating authorities and processors were updated in line with standard procedure.

The DSA, in terms of its project protocol and relationships with the relevant authorities (see project 6), continued to liaise with the relevant law enforcement bodies, providing support through dairy technical information and guideline documents to limit the sale of non-conforming products.

No Non-achievements / underperformance has been reported

Goal 2 - Investigations regarding quality problems in respect of product-compliance with legal standards

Achievements

Under Project 2, one low-risk complaint regarding cream composition was received. Background checks have been completed, and a follow-up investigation took place. The investigation was finalised, and feedback was given to the complainant.

No Non-achievements / underperformance has been reported

Goal 3 - Special investigations

Achievements

3.1 Aflatoxin M1 Analysis - 2026/Q1 - cycle 95

During the first quarter of 2026, Aflatoxin M1 testing was conducted on all collected milk samples. A total of 195 samples were examined to assess compliance with the legal limits for fungus-produced toxins set out in the regulations under the Foodstuffs, Cosmetics and Disinfectants Act of 1972 (Act No. 54 of 1972).

5 of 195 samples exceeded the permissible limit of 50 ppt for Aflatoxin M1, and an additional 2 samples showed traces of Aflatoxin M1.

*Note: Aflatoxin M1, previously classified as a special investigation, has now been incorporated into routine screening. This change enables the DSA to collect extensive data, identify high-risk areas, and implement targeted remedial actions. Prioritisation based on data trends strengthens food safety and compliance across the industry.

3.2 Labelling and advertising on dairy product packaging

During the first quarter of 2026, a total of 12 label-related queries and label information matters were addressed for various organisations, identified as Organisation 1 to Organisation 8. These included:

Multiple labelling enquiries from Organisation 1 relating to “Greek yoghurt”, strained yoghurt and general labelling regulations,

Queries from Organisation 2 on Amasi labelling,

Organisation 3 on the interpretation of % butterfat,

Organisation 4 on quark and Department of Agriculture contact details,

Organisation 5 on the registration of chemicals for the dairy industry.

Organisation 6 submitted three matters relating to the evaluation and follow-up evaluation of a 200g high-protein, low-fat plain yoghurt label, as well as a query on plain yoghurt flavourings.

In addition, label information was provided to Organisation 7 on standards for plain yoghurt; and

To Organisation 8 regarding the correction of class designation, both arising from Project 1.1

sampling activities.

Feedback was provided between 23 January and 30 March 2026, mainly by e-mail, with selected matters handled via WhatsApp. Overall, the quarter reflected continued industry demand for guidance on product labelling compliance, product designation, composition claims and related regulatory interpretation.

No Non-achievements / underperformance has been reported

Goal 4 - Milk and other dairy product risk identification

Achievements

The national dairy monitoring programme of the DSA facilitates the sampling of various milk categories, including packed pasteurised and unpasteurised milk, as well as retail bulk pasteurised and unpasteurised milk, along with other dairy products, in collaboration with the municipal health authorities. Upon completion of tests, sample results and interpretation material regarding food safety and compositional standards for milk and other dairy items were promptly conveyed to the appropriate government authorities and members of the dairy industry. Critical non-compliance results lists were collated and disseminated to each province.

4.1 Reporting of results to health authorities

Reports on non-conforming results were forwarded to the respective government departments at the end of each cycle. Each participating municipality received a quarterly report on the analysis of all samples submitted. Non-conforming processors as well as processors whose contact details were verified and who requested to receive test results were provided with individual test reports.

4.2 Software development

Recent developments and ongoing projects in the realm of information technology and software development within the DSA:

a. Upgrades to the current Management Information System (MIS):

Security across all platforms was improved through amendments to the registration process and to access to functions. The focus is on data analysis and on building a platform on which data can be processed more effectively and used for research and reporting purposes.

b. Updates to the laboratory program:

Security on the DSALAB program was improved by amendments to the registration process and to access to functions as to comply fully to SANAS audit requirements

c. Upgrades to the DSA Audit application:

No upgrades to the DSA audit application were required.

Ongoing initiatives in IT and software development underscore the DSA's commitment to continuously improve its technological infrastructure and systems. These upgrades and developments are essential for maintaining efficiency, data accuracy, and compliance across various aspects of the operations. The DSA will continue to monitor and report on the progress of these projects in future updates.

4.3 National and international food safety and recall monitoring

During the period 1 January to 31 March 2026, national and international food safety and recall monitoring identified Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) as the most significant animal-health risk to the South African dairy value chain, although it is not primarily a human foodborne disease. South Africa's January and

March 2026 technical reports confirmed ongoing SAT1 and SAT2 outbreaks across several provinces, with major open outbreaks reported in the Free State, Gauteng, Mpumalanga, North West, Limpopo and parts of the Western Cape, while additional outbreaks were confirmed in the Northern Cape during February and March 2026. Control measures continued to focus on quarantine, strict biosecurity, movement restrictions and state-controlled vaccination, with movement of live cloven-hoofed animals and unprocessed products prohibited from infected farms. During January 2026, South Africa also resumed submission of field strains to the Pirbright Institute to verify vaccine matching as part of the national 10-year FMD eradication strategy, which specifically prioritises high-risk cattle populations, including dairy cows.

Internationally, the main dairy-related food safety concern during the quarter was the multi-country infant formula incident involving cereulide-contaminated arachidonic acid oil, which by 25 February 2026 had led to recalls in 99 countries and territories and 144 suspected or confirmed cases across 10 countries, highlighting the continuing vulnerability of infant nutrition supply chains.

Late March 2026 saw an important raw dairy signal from the United States, where the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centres for Disease Control (CDC) investigations linked RAW FARM-brand raw cheddar cheese to a multistate E. coli O157:H7 outbreak, reinforcing the ongoing microbiological risk associated with raw milk products. Overall, the quarter underscored the need for continued vigilance on FMD-related dairy movement controls nationally, together with close monitoring of international recall alerts involving infant formula and raw dairy products.

No Non-achievements / underperformance has been reported

Goal 5 - Remedial programs with producers, processors and distributors

Achievements

***Suppliers:** Suppliers of dairy products for final consumption by humans. This includes but is not limited to:

- producer distributors (farmers selling dairy products to consumers);
- producer distributor processors (farmers adding value to dairy products and selling to consumers);
- milk shops (retail outlets selling dairy products to consumers);
- milk shop & processors (retail outlets adding value to dairy products and selling to consumers);
- processing facilities (facilities adding value to dairy products and selling through retail); and
- distributors (facilities distributing value added dairy products to consumers).

Following the activities of project 1.1, project 1.5 provides for an opportunity whereby information regarding the test results is effectively communicated to the suppliers either by means of an e-mail or WhatsApp report. Environmental health practitioners (EHPs) are also requested to communicate all test results to relevant parties.

Annual visits to suppliers are conducted either as a remedial visit in the case where non-conformances exist or as a courtesy visit if no non-conformances (on the latest 3 cycle test results) were detected. The purpose of a remedial visit is to make recommendations for corrective actions and in the case of a courtesy visit is to touch base and relationship building.

During cycle 95, a total of twenty-two visits were paid to suppliers, of which in Mpumalanga (2), Western Cape (5), Eastern Cape (9) and Limpopo (6) were visited.

The DSA technical personnel also visited the associated EHPs from the respective government departments of the Suppliers render support and guidance in the execution of project 1.

Table 3 Visits were paid to processors, PD's and milk shops

Province	Areas visited	Companies visited	E-mails	DSA further assistance provided
Gauteng	0	0	60	7
Mpumalanga	1	2	13	0
Free State	0	0	19	5
North West	0	0	12	1
Northern Cape	0	0	0	0
Western Cape	4	5	90	3
Eastern Cape	6	9	31	11
Limpopo	5	6	12	4
KwaZulu Natal	0	0	16	1

No Non-achievements / underperformance has been reported

Goal 6 - Communication with the authorities and other organisations

Achievements

6.1 Department of Health: Directorate Food Control

DSA liaised with the directorate regarding the possibility of a timebound increase in somatic cell count legal limits in view the effect of the foot and mouth disease impact on animal health. Subsequently a formal request was forwarded to the Director: Food Control signed by the project managers of the Milk SA Animal Health and Welfare as well as Regulations and Standards Project. The South African Codex National Contact Point were presented with the recommendations of the International Dairy Federation food safety related matters related to upcoming Codex Committee meetings for 2026.

6.2 Municipal Health Authorities

Communication with the municipal health authorities focussed on the interpretation of food safety legislation under the Foodstuffs, Cosmetics and Disinfectants Act, with specific reference to hygienic processing, packing and retail of milk as well the sale of raw milk and cheese. The above actions were a result of an action plan to make law enforcement officers aware of the dangers of non-compliant product in the retail. These engagements were followed up by means of webinars and radio talks about the health risks of substandard dairy products as per Project 8. During the first quarter new initiatives were identified to render assistance to the Eastern Cape municipal authorities Buffalo City and Nelson Mandela Metro. Assistance includes expanded collaboration including workshop related activities, expansion of monitoring activities and related outcome based goals to improve the promotion of compliance of milk and other dairy products under specifically small and medium enterprises.

6.3 Department of Agriculture: Directorate Food Safety and Quality Assurance (FSQA)

DSA actively participated in the review process of the Regulations relating to dairy and imitation dairy products (R.1510 of 2019) under the Regulation and Standards Project of Milk SA.

6.4 National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications (NRCS): Legal Metrology

Standard procedure provides for a quarterly report regarding metrology infringements, however, no formal complaints were lodged with NRCS during the first quarter of 2026.

6.5 South African Bureau of Standards (SABS)

During the first quarter, correspondence from the SABS in respect of South African National Standards as well as information from the International Standards Organisation were appropriately dealt with and ballot papers on standards (SABS/TC 0034/SC05) on Milk and Milk Products were attended to accordingly.

6.6 Communication with other organisations

6.6.1 Milk SA, MPO and SAMPRO

The DSA interacted with the project managers of Milk SA's Consumer Education Project, SAMPRO, on regulatory matters. The DSA general manager serves as a member of the DRDC and its management committee and meetings were attended.

6.6.2 Consumer Goods Council of South Africa: Food Safety Initiative (CGCSA: FSI)

The DSA as a member of the Food Safety Initiative (FSI) interacted on a regular basis with the management of FSI regarding regulatory matters relating to food quality and safety together with health and nutrition, amongst other matters.

The DSA Project Manager: Regulatory Affairs participated in several CGCSA: Food Safety Initiative projects including the Illicit Economy Project aimed at restoring integrity to South Africa's Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector and safeguard the country's economic future from the damaging effects of illicit and counterfeit trade.

6.6.3 European Hygienic Engineering & Design Group (EHEDG)

The DSA is a member of the South African steering committee. Interaction included a presentation by EHEDG on DSA arranged webinar.

6.6.4 South African Society of Dairy Technology (SASDT)

The DSA is the member of the SASDT with three DSA personnel serving on regional committees of the SASDT as well as national committee.

6.6.5 Tertiary institutions

The DSA serves as a member of the advisory boards of the Departments of Environmental Health of the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) as well as Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. The purpose of the advisory boards is to give industry inputs and assist the universities with the development of course material for environmental health practitioners (EHPs). As project manager of the DSA, Mrs J Odendaal attended scheduled meetings during the first quarter.

No Non-achievements / underperformance has been reported

Goal 7 - Liaison on legislation with authorities

Achievements

The DSA continued liaison with the authorities regarding the following legislation and standards:

7.1 Department of Health: Directorate: Food Control

Foodstuffs, Cosmetics and Disinfectants Act, 1972 (Act 54 of 1972)

Following the industry submission comments regarding the draft R.3337 of 2023 which is the draft amendment regulations relating to the labelling and advertising of foodstuffs, the Department has indicated that it will engage and liaise with the NEDLAC Trade and Industry Chamber, following the request by the affected industry stakeholders for the intervention of NEDLAC in tabling in the draft amendment of this regulation. The finalisation of the draft amendment is on going with the end of this process not anticipated soon as extensive work is still outstanding.

7.2 Department of Agriculture (DoA)

Agricultural Product Standards Act, 1990 (Act 119 of 1990)

The work on the proposed 2nd draft regulation relating to dairy and imitation dairy products is still ongoing following and the closing meeting was facilitated by NDA joined by industry members. Further consultations are however expected due to technical matters and will be managed by the Regulation and Standards Project of Milk SA.

7.3 South African National Standards (SABS)

Regular correspondence between DSA and the SABS continues under the Regulations and Standards Project of Milk SA. The DSA is to participate in the upcoming technical committee on Illicit Trade at SABS. The name of the Technical Committee is TC 292 - Security and Resilience and it mirrors the ISO TC 292 on Security and Resilience. This committee of the ISO deals with a group of standards such as ISO 22381, ISO 22378 on combatting illicit and Counterfeit Trade and the role of the SABS is to develop, harmonise or refer to these standards in this regard.

Interactions with SABS related to the administration and role of South African members and conveners in the African Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO) TC 04. The ARSO's monthly and plenary meetings were attended during the first quarter of 2026. Several DARS Final Draft African Standard were circulated for a 30-day balloting period during first quarter. Mrs Anneke van Niekerk has been appointed by DSA to serve as SA representative on behalf of the organised dairy industry.

7.4 Dairy Federation (IDF), Codex Alimentarius and International Organization for Standardization (ISO)

DSA personnel continue to actively serve in various standing committees. Reporting via the SANCIDF was also conducted correspondence and comments, where applicable, were shared with Milk SA and industry stakeholders.

Comments on IDF and Codex draft documents were shared with the South African Codex contact point.

No Non-achievements / underperformance has been reported

Goal 8 - Information and education

Achievements

DSA presents information sessions based on the DSA Codes of Practice and related guideline materials to professional environmental health practitioners (EHPs) as well as student EHPs.

Dairy Information sessions for student EHPs were scheduled with the respective tertiary institutions to commence in the second quarter of 2026.

The DSA presents, with the assistance of Plaasmedia, monthly webinars to share relevant information with the dairy industry and interested role players.

The 1st webinar, on 25 February 2026 was attended by 574 people and the topic was “Foot & Mouth Disease-where exactly are we now?”

The 2nd webinar, on 25 March 2026 with topic “Potential milk quality defects as a result of Foot & Mouth Disease” was attended by 108 people.

Recordings of all the webinars on the Dairy Standard Agency’s website is useful to re-cap or for interested parties not able to attend the webinars.

No Non-achievements / underperformance has been reported

Goal 9 - Media communication

Achievements

9.1 Summary of paid advertising and value-added exposure

The DSA media communication provided for the following during the first quarter of 2026:

Month	Type of media	Product	Platform	Amount
Jan 2026	Print magazine	'n Ontleding van Regulasie 1510	Veeplaas	R0
Jan 2026	Print magazine	Unravelling the regulations for dairy and imitation dairy products	Stockfarm	R0
Jan 2026	Radio	Jompie Burger oor ware melk en analoë	LandbouRadio	R0
Feb 2026	E-newsletter	DSA Lab Services half-page advertisement	Stamboek Times	R1 785
Feb 2026	Print magazine	Melkstaloudits vir volhoubaarheid	Veeplaas	R0
Feb 2026	Print magazine	Dairy farm audits: Best practice for sustainability	Stockfarm	R0
Feb 2026	Radio	Tania Blignault gesels oor melkstaloudits	LandbouRadio	R0
Mar 2026	E-newsletter	DSA Lab Services half-page advertisement	LRF-TS News	R1 693
Mar 2026	Print magazine	Hidden risks of heat-resistant spores in milk	Stockfarm	R0
Mar 2026	Print magazine	Hittebestande spore in melk	Veeplaas	R0

Mar 2026	Print magazine	DSA Lab Services banner advertisement	Veeplaas	R3 830
Mar 2026	Radio	Kommer oor BEK en melkveiligheid (Jompie Burger)	RSG Landbou	R0
Mar 2026	Radio	Jompie Burger gesels oor veilige melk	LandbouRadio	R0
Mar 2026	Radio	SSA-dienste 30-sek radio-advertensie x 3	LandbouRadio	R3 750
Mar 2026	YouTube	Jompie Burger oor melkveiligheid en bek-en-klouseeer	Plaas TV	R0
Mar 2026	Online	Hidden risk of heat-resistant spores in dairy	AgriOrbit	R0
Mar 2026	Online	DSA Lab Services banner with URL	AgriOrbit	R1 334

9.2 Links to web placements:

March: <https://agriorbit.com/hidden-risk-heat-resistant-spores-in-dairy/>

9.3 YouTube placements: Plaas TV

March: <https://youtu.be/FK4l2CaPLy8?si=QTXWhppEGepaqvV9>

9.4 Link to radio interviews

February: <https://on.soundcloud.com/Mn6Yjwc67yZLb5JnML>

March: <https://clyp.it/mwnbptyt>

March: <https://on.soundcloud.com/plxyO7QQe1HP5qpUAD>

No Non-achievements / underperformance has been reported

Goal 10 - Development of guideline documentation

Achievements

In response to the current foot-and-mouth disease outbreak, targeted information continuously was disseminated to dairy farmers through our established communication channels to reinforce biosecurity awareness and promote best-practice implementation as outlined the DSA Code of Best Practice for Dairy Farmers.

The Guidelines and additional best-practice measures addressing the safe handling, transportation, and processing of raw milk originating from infected animals were also distributed.

The development of the implementation of the chemical residue control with specific alignment to the National Chemical Residue Monitoring Programme (NCRP) is still in progress and subject to finalisation of the latest NRCP.

No Non-achievements / underperformance has been reported

Income and expenditure statement

Income and expenditure statement	PRJ-0424 2026.pdf
Unnecessary spending during period	No

Popular Report

[DSA popular quarterly report Q1 2026.pdf](#)

Popular report and Additional documentation

Statement

Levy funds were applied only for the purposes stated in the contract	Yes
Levy funds were applied in an appropriate and accountable manner	Yes
Sufficient management and internal control systems were in place to adequately control the project and accurately account for the project expenditure	Yes
The information provided in the report is correct	Yes