

Document: rBST policy / fact sheet

OUR COMMITMENT

Pick n Pay considers the needs of our consumers and takes the issue of rBST seriously. We have written agreements in place with all our dairy suppliers to ensure that the milk used in our dairy products is rBST free. The below is a guideline of what rBST is. Where we claim rBST free on pack (ie Jersey Milk) we have tested the milk and have audits in place to verify this.

1. DEFINITION

Recombinant Bovine Somatotrophin (rBST) is a synthetic version of Bovine Somatotrophin, which is a naturally occurring protein in dairy cattle. It is a product primarily injected into dairy cattle to increase their milk production.

2. FUNCTION

When a dairy cow gives birth to her calf, she gradually produces more milk each day until she reaches her peak milk production level at about 60 days, at which point her milk production starts to gradually decline again.

The rBST supplementation is usually initiated between Day 57 and Day 70 of the cow's lactation cycle. This rBST supplementation assists cows in prolonging the improved level of milk production.

3. HOW DOES THIS IMPACT THE CONSUMER?

Most consumers believe that milk that has been produced using rBST is unsafe. rBST **has been proven safe by several regulatory authorities, including the US FDA**, together with their scientific assessment bodies.

However, misconceptions still exist about whether milk produced by cows supplemented with rBST is safe for human consumption. Extensive studies on humans have established that people are **biologically unaffected** by rBST. It is noted that even if rBST is absorbed intact, the growth hormone receptors in humans do not recognise rBST and therefore, rBST cannot produce any sort of effect.

4. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

rBST is a hormone, and therefore milk from rBST supplemented cows is harmful to the human body.

There are 2 types of hormones: steroids and proteins. rBST is a protein hormone which means that it is inactive when taken orally, just like insulin, because it is broken down in the digestive system.

rBST is a steroid hormone given to cows.

rBST is in fact NOT a steroid hormone, it is a protein and is digested like any other protein when consumed.

Milk from rBST supplemented cows contains hormones while organic milk is free from hormones.

All milk contains hormones, the levels of those hormones are not biologically different between organic, rBST free and regular milk. BST from which rBST is derived occurs naturally in milk at minuscule levels, normally less than 1 part per billion. This amount does not increase in the milk of rBST supplemented cows.

rBST supplemented milk contains antibiotics.

All milk regardless of production practice is tested and milk contain antibiotics is discarded.

rBST use causes breast cancer in humans.

Drinking milk does not increase the risk of breast cancer, regardless of whether the milk is organic, rBST free or regular. In fact, milk contains MANY elements that have the potential to protect AGAINST breast cancer, such as ruminic, vaccenic, butyric and branched chain fatty acids, whey protein, calcium and vitamin D.

Milk from rBST supplemented cows is not as "good", not as nutritious or not as tasty as milk from non supplemented cows.

Milk produced by cows supplemented with rBST is actually indistinguishable from milk produced by other cows – meaning that all milk is the same. Regardless of the farm production practice, milk from cows that are rBST supplemented, rBST free OR organic are all compositionally similar.