

Danielle Semick  
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Abstract

Organic dairy products are one of the fastest growing aspects of the organic industry. From an understanding of current feeding management and breeding practices during the pasture season the production of healthier organic dairy products can be supported. Organic milk has been shown to contain higher levels of omega-3 fatty acids, polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFA), and conjugated linoleic acids. Lower levels of saturated fatty acids (SFA) have been shown when compared with conventional milk. A higher FA profile is beneficial for human consumption and by differing management practices this might be achieved. The fatty acid composition of milk from cows raised in an organic farming system varies depending upon cow's breed, feeding management, and seasonal course. By collecting data on the feeding regime (pasture/paddock size, dry matter intake, pasture plant species) and milking information (milk amount, number of cows milked) on a weekly basis, along with analysis of the FA composition of bulk tank milk and feed samples healthier organic products can be supported. The overarching goal of the three-herd survey is to understand the current feeding management practice during the pasture season to support the production of healthier organic dairy products.