Dairy MONTHLY
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DSA concludes a busy term

The Dairy Standard Agency (DSA) continues to play an indispensable role in promoting compliance with regulatory requirements relating to dairy quality, safety, composition, and metrology. This work safeguards consumer interests and provides an important foundation for industry growth.

The majority of the DSA's functions are funded by Milk SA and carried out as Milk SA projects. The DSA's members are the Milk Producers' Organisation (MPO), South African Milk Processors' Organisation (Sampro), South African National Consumer Union, and South African Society of Dairy Technology.

In the third quarter of 2026, the DSA collected 360 dairy product samples from 64 municipal offices across South Africa. Aflatoxin monitoring remained a priority, as some samples exceeded legal limits. The DSA sent a high-alert notification to health authorities to support risk management.

The DSA also remains the dairy industry's hub for all dairy regulatory and related information, including advice on laboratory requirements and technical support on cheese composition. Over the past quarter, the DSA provided technical support to dairy processors and suppliers in Gauteng, the Free State, and KwaZulu-Natal.

Work also continued on establishing an export chemical residue monitoring programme to meet market access requirements in China and the United Arab Emirates. Key activities included identifying and approving testing laboratories, developing sampling protocols, assessing costs for industry implementation, and drafting agreements with government stakeholders.

As part of its curricula, the DSA delivered presentations at five universities of technology, reaching 244 students. In addition, the DSA is updating guideline documents to reflect amended regulations and ensure they remain relevant to current industry practices.

'Facial eczema' project fast-tracked

The Forestry and Agricultural Biotechnology Institute's project titled "Exploring the facial eczema problem in dairy cattle in the Eastern Cape of South Africa, with a focus on the fungus *Pseudopithomyces chartarum*" has expanded its international collaborations. Much of the collaborative research involve gene-knockout experiments aimed at disrupting the fungal genes responsible for toxin production.

International collaborators include the Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research in Germany, the Austrian Institute of Technology, the Westerdijk Fungal Biodiversity Institute in the Netherlands, and New Zealand's facial eczema research team.

Status of the FMD bulk tank surveillance project

To test the possibility of monitoring very low levels of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) virus in bulk tank milk, a memorandum of understanding was signed with the global reference laboratory the Pirbright Institute in the United Kingdom. Milk and other samples were collected in 2025 to test and calibrate for SAT 1, 2, and 3. In accordance with regulations, the samples were stored at the Agricultural Research Council's facilities in Onderstepoort, pending dispatch under the prescribed conditions.
To date, the samples have unfortunately not yet been dispatched.

Sales to BeLN countries and exports to others

In the first six months of 2026, sales to BeLN countries (Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, and Namibia) accounted for 66% of all exports.

The mass of imports during the six-month period was 89,6% higher than in the corresponding period of the previous year. Category 04.05 (butter, butter spreads, etc.) recorded the highest increase, at 1 184%, followed by 04.02 (concentrated milk) at 243%, and 04.03 (buttermilk powder, yoghurt) at 130%.

View the full report at *milksa.co.za/imports-and-exports*

Heading	Description	(A) Sales to BeLN	(B) Exports to countries outside SACU	(A+B)=(C) Sales to BeLN plus exports outside SACU	A as % of C
		Kilogram			%
04.01	Milk and cream, unsweetened	46 077 830	12 569 768	58 647 598	78,6
04.02	Milk, concentrated	2 678 817	7 744 218	10 423 035	25,7
04.03	Buttermilk powder, yoghurt	9 541 859	5 675 030	15 216 889	62,7
04.04	Whey, whey powder, etc.	893 952	1 029 072	1 923 024	46,5
04.05	Butter, butter spreads, and butter oil	759 026	752 021	1 511 047	50,2
04.06	Cheese and curd	3 059 252	4 649 115	7 708 368	39,7
Total		**63 010 736**	**32 419 223**	**95 429 960**	**66**