MARKET INCENTIVES FOR IMPROVED MILK QUALITY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF DAIRY FARMERS

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Milk production occupies a prominent position on the national scenario, being one of the most expressive agribusiness segments of Brazil. Among the Brazilian States, Paraná located in the southern region of the country, is the second largest producer of milk. In 2016, were produced in the State 12.45 billion liters of milk, representing 37% of the national production. Despite the importance of the dairy activity, both for Brazil and for Paraná, the best development is still limited by some obstacles, among them, the low quality of raw milk.

In view of this, private companies, like dairy products, have encouraged the improvement of milk quality from the payment of the best quality of raw milk. Such a practice considers fat content and milk protein and Somatic Cell Count (SCC) and Standard Plate Count (SPC) values, for determining the price that is going to be paid by the liter of milk to the rural farmers. The best quality of the raw milk has a higher income in the industry and leads to final products of better quality and longer shelf. In addition, can result in better remuneration to the dairy farmers. Thus, we aim to analyze market incentives perceived by dairy farmers from different regions of the State of Paraná, to improving the quality of raw milk. For that, were applied 204 questionnaires along the Dairy Production Systems (DPS), located in the North Central, West and East Center of the Paraná State, between September to November of 2016. The variables were analyzed from descriptive statistics using SPSS software version 18 (Statistical Package for Social Science). Considering the aspects of quality, 58.3% of respondents think likely or very likely that they would receive more by liter of milk if the rates of SCC and SPC were reduced; 56.3% believe that the highest content of milk fat results in greater payment for liter; and 54.9% claim to be likely or very likely that the industry pay more for higher values of raw milk protein. Thus, from the perspective of dairy farmers, SCC and SPC are the most important criteria for receiving greater remuneration for the liter of milk. Therefore, these are the market incentives, perceived by dairy farmers, that can generate greater stimulus to improve the quality of milk.

Keywords: milk production, payment for quality, somatic cell count, total bacterial count.