

ABSTRACT

There are increasing expectations on the compliance of food products to safety and quality standards due to consumer demand for high-quality food. The aim of this study was to determine the quality tests that are carried out on raw milk and its utilization at three milk collection centers in Olenguruone and Dundori regions of Nakuru as well as some selected dairy farms. Using a semi-structured questionnaire, data were collected from milk collection centers' staff and farmers. Milk sampling for quality control testing was done at both the cooperative delivery points and farm level. The quality of milk handled and stored in different containers was assessed. Descriptive statistics, Chi-square and logistic regression analysis were carried out on the data. Results indicated that the average quantity of milk received at all milk collection centers was about 3687 liters per day. It was noted that most of the milk collection centers' staff (operators) had certificates or diplomas in dairy science. Their average job experience period in the milk sector was 7 years. Majority of the farmers (90%) and transporters (94%) used plastic containers for milk handling and storage. Farmers who used plastic containers for milking were approximately three times more likely to have their milk rejected compared to those who used mazzi cans, aluminium or stainless-steel containers ($p < 0.05$; Odds ratio = 3.20). The alcohol and lactometer tests were carried out on milk received at all collection centers studied. Resazurin test was only carried out in one collection center at Olenguruone that had the required laboratory equipment. Milk quality assessment was not done at the farm level. Traditional fermented milk was the common dairy product produced from evening milk in most dairy farmers' households. Regular education programs and seminars on milk safety and quality should be provided to both collection centers' operators and farmers.