

# Produzione casearia da filiera corta: valorizzazione e adeguatezza alle normative vigenti

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## ABSTRACT

Food safety is an issue of vital relevance in the health, social and economic fields affecting all citizens, none excluded, since everyone (adults, children, elderly, healthy and sick people, immunocompromised), every day, consumes food and drinks. Many health emergencies have affected the food industry in recent years: e.g. bovine spongiform encephalopathy, aflatoxins in milk, "dioxin chickens", bird flu and pathogenic microorganisms such as Salmonella and Listeria monocytogenes repeatedly found in some foods commonly used, the most recent cases found in Sardinia of trichinellosis and toxins with paralyzing action in the mussels. These emergencies have created alarm among consumers and greatly reduced their level of confidence in food healthiness present in commercial circuits and the effectiveness of prevention and control activities carried out by food companies on their products and by the health authorities themselves, with obvious and heavy negative repercussions on the consumer market. It is necessary to assess the risks related to the consumption of food products to ensure food safety. The assessment of food risk is a process of the more detailed risk analysis through which the risks related to the consumption of a given product are scientifically defined. The information derived from risk assessment, whether conducted at national or regional level, facilitates decision-making in public health and allows managers (national or regional) to plan health actions (management), to make more informed decisions or interventions of public relevance. Lazio and Tuscany produce a large and heterogeneous number of typical and traditional food products, many of which are obtained from milk processing. Given the high heterogeneity of dairy products and the related practices of cheese making, it is considered appropriate to carry out a detailed analysis of these aspects, also examining the presence of the main pathogens in the various stages of transformation of milk into cheese. Lactic bacteria naturally present in raw milk and / or added via starter cultures shows an important role during the production and maturation of cheese. The presence of lactic bacteria can determine the growth inhibition of unwanted microorganisms by their acidifying properties and the production of bacteriocins.

Food safety is one of the most important issues also in the field of research . The results of the research related can become a tool for updating the legislation and production practices. Cheese is

among the most widespread and consumed foods in Italy. In 2004, it recorded a penetration index (a parameter that measures the diffusion of a given product among consumers) of 99.5% representing, in value, 11% of the products in the shopping basket. It is considered among the safest foods, given that mainly pasteurized milk is used for its production. Despite this favorable aspect from the hygienic-sanitary point of view, some types of cheese are subject to the contamination and proliferation of pathogenic microorganisms. The causes are related to both intrinsic factors (nutrients, pH, substances with an inhibiting activity produced by starter and non-starter microorganisms etc.) and extrinsic ones (microbiological quality of raw milk, processing phases, etc.). Microbiological quality is a basic requirement of milk, both for direct consumption and for processing. Lazio produces a consistent and heterogeneous number of typical and traditional foodstuffs, 11% of which is obtained from milk processing. As far as Tuscany is concerned, 34 different types of traditional cheeses are currently registered in the ministerial database.