

Recommendations to Farmers Managing PFAS Risks:

Cattle – Meat, Dairy, and Feed

PFAS can contaminate livestock via soil, water, and feed inputs. **These recommendations are generally applicable to any cattle-related producer.** The PFAS Response Program's mission is to reduce or eliminate PFAS contamination in the food supply while supporting commercial farms' viability. **Please contact us at Pfas.dacf@maine.gov or 207-287-4514** to learn more and discuss available financial and technical assistance, including the development of individualized recommendations for your farm.



Beef and milk are currently regulated for PFOS contamination in Maine. Beef and milk have action levels above which the products cannot be sold. The action level for beef is 3.4 parts per billion (ppb) PFOS. The action level for cow milk is 210 parts per trillion (ppt) PFOS. Notice the difference in units for milk. ***Please be advised that these action levels may be lowered in the future and may include additional PFAS compounds.***

Soil screening levels are guidance. Maine's most conservative published agricultural soil screening level is 6.4 ppb PFOS. If soil concentrations are at or below 6.4 ppb PFOS, these soils are currently considered adequate for producing forage without requiring focused management to avoid exceeding regulatory levels.

Soil testing provides the most actionable information for assessment. Due to laboratory detection limitations, forage may have a non-detect result while still resulting in increased levels of contamination in milk or muscle.

Corn silage and/or snaplage, as well as small grain crops, take up less PFOS than grass and legumes. Growing corn silage, snaplage, or grains instead of perennial forage crops may be a viable option to utilize your most highly contaminated fields.

PFOS concentrations in livestock can be lowered by managing what is fed and when. For example, a farmer can greatly reduce the level of PFOS in beef cattle over a few months with clean feed. It may be possible for forages or pastures that contain low levels of PFOS to be safely used as feed during certain times of the year or for specific life stages of livestock. Please speak with an Agricultural PFAS Specialist to discuss details for your farm.

Label your forage sources. Field soils vary in their levels of PFAS, which means that the PFAS in the harvested forages will also vary. Identifying and labeling the field source of your baled or wrapped hay and silage is very important. If you use a bunker silo, segregate by fields if you can, or manage the filling process to avoid hitting high concentrations of PFOS-impacted feeds when feeding out. See the diagram to the right for an illustration.



Livestock water sources should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. There are currently no screening levels for livestock exposure to PFAS through drinking water. Various factors must be considered at each site to determine if exposure to drinking water is a concern. Treating drinking water through filtration is possible.

Inform your customers. If you sell forage, communicate about the presence of PFAS compounds in your farm's soil so customers can make an informed decision about how to use your hay or silage. Direct-to-consumer beef or dairy producers are also encouraged to communicate with their customers. Specific agriculture questions can be directed to Maine DACF at Pfas.dacf@maine.gov. Specific health questions can be directed to Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention toxicologists at 207-287-4311 or 866-292-3474 toll-free in Maine.

Financial support. DACF has programs available to assist producers impacted by PFAS. Please visit [Maine DACF's PFAS homepage](#) to learn more.