Effect of total solid contents in drinking water and milk yield per cow on milk mineral concentrations from California dairy farms

Alejandro R. Castillo1, Noelia Silva-del-Rio2, Normand St-Pierre3, William P. Weiss3
1. University of California Cooperative Extension, Merced and 2. VMTRC Tulare, California, USA
3. The Ohio State University, Animal Science Department, Columbus, Ohio, USA

INTRODUCTION

In order to comply with nutrient management plans, accurate estimates of manure and nutrient excretion are needed. So, adequate manure storage facilities can be designed for effective nutrient management plans (Nennich, et al. 2005). Different authors (Van Horn, et al., 1994, Beede and Davison, 1999, Weiss and Wyatt, 2004) have suggested estimating mineral excretion in dairy cows by subtracting the amount secreted in milk from the total daily intake.

The concentration of minerals in milk are assumed constant and book values are used rather than assayed values (e.g., NRC, 2001). In many cases, drinking water total solid contents (TS) are ignored to estimate mineral requirements and/or mineral excretion. Our hypothesis is that drinking water TS contents and milk yield per cow (MY) may affect milk mineral contents.

METHODS

**Dairies Surveyed**

Number of dairies: 40
Location: Merced County, CA
Means (ranges) of:
- Herd size: 787 lactating cows (210 to 2435)
- Milk yield: 31.8 kg 3.5%FCM/cow per day (20.6 to 43.5)
- Total Solids (TS) in drinking water: 550 mg/L (100 to 1700)

**Samples**

Drinking water samples were collected from water troughs
Milk samples (am + pm) were collected from bulk tanks
All samples were collected in duplicate on two non-consecutive days with no more than one week in between each sample and its duplicate

**Chemical Analysis & variables studied**

Water was analyzed to estimate TS content by oven drying (105°C, 24 h)
Bulk tank milk samples were analyzed for milk mineral composition by wet chemistry: calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, chloride, potassium, sodium, sulfur, copper, iron, manganese, selenium, and zinc, at the UC Davis, ANR Analytical Lab.

**Data analysis**

Forty dairies divided in four groups (10 dairies/group) were selected according to drinking water TS content and MY: high (H) and low (L) water TS (HTS > 500 mg/L and LTS < 500 mg/L), and high and low MY (HMY and LMY: high (H) and low (L) water TS (HTS > 500 mg/L and LTS < 500 mg/L). This response was likely associated with dilution effect. More research is needed to evaluate the observed water TS effects on the milk mineral contents.

The milk mineral differences with the NRC 2001 indicates that milk mineral contents should be adjusted to every local conditions for requirement and mineral excretion estimations.

**RESULTS**

Means (ranges) of drinking water TS (mg/L) were: 809 (335 to 1688) and 307 (100 to 515) for HTS and LTS; and MY (kg 3.5%FCM/cow per day) were: 36.0 (31.6 to 43.5) and 27.6 (20.6 to 31.6) for HMY and LMY, respectively.

Milk mineral concentration (mg/L) ranges were: Ca 1008 (930 to 1114); P 906 (845 to 1019); Mg 100 (88 to 109); K 1534 (1405 to 1670); Na 397 (327 to 451); Cl 1045 (925 to 1180); S 1186 (998 to 1383); Cu 0.036 (0.018 to 0.063); Fe 0.159 (0.136 to 0.233); Mn 0.016 (0.011 to 0.024); Zn 3.28 (2.8 to 3.8); Se 0.033 (0.013 to 0.049).

The associations between water TS and MY are presented in Table 1. Milk mineral composition from dairies with HTS water had lower (P<0.01) of the following minerals: K (-2); S (-2); and higher Mn (+15). Milk from dairies with HMY had significantly lower percentage of: Ca (-2.3), P (-3.1), Na (-5), S (-3), and Cu (-14). The Ca and Mg milk contents were higher on LTS in LSYM interaction, 4% and 3% respectively, respect to the other interactions.

The results indicate that milk mineral contents might be affected by drinking water TS contents and MY. High MY (36.0 kg/d) affected milk Ca, P, Na, S, and Cu contents respect low MY (27.6 kg/d). This response was likely associated with dilution effect. More research is needed to evaluate the observed water TS effects on the milk mineral contents.

CONCLUSIONS & REFERENCES

**References**


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