

**MICROBIOLOGICAL QUALITY OF LOCAL MILK AS ANALYSED BY REGIONAL VETERINARY
LABORATORIES IN 2017**

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Raw milk from local dairy farmers which were sent to Pusat Pengumpulan Industri Tenuku (PPIT)/ Milk Collection Centre will undergo platform tests prior for acceptance, then submitted to Regional Veterinary Laboratories for total plate count (TPC) test. Normally, TPC results were used for milk grading which determines the rate of payment to farmers. This study evaluated the percentage of raw milk samples with TPC results exceeding the limit to estimate the local milk quality. From January to August 2017, a total of 3,417 raw milk samples from 16 PPITs were analysed by four regional laboratories; Makmal Veterinar Kawasan Kuantan, Makmal Veterinar Kawasan Bukit Tengah (MVK BT), Makmal Veterinar Kawasan Kota Bharu (MVK KB) and Makmal Veterinar Kawasan Johor Bahru (MVK JB). About 70% of the samples were received and analysed by MVK JB as the state was having the highest number of dairy farmers. The normal limit for TPC in raw milk was 1×10^6 cfu/ml, and a total of 48% (1,632 of 3,417) samples were having TPC results exceeding the limit. The highest percentage of samples exceeding it was that analysed by MVK JB (64%), followed by MVK BT (25%), MVK KB (4%) and lastly MVK Kuantan (1%). Results from this study indicates that the hygiene of local milk has to be improved to ensure good quality milk can be produced, which also could benefit the farmers with higher income. Besides that, it is suggested to harmonise the criteria for determination of the milk grade among regions to ensure standardisation.