

# From Farm to Table: How Milk Goes From the Cow to Your Glass

Ever wondered how milk ends up at your local supermarket? In the two days it usually takes for milk to travel from the farm to the store, it goes through a structured process to ensure freshness and purity. Here's an insider's look into that process, from farm to table:



## From the Farm to the Milk Truck



### Cows Are Milked

Cows are milked in milking parlors, where no human hands touch the milk



### The Milk Is Stored

Once collected, the milk is cooled and stored in a tank for quality and safety



### The Milk Is Picked Up

A milk truck comes to pick up the milk

## From the Milk Truck to the Processing Plant



### The Milk Pickup Is Tested for Purity at the Farm



**Positive Test**  
The entire milk pickup is discarded



**Negative Test**  
The milk is taken to the processing plant



### The Milk Pickup Is Tested for Purity at the Plant



**Positive Test**  
The entire milk pickup is discarded



**Negative Test**  
The milk moves on to processing

## From the Processing Plant to Your Local Store



### The Milk Undergoes a 3-Step Process



#### Standardization

All the fat in the milk is removed and later rejoined to make different fat percentage levels (This is how we get nonfat, 1%, 2% and whole milk options)



#### Pasteurization

The milk is quickly heated, killing potentially harmful bacteria



#### Homogenization

The fat in the milk is mixed under pressure so it doesn't separate and rise to the top



### Optional Fortification

It's common for milk in the U.S. to be fortified with vitamins A and D, making it even more nutritious prior to bottling<sup>1</sup>

## From Your Local Store to Your Table

Once bottled, the milk is taken to the store ... where you buy it and bring it back home



<sup>1</sup>U.S. Food and Drug Administration. "CFR - Code of Federal Regulations Title 21." Updated 7.20.2022. Accessed 12.8.2022.