

Prevalence and Types of *Listeria monocytogenes* in Dairy Herds of the Pacific Northwest

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To determine the occurrence of *Listeria monocytogenes* in dairy herds of the Northwestern United States, we sampled the bulk tank milk from four hundred and seventy four herds in three states at two timepoints. Sample collection occurred in November 2000 and June 2001, the prevalence was 4.9% and 7.0%, respectively. All isolates were subtyped by serotyping and pulse field gel electrophoresis (PFGE). Fifty-one of the fifty-seven isolates belong to serogroup 1/2a, while 3 belonged to serogroup 4e, two to 4c and one to 4b. Subtyping by PFGE revealed that isolates from thirty-one herds shared 10 patterns, however there was no systematic geographical clustering of those herds. One herd had two strains that could be distinguished by *ApaI* PFGE during the June sampling. Five herds were positive for *L. monocytogenes* in November and again in June. Of these five herds, four had indistinguishable PFGE patterns at both time points suggesting that strains of *L. monocytogenes* may persist in a dairy environment for an extended period of time. In addition, we describe a novel method of isolating *Listeriae* from milk samples that uses selective enrichment.