

## **Human milk and human milk products for your information and no action is required**

### **CONTEXT**

We are currently aware of interest from companies wishing to import, market and sell human breast milk products in Australia and New Zealand.

In New Zealand, human milk is classified as a human tissue under the Human Tissue Act 2008. Under the Human Tissue Act 2008, the sale and marketing of breast milk products is prohibited unless an exemption is granted by the Minister of Health.

### **OUR STANCE**

The Ministry of Health strongly supports breastfeeding, including the safe use of donor human milk and non-commercial donor human milk banking in New Zealand.

It's essential that any use of human milk and human milk products must support, promote and protect infant health outcomes while optimising breastfeeding.

There are currently two donor human milk banks in New Zealand in Christchurch. Donor human milk is primarily used for premature babies and very low birth weight babies. In this situation, a bovine sourced fortifier is usually added to the donated human milk, for extra energy and minerals.

There is good evidence to show that human milk reduces the risk of some serious conditions, such as necrotising enterocolitis, which has a high mortality in premature infants.

### **CURRENT SITUATION**

The Ministry of Health and Ministry for Primary Industries (lead agency for food safety standards in New Zealand) are working closely together and we are working with our Australian counterparts to provide advice on donor milk banking, and the regulation, and importation of human milk products.

An Australian led working group has been established to undertake work during 2019 in response to a rise in global interest in human milk and human milk products.

The group has representation from the Ministry of Health, each state in Australia and the Australian Federal Government.

We are likely to be seeking advice and information from the sector and appreciate the assistance we have already received. We plan to keep key stakeholders, such as yourselves, up to date on key developments throughout the project.

For further information please contact :

Elizabeth Aitken, Principal Advisor (Nutrition), Public Health Group, Population Health and Prevention, Ministry of Health tel: 021 593 712 and email: [elizabeth\\_aitken@moh.govt.nz](mailto:elizabeth_aitken@moh.govt.nz)

Dr Pat Tuohy, Chief Advisor (Child and Youth Health), Population Health and Prevention, Ministry of Health tel: 021 313 124 and email: [pat\\_tuohy@moh.govt.nz](mailto:pat_tuohy@moh.govt.nz)