

What's in a name?

Nowadays, there are so many types of milk available on our shelves, that it can easily confuse the consumer who just wants to buy a “normal” litre of milk. Here are some of the important terms that you should be aware of when going to the shops.

Raw milk: This is milk that has not been pasteurised or homogenised.

Pasteurised milk: Milk is heated to between 70 and 75°C and is then quickly cooled down to 4°C. This process kills harmful organisms in the milk.

UHT-milk: This is also known as long-life milk. UHT means “ultra heat treated” and is a form of pasteurisation where the milk is heated to 140°C for approximately 2 to 4 seconds and then cooled. This milk can be stored in sealed packaging for months and is therefore popularly known as “long-life” milk.

Full-cream milk: This can be fresh or UHT milk. In South Africa, full-cream milk must have a fat content of no less than 3,3%.

Low-fat milk: This can also be fresh or UHT milk and usually has a fat content of 2%. After pasteurisation milk goes through a separator, after which some of the cream is separated from the milk for use as fresh cream or for making butter.

Fat-free milk: This is also known as skimmed milk and contains approximately 1% fat.

Fermented milk: This is also known as cultured milk. Well-known fermented or cultured products are maas and buttermilk. To make fermented milk, fresh milk is “soured” until it reaches a certain level of sourness.

Evaporated milk: This is also known as dehydrated milk. Approximately 60% of the water is removed from the milk. This milk is usually available in tins and can last on shelves for a long time. It is sweeter than fresh or UHT milk and is used over desserts and in cooking.

Condensed milk: This is also a dehydrated milk, but here almost all of the water is removed and the milk is then sweetened by adding sugar.

Organic milk: “Organic” is a new buzzword in the food industry. Organic milk mostly refers to milk from cows that graze in pastures and that are very seldom treated with antibiotics and other drugs. 