



Occurrence of macrocyclic lactones in milk and yogurt from Brazilian market



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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 1 December 2013

Received in revised form

17 March 2014

Accepted 2 April 2014

Available online 24 April 2014

Keywords:

Avermectins

QuEChERS

Milk

Yogurt

ABSTRACT

Avermectins and milbemycins belong to a family of compounds called macrocyclic lactones (ML) and are highly used as antiparasitic agents in the treatment of cattle for control of gastrointestinal nematodes, ticks and myiasis. In Brazil, there are five substances (ivermectin, abamectin, doramectin, eprinomectin and moxidectin) registered for bovines. The use of these compounds may bring benefits to the cows but indiscriminate use might result in the presence of residues in milk and dairy products. In this context, the objective of the study was to validate an analytical method for determination of five ML in dairy products and verify the occurrence of these compounds in milk and yogurt available in the Brazilian market. The method involved QuEChERS sample preparation, derivatization and determination by high performance liquid chromatography with fluorescence detection. The methodology was validated using organic samples of milk and yogurt for the following parameters: linearity, precision, accuracy, repeatability and limits of detection (LOD) and quantification (LOQ). The method showed good linearity. Average recovery, performed at three different levels varied from 83% to 112% (RSDs < 14%). The method provides LOD ranging from 0.4 to 3.2 $\mu\text{g L}^{-1}$ for milk and 0.6 to 0.9 $\mu\text{g kg}^{-1}$ for yogurt. The LOQ was established according to the lower spike level (0.2–10 $\mu\text{g L}^{-1}$ for milk and 2.5 $\mu\text{g kg}^{-1}$ for yogurt). Repeatability and within-laboratory reproducibility were in satisfactory for both matrixes. In order to monitor milks and yogurts marketed in Campinas, SP, Brazil, 13 brands of UHT milk (135 samples), 8 brands of pasteurized milk (103 samples) and 13 brands of yogurt (104 samples) were acquired. A total of 342 samples were analyzed in duplicate for the presence of ivermectin, abamectin, doramectin, eprinomectin and moxidectin. Moxidectin was detected in one sample of pasteurized milk. No residue of the analyzed compounds was found in UHT milk or yogurt. Results indicate that the consumption of milk and yogurt does not represent a health risk for Brazilian consumers.

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1. Introduction

Avermectins and milbemycins belong to a family of compounds called macrocyclic lactones (ML) and are highly used as antiparasitic agents in cattle and humans. Although the use of these substances bring benefits to the herd, the withdrawal time must be obeyed, as indiscriminate use of antiparasitic medicines, without the prescription instructions, may result in residues of these compounds in foods.

In Brazil, there are five compounds registered for use in cattle: ivermectin (IVE), abamectin (ABA), doramectin (DOR), eprinomectin (EPR) and moxidectin (MOX) totaling 135 commercial products. The most commercialized substances used in cattle are IVER, which is part of 75 products, and ABA, substance present in 56 products (SINDAN, 2013). In Brazil, only eprinomectin is indicated for use in cattle producing milk for human consumption, when other ML is being used the milk must be discarded (SINDAN, 2013).

In the European Union, compounds IVER, DOR and ABA are not allowed in lactating animals and maximum residue levels (MRLs) are established in bovine milk for EPR (20 $\mu\text{g/kg}$) and MOX (40 $\mu\text{g/kg}$) (Danaher, Howells, Crooks, Cerkvénik-Flajs, & O’Keeffe, 2006).

With the aim of protecting consumers and ensuring fair trade practices, these substances are monitored in food by regulatory

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agencies using established maximum residue limits (MRL). Codex Alimentarius does not establish an MRL for moxidectin in milk, while the MRL values for abamectin, ivermectin, doramectin and eprinomectin are set as $5 \mu\text{g L}^{-1}$, $10 \mu\text{g L}^{-1}$, $15 \mu\text{g L}^{-1}$ and $20 \mu\text{g L}^{-1}$, respectively. In Brazil, veterinary drugs are monitored by the Brazilian Residues and Contaminants Control Plan (PNCRC) and the MRL established for cattle milk is $10 \mu\text{g L}^{-1}$ for abamectin, ivermectin and moxidectin. For doramectin and eprinomectin the MRL was set as 15 and $20 \mu\text{g L}^{-1}$, respectively (Brasil, 2012).

In the last three decades, world milk production has increased by more than 50%, from 470 million tons in 1981 to 727 million tons in 2011. India is the world's largest milk producer, with 16% of global production, followed by the United States of America, China, Pakistan and Brazil, which produced 32 million tons of milk in 2011 (Embrapa, 2014; FAO, 2014). The consumption of milk and dairy products is associated with several benefits. They are considered a major source of nutrients and their daily consumption can contribute to the recommended daily intake of fat, protein, phosphorus, calcium, among other minerals, B vitamins, vitamins A and C. However, if it is not obtained within good veterinary practice, milk and other dairy products can be source of contaminants.

Most studies regarding contaminants in milk and dairy products present surveillance data indicating the presence and levels of occurrence of antibiotics, mycotoxins and product adulteration (Fonseca et al., 2009; Picinin et al., 2013; Souza et al., 2011). In products consumed on a daily basis, as is the case of milk and dairy products, it is vital that the levels of veterinary drugs used in livestock production are frequently monitored.

In 2003, Anastassiades et al., developed a sample preparation method for the determination of pesticide residues in fruits and vegetables that is known as QuEChERS (Quick, Easy, Cheap, Effective, Rugged and Safe), which has been used for pesticide analysis in different matrix. Over the years this method has also been tested and successfully employed for the analysis of different compounds in foods, such as veterinary drugs, mycotoxins and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (Aguilera-Luiz, Vidal, Romero-González, & Frenich, 2008; Cunha & Fernandes, 2010; Lesueur, Knittl, Gartner, Mentler, & Fuerhacker, 2008; Sadowska-Rociiek, Surma, & Cieslik, 2014).

The objective of the present study was to validate an analytical methodology for determination of five ML in milk and yogurt using QuEChERS sample preparation and study the occurrence of these substances in samples commercially available in the Brazilian market.

2. Material and methods

2.1. Samples

Samples of milk and yogurt were collected monthly, throughout a year, in markets in the city of Campinas, State of São Paulo, Brazil. Milk samples were of two types: 13 brands of UHT milk (135 samples: 73 whole milk and 62 low fat) and 8 brands of pasteurized milk (103 samples: 67 whole and 36 low fat). Yogurts were obtained among 13 brands (104 samples), resulting in a total of 342 samples analyzed for the presence of ivermectin, abamectin, doramectin, eprinomectin and moxidectin. Organic samples of milk and yogurt were purchased to be used as blank samples.

2.2. Standards and reagents

Standards of doramectin, ivermectin, moxidectin, abamectin and eprinomectin were purchased from Sigma–Aldrich/Fluka, with purity >95%. Stock solutions of individual standards (10 mg L^{-1}) were prepared in acetonitrile and stored in the dark at -18°C . The

calibration standards solutions containing the 5 macrocyclic lactones were prepared in acetonitrile. These solutions were used for spiking organic milk and yogurt samples at different levels for recovery studies.

Reagent grade NaCl, acetic acid (Merck), anhydrous MgSO_4 , purity > 98% (Synth), N-methylimidazole (Sigma–Aldrich) and trifluoroacetic anhydride (Vetec) were used. The magnesium sulfate was heated in a muffle furnace for 5 h at 500°C for phthalates and moisture removal. Primary secondary amine (PSA) sorbent ($40 \mu\text{m}$ particle size) was obtained from Varian. Organic solvents used in the study were HPLC grade and purchased from Tedia.

2.3. Sample preparation

Samples were prepared by QuEChERS method followed by derivatization (Anastassiades, Lehotay, Štajnbaher, & Schenck, 2003; Kinsella et al., 2009). Ten mL of milk or 10 g of yogurt were transferred into a centrifuge tube, 10 mL of acetonitrile were added and the solution was mixed using a Vortex mixer for 1 min, then 4 g anhydrous MgSO_4 and 1 g NaCl were added, the solution was mixed again for 1 min and the tube was centrifuged. Two milliliter aliquot of the upper layer was transferred to a centrifuge tube containing 100 mg PSA and 300 mg anhydrous MgSO_4 . The extract was mixed using a vortex for 30 s and then centrifuged. 550 mL of supernatant were transferred into a glass flask and the extract was evaporated in a water bath at 40°C under nitrogen flow until total dryness. The extract was derivatized with 200 μL of 1-methylimidazole:acetonitrile (1:1), 200 μL of trifluoroacetic anhydride:acetonitrile (1:2) and 5 μL of acetic acid at 65°C for 30 min. The extract was cooled, filtered through a Millex HV filter ($0.45 \mu\text{m}$, Millipore) and analyzed by HPLC with fluorescence detection.

2.4. HPLC-FLD analysis

The analyses were performed by HPLC-FLD on a Shimadzu system equipped with an LC-20AT pump, automatized injector SIL 20A (20 μL injection volume) and fluorescence detector RF-10A XL (excitation wavelength 365 nm and emission wavelength 470 nm). A C18 analytical column (Waters Nova-pak®, $150 \times 3.9 \text{ mm}$, $4 \mu\text{m}$ particle size) at 25°C and mobile phase of acetonitrile:methanol:acetic acid 2% (v/v) (55:40:5) at a flow rate of 1.2 mL min^{-1} were used for separation.

2.5. Method validation

The method validation was performed according to the Brazilian Institute of Metrology, Standardization and Industrial Quality (INMETRO) guidelines by the following parameters: linearity, accuracy, precision, limits of detection (LOD) and quantification (LOQ) (INMETRO, 2011). All the analyses were carried out using the same blank samples (organic milk and yogurt).

For milk, linearity was determined by the construction of calibration curves in acetonitrile in six concentrations in the range of $0\text{--}40 \mu\text{g L}^{-1}$ for eprinomectin; $0\text{--}30 \mu\text{g L}^{-1}$ for doramectin and $0\text{--}20 \mu\text{g L}^{-1}$ for ivermectin. These levels contemplate 0, 0.25, 0.5, 1, 1.5 and 2 times the MRL of the studied substances set by Codex Alimentarius. For moxidectin and abamectin, that do not have MRLs established by Codex, the concentrations studied were in the range of $0\text{--}20 \mu\text{g L}^{-1}$. For yogurt, linearity was determined by the construction of calibration curves in acetonitrile at 7 concentration levels ($0\text{--}25 \mu\text{g L}^{-1}$).

Limits of detection (LODs) were estimated by seven independent analyses of organic milk and yogurt samples spiked with all ML at different levels. LODs were calculated as three times the standard deviation of the obtained responses. LOQs were

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