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Q fever and prevalence of *Coxiella burnetii* in milk

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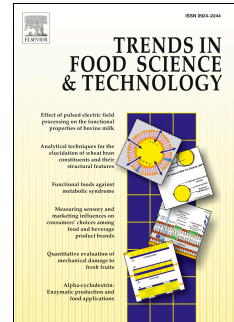
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1 Q FEVER AND PREVALENCE OF COXIELLA BURNETII IN MILK

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14 **ABSTRACT**

15 *Background*

16 **Q fever** is a **zoonosis** caused by *Coxiella burnetii*. In humans, although it has been
17 predominantly considered an occupational hazard, in the last decades, Q fever outbreaks
18 have also been reported in various countries, indicating its importance as an emerging
19 **public health** threat. Domestic ruminants are considered as the most important sources
20 of human infection. In fact, both symptomatic and asymptomatic infected ruminants
21 shed the bacterium into the environment with birth products, but also in urine, faeces,
22 vaginal mucus and **milk**. Q fever in humans is mainly asymptomatic, but it also may
23 manifest itself as an acute or chronic disease with long-term sequelae. Inhalation of
24 infectious aerosols usually causes the disease in humans, but the presence of *C. burnetii* in
25 raw milk raises concern over the role of milk as a source of infection.

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