

An Irish SME's perspective on the importance of accurate measurements

“People can see that if we're working on legal metrology for the NSAI, we must be operating to a high standard. It really makes our standing in the industry stronger.”

CONOR HICKEY, MANAGING DIRECTOR, HICKEY METERING



NSAI

Ensuring accuracy in the Irish dairy industry

An interview with Conor Hickey, Managing Director of Hickey Metering



While most of us have seen milk tankers traversing the roads of Ireland, we probably haven't stopped to consider how much milk they contain. For farmers and dairies, however, this knowledge is vital. Accurate measurement of how much milk is in a tanker is crucial.

As it happens, behind the roller door fixed on the cabinet at the back of the tank sits a high-tech system. It measures the quantity of milk taken into and held by the tanker, along with enabling a sampling system to determine the quality of the milk.

Hickey Metering, based in Cullen, Co Cork, is an Authorised Verifier for the NSAI, entrusted with verifying these truck-mounted metering systems for milk. *“Both the farmer and the dairy need to be able to trust the accuracy of the milk metering system”* explains Conor Hickey, the company's Managing Director.

Supporting excellence in Legal Metrology

NSAI Legal Metrology is responsible for making sure trade measures are accurate. As an Authorised Verifier, Hickey Metering has a vital role to play in NSAI Legal Metrology's verification and compliance service.

It aims to copper fasten consumer and trade confidence in the Irish dairy sector, which is so vital to our national economy.

Each time a milk tanker collects this product from the supplier, this product must be measured and recorded accurately to a high standard says Conor. *“Hickey Metering install and service the systems that collect*

and measure the product. Hickey Metering is an independent company which services, maintains and verify the systems to the highest standards."

Ensuring accurate milk measurement



Having already been working in the dairy industry maintaining and installing milk metering systems, Hickey Metering became an Authorised Verifier for the NSAI in 2012.

"A dairy requests Hickey Metering to go on site and verify their milk metering systems, our technicians check each tank, rectify any issues, certify and seal the systems.

The NSAI currently has a database of the complete milk tanker fleet based in Ireland. This data is right up to date and extremely accurate.

Ensuring fairness and legal compliance

While it's vital to measure the milk collected from the supplier accurately, that is not the only benefit of exceptionally accurate measurement, it also guarantees traceability and can also prevent any issues that may arise between parties.

Continuous improvement in metering

Due to more specific stipulations being included in the standards, Hickey Metering had to upgrade their highly sophisticated measuring equipment. This equipment which Hickey Metering uses is regularly checked and certified independently to the highest standards, explains Marie Hickey, Quality Manager.

In 2021, Hickey Metering also switched to a handheld GPS/GSM connected unit for entering and gathering the data on each individual milk tanker. Hickey Metering's technicians use these devices to transmit real-time metering data to the NSAI. This means the NSAI holds complete, up-to-date live data for each individual milk tanker in the dairy industry in Ireland. This data helps to build an accurate picture of the national dairy sector.

"This information is very accurate," says Conor. "It includes the GPS co-ordinates for where the milk was collected, along with the time, date and quantity of milk.

Promoting trust in the dairy industry

To tender for the position of Authorised Verifier with the NSAI, Hickey Metering had to achieve ISO 9001 certification.

"ISO 9001 makes our business more efficient," explains Marie. "It also gives us traceability. At all times we have the accurate data for all works completed by our staff."

In fact, being an Authorised Verifier also underscores the credibility of Hickey Metering's own business, says Conor. *"We're in the dairy industry. Being an Authorised Verifier shows our competence as a company in meeting these legal requirements."*

HickeyMetering.ie

+ Find out more about our work at NSAI's Legal Metrology Services by visiting nsai.ie/legal-metrology



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