

SHEPTON VET GROUPS

TOP TEN TIPS TO REDUCE CELL COUNTS ON YOUR FARM

The successful approach to tackling the high cell count herd includes;

1. **Post dip EVERY cow after EVERY milking throughout the year.** This kills bacteria which have been transferred onto the teats during milking. This happens all year round.

If you start post dipping you will have to wait about a year to see the full benefits. Teat dips helps stop NEW infections, it has no effect on EXISTING infections which are already in the udder.

2. **Use antibiotic dry cow therapy on ALL cows at the end of lactation.** Dry cow therapy kills infections present in the udder and helps to prevent new infections occurring.

You may also use a Teat Seal as well as dry cow therapy. This is fine. Always use dry cow therapy on every cow at the end of every lactation.

3. All milkers to wear **CLEAN GLOVES** during milking to reduce the risk of cross contamination. Rinse the gloves regularly in disinfectant solution during milking. Do not use **COMMON UDDER CLOTHS**

You cannot disinfect hands and clean gloves make an excellent hostile surface and reduce cow to cow spread of bacteria. Common udder cloths spread infection from cow to cow. One cloth per cow.

4. Change the **liners of the milking machine every 2,500 milkings or every six months**, whichever is the shorter period.

Worn liners are difficult to clean and have small cracks where mastitis bacteria can live. Worn liners also take longer to milk your cows.

5. **Detect clinical mastitis early** and treat all clinical cases with antibiotics

Milk treated cows through a separate cluster which must be disinfected after every use. Discard ALL milk from cows with clinical mastitis as their milk has a very high cell count.

6. Have the **milking machine serviced twice a year**, and follow the recommendations made in the test report

Your milking machine is your combine harvester. If it does not work efficiently then not only can this affect mastitis, but also can reduce milk yield if cows are not milked out efficiently.

7. **Disinfect the milking cluster** after milking any cow with clinical mastitis to avoid the spread of infection

Milk treated cows through a separate cluster which must be disinfected after every use. Discard ALL milk from cows with clinical mastitis as their milk has a very high cell count. You may also decide to disinfect clusters after milking persistently high cell count cows

8. Carry out **regular individual cow cell counts**. Use the data to identify the persistently high cell count cows. Have these cows tested to identify the mastitis bacteria which are causing the high cell count on YOUR farm. These can vary from farm to farm

Cell counts vary from day to day. A series of cell counts are needed to find out which are the persistently high cell count animals. Results from Progressive Genetics also gives so much useful information such as percentage contribution to the bulk tank cell count result, cell count in the previous lactation and results broken down by lactation number.

9. Cull cows in lactation four and above which have persistently high cell count cows and are **infected with Staph aureus**

You must have bacteriology to know which bugs are present in your herd. Different bugs have different cure rates. Some infections will result in culling, others can be treated. Choices all depend on the bacteria.

10. Maintain a **clean environment** and ensure that cows teats and udders are clean throughout the housed period. Dirty teats means more clinical mastitis.

Look at the cows udders and teats. They should always be clean. Check the milk filter, it should be clean after milking. If cows are dirty, improve the environment.