

MASTITIS CONTROL-DRY COW THERAPY

Remember that good management is still the key to successful dry cow therapy. One cannot depend on the antibiotic alone. Each herd may have a different problem. Be sure you consult with one of our veterinarians in formulating a good dry cow program.

May we list some general considerations which you can study.

1. Dry Therapy

This is an important part of a complete mastitis program. Most all herds will benefit by treating every quarter of every cow at drying off. Only after careful consideration should one ever skip a cow. Subclinical udder infections are best treated at drying off time.

Advantages:

- a. Cure rates are much higher than with lactation therapy
- b. Higher doses of drugs can be used.
- c. The antibiotic is retained a longer time in the udder.
- d. Drug residue risk is much less.
- e. There is a reduction in new infections in the udder.
- f. No milk is discarded.

2. Good Management

Success is achieved by getting the cow ready to dry off; that is, getting her below 30 pounds of milk.

This can be accomplished by:

- a. Possibly limiting water intake.
- b. Stop feeding grain at least 2 weeks before the dry date.
- c. Offer poor quality hay.

One can:

- a. Abruptly stop milking.
- b. Milk once a day for 3 to 4 days.

However, if there is subclinical mastitis, intermittent milking allows bacteria to multiply before you milk the cow again. For this reason, we favor the "abruptly stop" milking procedure followed by treatment.

3. Strict Sanitation

Cleaning and disinfection is very important before infusion (treatment). Without this, organisms present on the teat ends may be forced into the quarter resulting in a new infection, thereby defeating our plan of attack.

Procedure for treatment:

- a. Wash teats with an effective disinfectant solution and dry.
- b. Disinfect teat ends with alcohol.
- c. Infuse treatment.
- d. Dip teats and continue to dip for 1 week after dry off.

What to use:

a. Generally, use a commercial preparation specifically formulated for dry therapy, packaged in sterile, single dose syringes. Research shows the cure rate using these commercial products is much greater than the home mixed tubes. Only on the advice of our veterinarians should other treatments be used.

b. A single dose should be used and only occasionally, on the advice of one of our veterinarians, should repeated doses be employed.

c. Be gentle when infusing a quarter. The teat end is the cow's first line of defense against an infection of the udder. The teat sphincter muscle and the keratin coating of the canal lining are of utmost importance and should not be destroyed.

If you are having trouble with mastitis in dry cows or at calving, contact one of our veterinarians to find a solution. Occasionally the product should be changed, a sanitation problem may have arisen, a new organism may be involved, or a fault in procedure could be occurring.