

Coaching Guide 11

Treatments and withhold periods

Aim: To ensure that employees can recognise cows to withhold from the vat and how to do basic treatments

To maintain food safety, it is important that cows under treatment with medications that are not suitable for human consumption and end up in milk do not enter the vat. Knowing which cows are being treated for what and milking the cows in a way that the milk is not collected into the vat is therefore very important.

At the end of this coaching session employees will be able to recall the methods cows under treatment at this farm are marked, outline common treatments used with cows that have health problems, always wear appropriate PPE when administering treatments, and describe the treatment withholding periods of medications.

Before coaching starts

Has the employee completed the online Milking and Mastitis Management Program? If so, some of this coaching will be revision. The guide can also be completed while completing MMM.

Check that farm protocols for doing common treatments are up-to-date (and ensure they are available to the employee).

Do you have a poster on how cows are marked? Consider putting a new copy on the whiteboard or putting labelled photos on the wall in the farm office. Have the poster available for the coaching session.

Make a list of common cow treatments to discuss and demonstrate. List their relevant withhold periods.

Have available cow records to show the importance of recording all treatments. Your farm QA system can be used to explain requirements for recording treatments, particularly antibiotics

Prepare yourself to explain, demonstrate and then observe to provide feedback on common treatments

- Doing intramammary treatments
- Administering injections
- Drenching

COVID-19

- Reinforce PPE use, personal hygiene and cleaning/disinfection of shared surfaces after each use
- Ensure the farm COVID-19 protocol for how to work with other team members is followed, including during the coaching session

Treatments

- Discuss who is authorised to treat cows.
- As appropriate, explain common cow treatments and the drugs used on farm – where they are kept and when they are used.
- Show the new employee the records for reference on treated cows.

Common treatments	What are the common treatments we use on this farm?
Who is authorised	Who's involved in treating livestock on this farm? How do you know if you are allowed to treat cows or calves?
Treatment protocols	Where are the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for doing treatments?
Record Keeping	What treatments are recorded? How?

Cow marking

- Explain the different ways that cows are marked – e.g. paint on different locations on udders, body or use of tail tapes.
- Describe:
 - Where, which colours, and what they mean:
 - Alert to withhold milk from the vat e.g. cow is treated, freshly calved, or recently dried off (and she has got back in the herd in error)
 - For other reasons e.g. tail paint during mating.
 - Whether marking is used in conjunction with electronic alerts on your farm

Use the questions below to quiz the employee as you are talking – help them to memorise the colours and what they mean

- Check your new employee can identify all markings that require milk to be withheld from the vat – observe them during milking.

Cow Marking	Why is cow marking used?
Colours	What do the different colours mean?
Mastitis	What colour and marking signifies that a cow has mastitis?
Withholding milk	What are all the markings that mean a cow's milk must not go in the vat?

Withhold Periods

- ❑ Explain what withhold means for milk and meat (milk can't go into the vat, cows can't be sold for meat)
- ❑ Describe the various milk withhold times for the drugs used on farm.
- ❑ Emphasise the importance of treated cow milk not getting into the milk vat – strict adherence to the farm protocols e.g. how cows are marked, treated cows milked separately
- ❑ Reinforce – always alert your supervisor immediately if you think the milk from a wrong cow is going into the vat – “if you see something, say something”.

Withhold	What does 'withhold' mean?
Withhold periods	Do all drugs have the same withhold period? If you do not remember the withhold period, where can you find out?
Treated or tainted milk	What do we do to ensure that treated milk NEVER goes into the milk vat? How many litres of milk are there in a full milk vat? If this was worth 50 cents/litre, how much would be lost if this milk had to be discarded?