



Mastitis control in and after wet conditions

Cow parking and mastitis risk

To minimise mastitis risk or reality around 'cow parking', the top priorities are:

- › Milk the herds separately if it is possible
- › Milk clinical cases last, or use a separate cluster for them only
- › Wear gloves and ensure milk is not spread from cow to cow
- › Cover 100% of teat skin with teat disinfectant spray
- › Use blanket Antibiotic Dry Cow Treatment (all quarters of all cows)

Have any of your cows have been milked on another farm?

Have you milked other people's cows on your farm?

A common way to introduce mastitis bacteria into a herd is in the udders of cows from somewhere else.

Bacteria such as *Strep agalactiae* can spread rapidly through a herd.

Countdown usually recommends that you don't buy-in or milk cows of unknown mastitis status with your herd, but during crises such as floods, necessity and generosity are driving factors beyond mastitis risk.

Host farms – reduce mastitis spread in the shed

- › **Milk the herds separately** where it is possible, with the guest cows last. This reduces the risk of spread, especially if you put a rinse through the machine between each herd.
- › **Ensure that all staff follow best practice for hygiene when milking.** The essentials are:

Milking gloves

- › Everyone wears gloves to milk
- › People stripping cows don't get milk on their gloves
- › Gloves are regularly washed with running water

Clinical Cases

- › Clinical cases are milked last, or with a separate cluster that is disinfected afterwards.

Teat disinfection

- › 100% of every teat is covered after every milking
- › Teat spray is a Ready-To-Use product (or made up daily at the correct concentration with good quality water)

Liners in good order

- › Liners are not past their use-by date – no more than 2500 'cow milkings'

Both farms – keep an eagle eye on mastitis rates

- › **Watch your Bulk Milk Cell Counts carefully.** If these are above 250,000 or trending up in a way that is unusual for your herd, speak to your mastitis adviser or vet.
- › **Count clinical cases and assess treatment success** – record all details – get advice from your vet if you have more than 2 cases per 100 cows per month, or more than 1 in 5 cases needs a second course of treatment.
- › Check which bacteria are present. Get a milk sample for **culture from all clinical cases** especially for early warning of Strep ag.
- › **Track new infection rates by Milk Recording** for the next 12 months. Get a one page
- › Countdown Mastitis Focus report from your HI centre after every Milk Recording visit. This is an accurate way to track new infections in your herd.

Both farms – review Dry Cow plans with your vet

- › Drying-off is the time that you have a chance to remove infections that have occurred during the lactation. When you discuss your Dry Cow plans with your veterinarian, tell him/her that you have hosted or sent cows cow parking.
- › After 'cow parking' you should seriously consider **blanket Antibiotic Dry Cow Treatment** – all cows treated with an appropriate Dry Cow Treatment.

When it is time to send cows home

- › If cows are sent home at the end of their lactation either send them home while still milking, or at least 2 weeks after drying off, when the udder has shrunk and the teats have sealed well. If still milking, continue twice daily for a few days to find and treat any clinical cases before drying off.
- › Make sure all mastitis records go home with the cows.

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