

## CELLCHECK TIP OF THE MONTH



Host farmers at the recent AHI CalfCare 2023 Event in Ballineen: John, Veronica, Eoin & Laura Cullinane.



Large crowd at the AHI CalfCare On-Farm Event on the farm of John Cullinane & Family, Ballineen



# MAXIMISING A HERD HEALTH PLAN

Turning herd health planning from a tick box exercise into an active and responsive plan.

## BUILDING A HERD HEALTH PLAN

Before the calving season kicks off is a good time to review previous year's records and create a herd health plan with your vet. In relation to mastitis, it is important to review your records from last year and set targets for the coming year. We all have a role to play in using antibiotics more prudently-review how your mastitis treatments have been working for you and whether or not they are fit for purpose.

Plan your mastitis management for the coming year. For example, if you are not milk recording, you need to get started. Milk recording is the best way of identifying problem cows and poor performers. Completing a milk recording within 60 days of calving shows you how successful any dry cow treatment was at curing infections and identifies cows that picked up new infections during the dry period.

During the year begin building up a profile of what pathogens are present in your herd by collecting a milk sample from any clinical cases that occur. These can be frozen for up to four months, so a number of them they can be sent to the laboratory together when you have more time. Make sure they are correctly identified. Do not forget to record all clinical cases of mastitis and ideally send the information to ICBF by texting 'Mast' and the cow's freeze brand to 0894577663; for example, if cow number 200 has mastitis, type Mast 200. The more information you can gather on each cow during the lactation the better prepared you will be when it comes to cow selection for selective dry cow therapy at the end of their lactation, and better cow selection will mean better results.

### Other jobs that should be on the 'to do' list include:

- Service the milking machine, change the liners and check teat sprayers.
- Have the calving area clean, disinfected, properly set up and ready to go.
- Closely monitor cows and heifers that are near calving, as they are more prone to mastitis in the last 2 weeks before they calve.
- Keep the cubicles dry and clean - it can get a bit tiresome at this stage of the winter, but spring is coming, and they will be outdoors before you know it!
- Parlour train heifers. If more than 15% of your heifers calve down with mastitis, then teat spraying three times per week before calving has been shown to significantly reduce new infections and is as effective as teat sealing heifers.
- Stock up on supplies e.g., gloves, teat disinfectant, milk sample bottles, calving equipment, paper towel, markers, California Mastitis Test, calcium, salt (for frozen yards and milking machines).
- Complete maintenance and repairs on areas that could pose a mastitis risk once cows are left out - roadways, around troughs etc.