



CELLCHECK TIP OF THE MONTH



Recording all cases of clinical mastitis and the treatments administered is essential. When it comes to reviewing udder health performance during the year, investigating a herd problem, or measuring the success of drying off and the dry period, having records (preferably electronically) of all clinical cases will give you more accurate information. Very often we rely on memory but trying to recall those details in hindsight, often months later, is not easy.

Keeping regular, simple records is key. A common way of recording mastitis cases is on a whiteboard in the parlour, making it easy for anyone milking to be aware of cows that have been treated and what milk needs to be withheld. These records can be recorded electronically after the milking on ICBF or on whatever farm software you use. Having the information recorded electronically allows you to get even more value from your milk recording reports, as the 'Clinical Mastitis' graph on the CellCheck Farm Summary report will then provide you with valuable information and direction. The CellCheck Dashboard, which is available on the ICBF website, displays milk recording information similar to these reports but one advantage of the dashboard is that it is interactive and allows the operator to look back in time at records, which helps develop a better picture of what is going on in the herd. The herdowner must give authorisation to allow others including farm advisors, veterinary practitioners, and co-op advisors to access the information. Recording clinical mastitis events with the ICBF text-in service is quick and easy. This service is available to all herds whose mobile is registered on the ICBF database. To register your mobile number ring 1850-600-900. Then to record a case of mastitis for cow Freeze Brand 627, text the following message, Mast 627 to 089-4577663. The case of mastitis will be recorded as having occurred on the date the text was sent, unless you specify otherwise e.g. Mast 627 18/01.

Cases of clinical mastitis are identified based on clinical signs of inflammation (swollen quarters), systemic illness, or abnormal changes in the appearance of milk. Early detection and treatment of clinical cases reduces the risk of severe cases and chronic infections developing. Subclinical infection is diagnosed on the basis of individual cow somatic cell count (SCC) levels, ideally from milk recording. The California mastitis test (CMT) is a simple cow-side test that is quick, and low cost and may be used to define if the cow is likely to be infected and it may be a temporary solution in the absence of milk recording. However, interpretation of the results is subjective depending on SCC level and the pathogen involved.

It is important that there is ongoing collection and bacteriological testing of milk samples, before treatment begins, from animals with clinical or subclinical mastitis, both to guide clinical decisions and as part of the broader assessment of mastitis and antibiotic resistance patterns on the farm. These samples can be labelled, frozen and stored for up to 4 months and submitted to laboratory at a later stage if necessary. A standard operating procedure for the treatment of in-lactation cases should be agreed with your vet. If more than 20% of cases require a second course of antibiotics, the protocol should be reassessed. An annual review of clinical cases should be done with your vet. If mastitis continues to be a problem, then a discussion about the factors contributing to suboptimal mastitis control is necessary. A strong professional relationship with all professional farm service providers is important to ensure a holistic approach to milk quality and broader animal health and welfare.