



## Planning and achieving the best possible dry off plan:

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At this stage most farmers have started their dry off plan with low yielders and first calver's dried off in a lot of herds at this stage. Ideally a culture and sensitivity in conjunction with a discussion with your Vet or via a dry cow consult with your Vet should have been carried out prior to dry off.

For farmers who have milk recorded in 2023, the CellCheck Report is very important to look at, an analysis of the performance of your dry cow period will be available, assuming your first milk recording was carried out within 60 days of cows calving. This is a fantastic report, as it is unbiased, it tells you the new infection rate over the dry period in cows and also in your heifers. The cure rate over the dry period is also highlighted. You should analyse this report before drying off as this will highlight whether your procedure is up to standard or not. Adjustments to your dry cow technique and/or housing management maybe required.

Mastitis Control: Dry Period/Calving ★★★★★		
Note: Cows with first recording >60 days after calving are not included.		
New infection rate over the dry period	First Test since calving	All calvings in current lactation
<b>Cows</b> No. of cows calved that had a SCC <=200 in recording prior to calving (22) and >200 in the current recording (2).	9% Target: Less than 10%	11% 20/187 Target: Less than 10%
<b>Heifers</b> No. of heifers that had a SCC >200 in the current recording (0) as a percentage of all heifers calved (0).	N/A Target: Less than 10%	13% 0/47 Target: Less than 10%
Cure rate over the dry period		
No. of cows calved that had a SCC >200 in recording prior to calving (3) and <=200 in current recording (1)	33% Target: Greater than 85%	83% 15/18 Target: Greater than 85%

Preparation is key, check that the following aids are available; methylated spirits and cotton wool, head torch, disposable gloves, ideally a new milking gown, help available, a recent milk recording esp. for the selective dry cows, pen and paper to record, reading glasses if required and turn off your phone. All cows tails should be clipped prior to dry off.

Dry off technique, try to settle on a good technique and stick to it. It is recommended to use cotton wool and meths to clean teats prior to infusion. Always clean from the head side of the udder and tube from the tail end of the udder, try to keep contact with the cow as you move from teat to teat. This ensures consistency, minimises mistake and minimises the risk of contaminating the teat end. The group size at drying off is one of the biggest areas affecting the success of the dry period. No more than 6 cows at a time, apply antibiotic tube and sealant, let out, clean the platform change gloves and let the next 6 in. A good restraint i.e. gate or chain to keep cows in place is essential, multiple rows of this size can be dried off using this protocol.



Disinfect the far teats before the near teats to avoid accidental contamination of previously disinfected teats (as numbered).



Insert Antibiotic Tube into nearest teats first (as numbered) to minimise contamination of teats that have not been treated. If using a sealer (recommended) repeat the disinfection procedure again.





Identification of cows for Selective Dry Cow Therapy (SDCT) requires great care. These are uninfected animals, advice should be gained from your Vet or Adviser on cows that maybe suitable for selective dry cow. If it is your first year, you need to be milk recording, consult with your Vet to have a look at your records and make out a list of potential cows for dry off. These cows need to be recorded accurately, so you can see how they will perform in the next lactation, ideally you should see that these cows will not require antibiotics for multiple lactations.

## Herd criteria for SDCT

One of the most important herd criteria for SDCT is achieving a below target rate for new infections over the dry period. If targets cannot be met with antibiotics, it is likely that the situation will disimprove without antibiotics. Other herd criteria include:

- Bulk SCC less than 200,000 for the entire lactation.
  - A minimum of 4 milk recordings in current lactation.
  - Culture negative for Strep. Agalactia.
  - Housing and hygiene - One cubicle space per cow. Optimal housing during dry period and around calving.
- Herds that are using SDCT successfully are picking suitable cows, but crucially are meeting these herd criteria also.

## Management post dry off:

The first 2 weeks are critical post dry off, research from Moorepark has shown that twice per day liming has a significant impact on dry cow performance post dry off. This is particularly relevant when there isn't a cubicle space available per cow. Scrapper timing is important, try to run scrapppers at least 6 times per day, you will notice beds are a lot cleaner and drier when working on these times.



Cull chronic cows this is a crucial management tool, if cows have consistently high cell counts and/or repeat clinical cases then these cows should be culled. We see these cows time and time again causing a huge issue at farm level, they spread infection particularly to your heifers and you lose the bounce of the heifers coming into the herd. A lot of these cows are marginal in profitability and should be culled.

***If you are finding it difficult to interpret the milk recording reports, please contact us, a lot of farmers cannot get over the value of the info in milk recording once it is explained to them.***