Drying off strategies for 2016

Drying off cows at the end of their lactation is an important job that can dictate milk quality for the following season. It is also a process involving a degree of risk if not performed correctly, and never a job that farmers look forward to undertaking. There are a number of decisions to be made prior to drying off such as which Dry Cow Strategy to use in your herd and the most appropriate dry cow products to use.

Your Dry Cow Strategy should be a two step process with the first step being the treatment of existing infections, and the second step being the prevention of new infections. To help decide on the best strategy for your herd, ask yourself the following questions:

**STEP 1: Treatment of existing infections**
- Is your Bulk Milk Cell Count out of premium for any month of the year?
- Do you have less than 4 Individual Cow Cell Counts (ICCCs) for each cow for the year?
- Do more than 30% of your cows have a peak ICCC above 250,000 cells/mL?
- Are your clinical mastitis case records incomplete?
- Did you average more than 2 clinical cases per 100 cows per month during lactation?
- Do individual cow milk cultures or bulk milk PCR testing indicate the presence of Strep ag?

*If you answered YES to ANY of the above*
*If you answered NO to ALL of the above*

*If you answered YES to ANY of these questions, use blanket antibiotic Dry Cow Treatment: treat all quarters of all cows.*
*If you answered NO to ALL of these questions, you could use selective antibiotic Dry Cow Treatment: treat all quarters of any cow that had clinical mastitis during lactation and/or had a peak ICCC above 150,000 cells/mL. Call to discuss selective Dry Cow Treatment options with one of our vets.*
STEP 2: Prevention of new infections

- Did more than 5% of cows or heifers have clinical mastitis in their first 2 weeks after calving? OR Were you treating more than 5 cases per 100 cows in the months your herd was calving?
- Do individual cow milk cultures indicate significant numbers of Strep uberis?
- Did more than 5% of cows or heifers drip milk or have severe udder oedema (flag)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Active ingredient</th>
<th>Minimum dry period (days)</th>
<th>Milk (hours)</th>
<th>Milk (days)</th>
<th>Meat (days)</th>
<th>Calves (days)</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orbenin Enduro DC</td>
<td>600mg of cloxacillin (as Benzathine Salt)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>✓ Primary range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teatseal®</td>
<td>Teat sealant</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>✓ Primary range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cepravin DC</td>
<td>250mg cephalonium</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>✓ Primary range</td>
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<tr>
<td>Juraclox LA</td>
<td>600mg cloxacillin</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noroclox DC</td>
<td>500mg cloxacillin</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Shorter acting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bovaclox DC</td>
<td>Cloxacillin + ampicillin</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>With ampicillin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2016 Dry Cow Treatment options

There are a wide variety of products available for drying cows off, and making a decision best for your herd and business is dependent on a number of factors including time of year, likely mastitis pathogens, previous success, BMCC, ICCC data availability, price, length of dry period and other factors. As part of an annual dry cow discussion, we attempt to ensure you are presented with all the options and work with you to determine the best product for your circumstances. All of our products come with wipes included. Each year there are changes to the products available, this year options in the range include:

- If you answered YES to ANY of these questions, use blanket internal teat sealant: treat all quarters of all cows and/or heifers in addition to your selected antibiotic Dry Cow Treatment.
- If you answered NO to ALL of these questions, and if there will be no changes to dry cow management, calving management or seasonal conditions, then use of an internal teat sealant may not be indicated.

If you would like help identifying high cell count cows to treat and/or assistance with working out clinical case rates, please call Farm Services on 1300 838 700 to arrange a time to have a chat with one of our milk quality veterinarians.
Dry cow antibiotic is designed to cure existing infections in udders at the end of lactation, while Teatseal® provides a physical barrier that prevents new infections during the dry period. However, the dry cow antibiotic is not able to prevent the growth of environmental bacteria that are introduced during dry cow administration and so IT IS VITAL TO CLEAN AND STERILISE TEATS CAREFULLY BEFORE INFUSING ANTIBIOTICS AND/OR TEATSEAL® INTO THE UDDER. Without proper preparation, bacteria present on the teat ends may be transported into the udder and result in a severe, life-threatening mastitis.

- Dry Cow Treatment should be administered immediately after the final milking.
- Mark the udder of cows that will receive Dry Cow Treatment so that they can be easily recognised.
- All four quarters of cows selected for Dry Cow Treatment should be treated.
- For application, start with further most teats. Do each teat from start to finish before moving on to the next teat. Use the following steps:

1. Holding the teat, thoroughly clean the end of the teat by scrubbing with a fresh teat wipe or a cotton ball soaked in 70% alcohol.

2. a) Infuse dry cow antibiotic and massage it gently up into the udder.

2. b) If using Teatseal®, close off the base of the teat near the udder and infuse Teatseal®. DO NOT MASSAGE INTO UDDER: Teatseal® works by staying in the teat.

3. Move onto the next teat, trying to avoid any further contact with treated teats, and repeat the process.

4. When all four teats are finished, apply an iodine-based teat dip or spray to the entire surface of each teat.

- Infusing Dry Cow Treatments is an important job that needs to be done properly. Have enough people in the dairy to help and restrain cows using a tail jack where needed.
- Wear disposable gloves. Keep them clean using teat wipes or an alcohol spray and paper towel, and change when necessary.
- Use a new swab or teat wipe for each teat. If there is a chance that the teat end has been contaminated after infusing the dry cow antibiotic – such as the cow kicking or if you’ve touched the teat – it will need to be re-cleaned prior to infusing the Teatseal®.
- Do not allow the sterile nozzles to touch anything prior to infusion. If a nozzle becomes contaminated, or if you accidentally drop a tube on the ground, discard the tube.
- After drying off, move cows SLOWLY to a clean paddock away from the dairy. Avoid transporting treated cows or walking them long distances for 3–4 days after drying off to avoid loss of dry cow antibiotic or Teatseal®.
- Observe dry cows daily over the next week. Any cow that is lethargic or has a swollen quarter/s should be examined (where possible, avoid bringing the whole group up to or near the dairy).
- If a dry cow has clinical mastitis, strip the quarter completely twice daily and treat using a full course of your normal lactating cow antibiotic. If the cow’s expected calving date is outside the product’s minimum dry period, repeat the drying off procedure in the affected quarter – if you have any questions please contact your veterinarian.
Welcome David Sheedy
The Vet Group is pleased to welcome David Sheedy to the Farm Services veterinary team. David, a 2015 Melbourne University graduate, has recently settled in Timboon which is not far from his family home in Warrnambool.

David left a financial advisory career to study veterinary medicine in order to spend more time outdoors, be constantly challenged, meet great people and, of course, to work with animals. In his free time David looks forward to spending time in the ocean and playing soccer. David is backing the mighty Geelong Cats to regain form this year.

INVITATION TO ATTEND A FIELD DAY
Managing our farms better in a changing climate

Date: Thursday 17th March  
Time: 11:00 am to 2:00 pm
Location: John and Kathy Dalton’s Dairy, Reas Rd Naringal

Presenters
Graeme Ward  The impact of a changing climate on our pastures and dairy cows, implications for farming in this region and how we may need to change.

Peter Notman  Plant varieties and ‘cropping programs’ that may suit drier winters and springs.

Chris Hibburt  How does the changing climate impact our bottom line and how can we take advantage of it?

Lunch provided by:

Cups On Cups Off
Short course code: SACOCO
Mastitis problems in your herd?
Enrol now in this highly regarded program, developed to assist dairy farmers achieve the best possible results in the prevention and management of mastitis.
Mastitis and milk quality affect the bottom line of all dairy farms. Dairy Australia estimates that every case of clinical mastitis costs at least $270 in treatment costs and lost milk.

Controlling mastitis and achieving high quality milk affects the profitability of all dairy farms. In any dairy, the milking process can significantly affect the spread of mastitis infections and the risk of clinical cases of mastitis.

This two day training program covers the entire milking process with special emphasis on mastitis prevention and control. This program is ideally suited for all people who milk cows, whether they be an owner/operator, family members, employed staff or sharefarmers – the need for best practice is universal.

The Cups On Cups Off program is designed to achieve best practice in milk harvesting and the detection and treatment of clinical cases of mastitis.

Dairy farms can use this training to build skills in milk harvesting and mastitis control, and therefore make a substantial contribution to the farm's mastitis control program.

Topics covered include:
- How and why infections occur
- Practical mastitis control
- The importance of teat disinfection
- Reducing the risk of infection
- How to detect and deal with clinical mastitis
- Best practice in milk harvesting
- The real cost of mastitis

Participants also receive:
- Credit for the Certificate II in Agriculture Milk Livestock unit
- A copy of the Countdown Farmer Guidelines for Mastitis Control
- A copy of the new Countdown shed guides
- A free apron

Upcoming Course
Date: 17th and 24th February 2016
Time: 10am -2pm
Venue: Simpson, venue TBC
Cost: $180.00 per participant
Lunch will be provided.

For further information or to enrol, contact Michelle Easterbrook on 0407 552 011 or email ncedeawest@gotafe.vic.edu.au

ncdeagotafe.edu.au | 1300 GOTAFe (1300 468233)