

GUIDELINE 18

Check udders after dry off

In this guideline:

18.1 Observe cows daily in the paddock and look for swollen quarters

18.2 Check swollen quarters manually

18.3 Run all cows through the farm dairy for a manual check of the udder every 14 days

18.4 Treat clinical quarters by stripping out completely and using a lactation antibiotic

Cows are susceptible to new infections particularly in the first week of the dry period before their teats have sealed.

These infections must be identified and treated so that they do not persist and create problems after calving. Remember, however, the objective is to achieve teat plug formation quickly.



Good Read

[*Technote 18 - Check udders after dry off*](#)

18.1 Observe cows daily in the paddock and look for swollen quarters.

Avoid bringing cows near the dairy area or they may start running milk.

Observe every day for a week. Look for swollen udders and signs of sickness i.e. cows that are visibly slow in their movement or off their feed in the first few days after dry off.

Do not handle - just look.

If a quarter is swollen, bring the suspect cow into the dairy area and check the udder manually.



Check for sick cows

Poor hygiene when DCT or ITS tubes are inserted into the teats can cause a very acute mastitis. The cow can become very sick, very quickly. Seek veterinary advice if this type of mastitis is suspected.



Check cows in the paddock. Look for sick cows and grossly swollen quarters.

18.2 Check swollen quarters manually.

Strip secretion from suspect quarter and check. It may be different from milk prior to drying off (e.g. thicker and more 'stringy') and therefore difficult to assess.

If suspicious, treat as a clinical case.

Do not remove milk or secretion from adjacent normal quarters.

18.3 Run all cows through the farm dairy for a manual check of the udder every 14 days.

SmartSAMM advises manual checks of all udders fortnightly for the first 4-6 weeks of the dry period.

If possible, run all cows through the farm dairy so that udders can receive a closer inspection. Feel the udder for lumps and heat - don't manipulate or squeeze teats unless clinical mastitis is suspected. These checks are especially important for cows that did not receive antibiotic DCT at dry off.



Select appropriate dry cow treatment strategy

For herds that cannot perform close inspection of cows after dry off, whole herd antibiotic DCT or a combination of DCT and ITS is highly recommended at dry off.

18.4 Treat clinical quarters by stripping out completely and using a lactation antibiotic.

Veterinary advice is recommended.

Use Lactating Cow intramammary antibiotic (even if antibiotic DCT was previously used in the quarter). Use the full course of the antibiotic (as recommended on the label). Injectable antibiotic may be appropriate.

Strip out completely and continue to strip out at least once every day during the course of the treatment.

Record treatment details.