

GUIDELINE 19

Observe cows weekly

In this guideline:

19.1 Observe cows regularly during the dry period

19.2 Check swollen quarters manually

Dry cows should be checked regularly for changes in the udder because clinical cases can occur during the dry period and quarters that are not treated may have lower production in the next season.

Visual observation of udder size and symmetry is all that is required, and often all that is possible where dry cows are kept. Some facilities for handling suspect cows are essential.



Good Read

[Technote 19 – Observe cows weekly](#)

19.1 Observe cows regularly during the dry period.

Observe udders for signs of swollen quarters when carrying out normal observation of dry cows. As a minimum, this should occur weekly. If quarters look swollen, bring in and check udders manually.

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 or other facilities fortnightly so that udders can receive a closer inspection. Don't manipulate or squeeze teats unless clinical mastitis is suspected.

Apply teat spray to all teats after checking udders.



Teat spraying in the dry period

Reducing bacterial numbers on the teats during the dry period, particularly in last month before calving, helps reduce the risk of mastitis. This applies to first calvers as well as to cows that have been treated with DCT or ITS at dry off. Opportunities to spray teats with teat disinfectant during the dry period include:

- Checking udders after drying off
- Moving cows to fresh grazing breaks
- Moving cows to and from feedpads or stand-off areas.

19.2 Check swollen quarters manually.

Check for heat and pain - compare between all quarters. Strip secretion from suspect quarter and check. It may be different from milk prior to drying-off, and therefore difficult to assess.

If suspicious, treat as a clinical case. Do not remove milk or secretion from adjacent normal quarters. Do not repeat the use of antibiotic DCT in these quarters - withholding periods may exceed the remainder of the dry period time.

Remember to record details.



See [Guideline 18.4](#) for instructions on treating dry cows with clinical mastitis