

TECHNOTE

19

Observe cows weekly

19.1

Observe cows regularly during the dry period.

SmartSamm advises visual checks weekly in the paddock, and manual checks of all udders fortnightly for the first 4-6 weeks of the dry period.

Where possible, cows should be run through the farm dairy or other facilities to allow the udders to be manipulated and felt by hand. Teats should not be squeezed so that the contents are removed, unless suspicious lumps or heat is found.

Where no facilities are available e.g. where dry cows are away at the run off, then paddock checks for swollen udders and sick cows can be done, although this method will only find gross or acute cases of mastitis.

After checking the udder, all teats should be sprayed with teat spray.

Regular teat spraying (3 times a week for the last 3 weeks of the dry period) helped reduce the numbers of bacteria on heifers' teats and led to a reduction in new *Strep. uberis* infections amongst heifers following calving (Lopez-Benavides *et al* 2009). Mixed age cows that had been treated with antibiotic dry cow treatment also showed lower levels of mastitis after calving when sprayed with teat spray 3 times per week for the last 3 weeks of the dry period (Williamson and Lopez-Benavides, unpublished results).

Technote 4.1 describes an udder palpation technique.

Reducing bacterial numbers on teats during the (late) dry period, helps reduce risk of mastitis at calving. Take advantage of opportunities such as moving cows to fresh grazing, feedpads or stand-off areas, to spray teats.

19.2

Check swollen quarters manually.

Technote 18.2 describes checks of quarters in the dry period.

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These SmartSAMM adapted resources are made available to NZ dairy farmers and advisors through a Memorandum of Understanding between Dairy Australia and DairyNZ.

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Key papers

Lopez-Benavides MG, Williamson JH, Lacy-Hulbert SJ, Cursons RT. Heifer teats sprayed in the dry period with an iodine teat sanitizer have reduced *Streptococcus uberis* teat-end contamination and less *Streptococcus uberis* intra-mammary infections at calving. *Vet. Micro.* 2009; 134: 186-191.