

Mastitis is one of the biggest challenges that faces the dairy industry and a disease that affects every farm around the world. Dr. Michelle and I recently attended the National Mastitis Council Annual Conference in Tuscon, AZ. This is a great conference where producers, industry personnel, veterinarians, students and researchers all gather to learn the latest and greatest in mastitis research. However, this year they also took a trip into the past to review some of the basics about mastitis control, which is summarized by the Five Point Plan for Mastitis Control which I'll share with you:

1. Use of post-milking teat disinfectant

Post-dipping cows after milking is one of the most important practices for mastitis prevention. The teat sphincter remains open for an additional 30-60 minutes after the cow finishes milking, leaving her at risk for mastitis. Without the use of a proper teat dip and good coverage of the teat end, the teat canal remains vulnerable to infection from agents in the environment.

2. Use of dry cow therapy

Drying cows off is another time that they become susceptible to infection for a variety of reasons. For one, placing anything into the teat including teat sealants or dry cow tubes can introduce bacteria directly into the udder. If not properly prepped with a teat dip, alcohol wipes and good wiping, mastitis is a risk. Using a dry cow tube helps to prevent infection from not only bacteria that a cow may be exposed to while she's drying off, but any bacteria that we may be placing in her udder as well!

3. Treat clinical cases

Treatment success is determined by a number of factors, including the timely identification and treatment of mastitis. Definitions of mastitis and treatment philosophies vary from farm to farm, so having protocols in place that assure employees and managers are on the same page is important.

4. Machine maintenance

If "blame" could be placed on something that causes mastitis, environment would account for 80% of it, however machinery and cows account for the other 20%. Parlor evaluations done on a regular basis can help prevent and identify issues that may exponentially

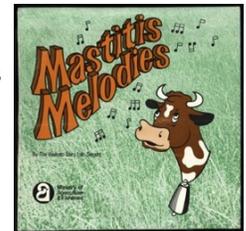
increase the risk of mastitis in your parlor.

5. Cull chronic animals

There will always be those cows that reach a point where it doesn't make sense to keep 'em on the farm for one reason or another. Whether she is a treatment failure, loses another quarter, or is an older cow with bad udder confirmation; these all present an increased risk for mastitis. This costs the farm money and prevents her from being successful.

There are many other factors that need to be considered when trying to control mastitis, many of which can be tailored to the goals and current situation on each farm. However, these basic guidelines can act as a conversation starter: What are your farm's protocols and definitions of disease? How can they be improved upon?

Taking a break from business and scientific presentations, we were also introduced to a collection of songs about mastitis from the 1970's called "Mastitis Melodies". Fortunately for us, it has been digitally remastered and is available for everyone to enjoy! You can check it out in the link below:



<http://blog.wfmu.org/freeform/2006/01/working.html>

Upcoming Meetings

Pastures & Parasites

Wednesday, May 2, 2018 at 6 PM

Come learn the basics for your backyard ruminants and camelids. We will be covering parasites, deworming and pasture management.

To register, please call the clinic at (810)376-2425.

The meeting will also include a free fecal exam for all attendees!

