1963

EC63-644 Mastitis the Menace : You can Control Mastitis

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YOU Can Control Mastitis!
You Can Control Mastitis

This is the last of six circulars emphasizing control of mastitis.

Treatment of cows with mastitis is not the answer to the mastitis problem. The answer is in prevention and control.

The most important people in control and prevention of mastitis are the owners and milkers. Professional workers can help but producing high quality milk from disease-free cows is the producer's responsibility.

Review and study the previous five circulars and think seriously about the problem of mastitis in your dairy herd. Then fill in the answers to the following questions. This will help you appraise the udder health of your herd.

General

Mastitis reduces individual cow and herd production. Mastitis reduces the possible lifetime production. It also lowers the quality of milk marketed.

How does mastitis affect your herd?

What do you estimate mastitis costs you annually?

How many cows' quarters were lost because of mastitis?

How many milk cows did you sell during the year because of mastitis?

How many cows did you treat for mastitis?

How much did you spend for antibiotics?

How much did you pay professional workers for treating cows with mastitis?

How much milk was not marketed because of mastitis?

How long do you withhold milk from cows treated for mastitis?

Herd Management

There is no substitute for proper herd management. Treatment is of little benefit without proper management of the dairy herd. Cows must be properly housed and fed if they are to be comfortable.
Are your cows ever roughly handled so as to produce under stress? 

Are your cows provided with ample bedding in months when it is needed? 

Do you prevent udder injury by eliminating high door sills, logs or brush or old machinery in the pasture or dry lot? 

Do you clean and disinfect all stalls after removal of infected cows? 

Have you eliminated all low, poorly drained areas in the barnyard, lanes and pasture? 

Are your dairy cattle fenced away from your farm pond? 

Are you sure that purchased animals are free of infection? 

Do you keep purchased animals away from the rest of the herd for about 30 days? 

Does your calf-raising program protect your heifers from udder injury? 

The Milking Machine 

The milking machine is a very important part of dairy equipment. It is different from other farm machinery because it works on living tissue. For best results, the milking machine must be properly installed, maintained and operated. 

Is your vacuum pump large enough to handle all the milker units and all other accessory equipment? 

Do you lubricate and service the pump according to instructions in the operator's manual? 

Is your vacuum controller functioning properly? 

Do you inspect the controller and clean it when necessary? 

Is your vacuum line of adequate size? 

Do you know whether the pulsator on your milking machine is operating properly? 

How often do you change teat cup liners? 

Does the pipe carrying milk slope towards the milk receiving receptacle? 

Have you located the small hole or air vent in the milk claw or bowl? 

Is this hole clean so air can be admitted?
Milking Practices

The milking machine can be properly installed and maintained but if milking is not done correctly other factors are unimportant. Properly harvesting the milk twice daily is the most important chore the dairyman performs. It is important to take a critical look at milking practices to see that maximum milk production is secured and udder health is maintained.

How do you stimulate the let-down of milk in your herd?

How long after stimulation do you wait before placing milking machine on teats?

Do you use a strip cup?

What causes a cow to hold up her milk?

How do you remove the milking machine from the cow's udder?

What procedure do you follow in sanitizing the teat cups between milkings?

How many units are operated by one individual?

How long do you leave the machine on the cow's teats?

Do the machines creep up on the udder before being removed?

Do you machine strip your cows?

Do you follow a definite routine in milking your cows?

Preventing Spread of Mastitis

The germs that cause infectious mastitis can be spread from infected to non-infected cows rather easily. Bacteria found in manure, soil and water may occasionally pass through the teat opening and multiply within the udder. One of the most important phases of mastitis control is to prevent the spread of germs that cause mastitis.

If you took an inventory of your dairy set up, what practice or factor do you think might be causing mastitis to spread from one cow to another?

In washing and massaging cows' udders, do you use a single cloth or individual cloths or paper towels?
List five ways that mastitis might be spread from one cow to another cow on your farm?

1. ___________________ 2. ___________________

3. ___________________ 4. ___________________

5. ___________________

To prevent calves from sucking one another, what practice do you use? ___________________

What has been the biggest help to you in preventing and controlling mastitis? _________

Two additional bulletins recommended for further study are: Current Concepts of Bovine Mastitis—published by the National Mastitis Council, 440 East Ogden Avenue, Hinsdale, Illinois, $1.00 per copy. Bovine Mastitis Bulletin 525, Ontario Veterinary College, Guelph, Canada. (Few copies available Dairy Extension Office, College of Agriculture, Lincoln, Nebraska.)

The subject of mastitis has been covered in six circulars. Information in the circulars has been as follows:

EC 63-639 Mastitis and Your Dairy Herd
EC 63-640 Preventing Mastitis by Better Herd Management
EC 63-641 The Milking Machine and Mastitis
EC 63-642 Preventing Mastitis with Better Milking Practices
EC 63-643 Preventing Spread of Mastitis
EC 63-644 You Can Control Mastitis

Prepared through the cooperation of the Nebraska Mastitis Committee, C. W. Nibler, chairman, P. H. Cole, secretary.