



**LINWOOD**  
VETERINARY SERVICES

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Orders for Delivery: call by 9:30am for same day local delivery Mon to Friday

24 Hour Emergency Vet Service

### NOVEMBER 2011 NEWSLETTER

#### Clinic News

Linwood Veterinary Services and Hwy 89 Veterinary Services invite you to a dairy meeting with keynote speaker Dr. Sam Leadley, PhD P.A.S. the calf/heifer management specialist from Attica Veterinary Associates. Dr. Leadley consults with dairy farmers and heifer growers with the goal of improving the profitability of raising healthier, faster-growing animals through better management practices. We will be hosting a meeting with Dr. Leadley the mornings of January 19<sup>th</sup> at the Legion in Mount Forest, and January 20<sup>th</sup> at the community centre in Linwood. Please call the clinic to add your name to our attendance list and to reserve lunch at one of the meetings.

## Untreated mastitis – is that the right thing to do?

Some bacteria that cause mastitis respond to common mastitis treatments and should be treated that way. However, there are some cases of clinical mastitis which do not respond to antibiotic treatment and should not be treated with antibiotics. How do you make the treatment decision?

The answer is by culturing the milk of clinically infected cows to at least categorize the pathogens as to a type that responds or a type that does not respond to antibiotics. Many will say sending milk away for culture takes days and by then the cow should have been treated. That may be true, but this information/identification will help and be the key to consistently producing low bulk tank somatic cell counts (SCC). Culturing milk should be a part of a complete program for cow health and quality milk. It not only provides information for treating the cow with mastitis, but it helps monitor the herd udder health and fine-tune prevention program.

It is important to note that treatment can be delayed until culture results were complete only for cows with milk to moderate clinical mastitis. Treatment should not be held from cows with severe (fever, off-feed, depressed) mastitis. Many of these types of mastitis can result from life-threatening coliforms, and while culture is still useful for management decisions, antibiotic and supportive therapy should be given immediately.

In a recent study researchers report that only half the number of cows in the culture group was treated compared to the positive control group, in which all cows showing clinical mastitis were treated. Therefore, milk culturing cut antibiotic use and treatment costs.

When comparing those cows that were not treated versus treated there were no significant differences in cure rates, risk of new infection or treatment failure:

In addition, when they looked at how long the milk from mastitic cows was kept out of the tank. They found that the withholding time for the culture-based group was reduced by one day compared to the other group.

Based on these results, the use of milk cultures resulted in reduced antibiotic use and decreased days of nonsalable milk with no loss in mastitis control on the farms. Milk culturing results in a win-win situation especially in herds with high SSC levels. Talk to your herd veterinarian to develop a mastitis prevention-treatment program.

# Set goals for Improved Milk Quality

As CQM adoption continues, producers must look to help improve milk quality, cow health and profitability. Use the following milk quality resolutions to advance your mastitis management programs and produce higher-quality milk.

- **1) Keep culture records:** When mastitis problems are detected, it is important to identify the pathogens. Culturing programs and record keeping can uncover the root of mastitis problems. Pinpointing specific environmental or contagious pathogens can help you select the most effective mastitis therapy and protocol to improve cow health and reduce overall treatment costs.
- **2) Treatment goal is for complete cure:** Work with your veterinarian to base treatment protocols on the cow's milk culture; treatment history; length of the infection; and cow age, health status and lactation stage. Often, extended antibiotic therapy can help achieve a true cure, in which the bacteria are no longer present in the udder. Important not be switching products mid-treatment or failing to finish the full treatment protocol even if milk appears normal. Completion of treatment will reduce the likelihood of a relapse. Relapse increases time milk is out of the bulk tank as well as the cost of treatment.
- **3) Pay more attention to your dry cows:** Use a comprehensive dry cow program. Must treat the subclinical mastitis infections that are present going into the dry period with a Dry cow treatment. Next, utilize a teat sealant like **Orbeseal** to provide a barrier against bacteria and help prevent new infections. Prevention steps also include vaccinating for coliform mastitis. By using a vaccine such as **ENVIRACOR® J-5**, you can decrease the incidence of clinical coliform mastitis and lessen the severity of cases that do occur. Be sure to also provide a clean environment throughout the dry period to help further reduce the risk of new infections.
- **4) Increase parlor routine consistency:** A consistent milking routine is key to producing high-quality milk and improving udder health. Make sure everyone agrees with and understands the new procedures. Monitor mastitis events, bulk tank bacteria counts and spikes in somatic cell counts to identify parlor routine issues.
- **5) Work closely with your veterinarian:** A veterinarian can help you develop, implement and monitor a mastitis management program. Your veterinarian can help you gain better outcomes from treatment decisions, advise on parlor routines, interpret milk culture results and implement management practices. They can provide science-based recommendations for appropriate treatment options and protocols. Additionally, they can help set up a milk culturing program and analyze the data to develop treatment protocols for your operation. Veterinarians also can provide a valuable outside perspective of your dairy operation and may be able to identify areas for improvement in your environmental management, parlor routines and equipment maintenance.
- Visit [www.milkqualityfocus.com](http://www.milkqualityfocus.com) for more ways to improve your milk quality.