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We will provide industry-leading, reliable, knowledgeable service, in a friendly, courteous and timely manner, to benefit our clients and the communities we serve.

Linwood Clinic Hours: Mon-Fri 7am – 5pm Sat 7am – 12pm

Hwy 89 Clinic: Mon-Sat 7am-1 pm

NOTE: BOTH CLINICS ARE CLOSED SUNDAY

Orders for Delivery: **call by 9:30 am at the latest** for same day local delivery Monday to Friday

24 Hour Emergency Vet Service 1-800-663-2941

AUGUST 2014 NEWSLETTER

HOLIDAY HOURS There will be no delivery service on Monday September 1, the Labour Day holiday, but both clinics will be open in the morning.

Canadian Quality Milk Program Update

Two information sheets have been issued regarding importation of veterinary livestock drugs and their use in Canada. If you haven't seen this notice, you can ask your herd vet or find at www.dairyfarmers.ca follow the What We Do Tab, then choose Programs, then Canadian Quality Milk, then Notice of Change July 8, 2014.

Summer temperatures impact somatic cell counts

Keeping somatic cell counts (SCC) low in your herd can be a real challenge during the summer months. What causes and how can we prevent these spikes? The good news is that there are many answers for both of these questions.

Why does SCC rise in the summer?

High temperatures are usually accompanied by high humidity. This increase in air moisture leads to less evaporation so alleyways and other barn surfaces will stay wetter for longer. Alleys in freestall barns will likely never be completely dry, and even the cleanest barn will have at least some manure present. This means **dirty feet**. When a cow lies down, those wet, dirty hooves will come in contact with teat ends. That contact can lead to contamination.

Stalls are another area where surplus wetness can be found. Regardless of the bedding material used and whether you keep cows in tie stalls or free stalls, the increased humidity will lead to wetter bedding. Moist, warm bedding creates the perfect breeding ground for mastitis-causing environmental bacteria. Wet alleyways and stalls both lead to the same result: a greater opportunity to introduce bacteria to the teat of the dairy cow causing a potential for higher SCC. Therefore, the real culprit in the summer is the increased rate at which pathogens multiply, thereby increasing the potential for infection, mainly from environmental pathogens.

We must also consider that the **heat stress** on the cow itself may actually lower her immune response and ability to fight off low level infections in the udder. Florida research suggested the summer SCC increase may actually be related to decreased milk production when cows are experiencing heat stress (Shearer and Beede, 1990).

Prevention, how to stop an SCC increase in the summer?

There are several answers to this question and requires a series of actions to help keep SCC low. First and foremost, **no slacking!** Cutting corners now can lead to bad habits in the future. Take the time to thoroughly clean alleys and stalls, and do so often. Keeping piled up manure at a minimum will help keep manure off of hooves, and away from teats.

In the stalls, make sure **bedding** is getting the TLC it deserves. There will inevitably be some manure in the stall platform, take the time to scrape it out. Also, take the time to add clean, dry bedding to the back of the stall to ensure a clean resting place for the udder. In addition to top-dressing, make sure stalls are completely cleaned out and given fresh, dry bedding regularly. Consider using drying agents like Dry-Start.

Air movement in barns helps keep cows cool, but it can also aid in drying out bedding and alleyways. Take advantage of free air movement from open-sided barns and properly placed fans. This can reduce the moisture level in the stalls and alleyways. That will help keep cleaner feet and cleaner cows. Another possible option to help dry out stalls and especially alleys is to let cows out on dirt lots or pastures, if available. This may possibly allow some alleys to dry completely. In addition, it will give the cows some time on dry surfaces and reduce the manure deposited in the alleys. An added benefit to this practice may be healthier feet and legs because the cows are off the concrete for a few hours.

In the parlor, make sure the milking routine and equipment are kept at their highest quality level. If cows are carrying even subclinical levels of infection, it can contaminate the milking line. Poor milking practices can lead to the contamination of other cows, so extra steps need to be taken to prevent it. This includes thorough teat dipping of all quarters, and using a different towel for each cow.

Lastly, **move cows slowly**. This prevents manure from getting kicked up onto the feet and legs. Cows moved calmly into the parlour more readily let down their milk, which gives a more complete milking and prevents teat damage.

Keeping somatic cell counts low and preventing mastitis is important all year round on a dairy, but by remembering the causes of teat contamination, and by actively taking steps to prevent it, you can minimize a SCC rise in the summer months.

Is she getting her Litres of Water?

As the heat of summer approaches our thoughts turn toward heat stress abatement, assess if your cows have access to sufficient water. Water is the most important nutrient for dairy cattle! Dairy cattle suffer more quickly and severely from a lack of water than from a deficiency of any other nutrient.

Water constitutes 60 to 70 percent of a livestock animal's body. Water is necessary for maintaining body fluids and proper electrolyte balance; digesting, absorbing, and metabolizing nutrients; eliminating waste material and excess heat from the body; providing a fluid environment for the fetus; and transporting nutrients to and from body tissues. Dairy cattle get the water they need by drinking and consuming feed that contains water, as well as from metabolic water produced by the oxidation of organic nutrients. Water loss from the body occurs via urine, feces, and milk; through sweating; and by evaporation from body surfaces and the respiratory tract. The amount of water lost from a cow's body is influenced by the animal's activity, air temperature, humidity, respiratory rate, water intake, feed consumption, milk production and other factors.

For example, a 700kg mature cow producing 35kg of milk/day while consuming 25kg of Dry Matter feed at a temperature of 28 degrees Celsius would require 125 litres of water. Lactating cows drink about 30 to 50 percent of the total water consumed daily within the first hour after milking. This time also coincides with a major period of eating activity as well as milking equipment cleaning. Water pressure must be adequate to supply all tanks and waterers during this high-use period.