
MASTITIS

One of the greatest costs to the UK dairy industry is the loss of production and profitability to the dairy farmer through mastitis. It is also clear from the major supermarkets that it is now considered a huge welfare issue which may become of concern to the buying public.

If we take a 100 cow, 8000l herd suffering from a modest 50 cases per 100 cow year and a cell count penalty of 0.25 ppl then the most conservative costs are £7000! This doesn't even take into account reduced overall yield, potential deaths from toxic mastitis and premature culls! I'm sure it's apparent that the figures can be stacked up even more alarmingly.

This gives an immediate incentive to deal with the issues and involve your vet in sorting out underlying problems. Given the scale of financial losses it also should incentivise us all to do this in a structured manner, rather than a quick chat as the vet washes his wellies after a few PD's.

At the very simplest level the following factors should be considered in when we try to identify the causes of mastitis in a herd

- Bulk tank analysis- give a broad picture of which 'bugs' are present in the herd.
- Analysis of individual cases to identify causes.
- Analysis of milk recordings- to identify the pattern of high cell count development.
- Milking machine function- it's just so important.
- Parlour routine- vital in the prevention of spread of disease.
- Cow environment- a major source of infection

Unfortunately often this involves a critical look at the way everything is done on the farm and the slightly uncomfortable presence of your vet during milking time! But surely with the costs involved....?

Once again at Calweton vets, through investment in training and equipment we feel we are in a strong position to help you tackle your mastitis issues and hopefully generate constructive, workable recommendations, ultimately saving you money, improving cow longevity and improve welfare.