



SCC DIAGNOSTICS TOOL BOX



F-MP-1: Fifteen Ways to Reduce Somatic Cell Counts

1. Keep cows clean and dry at all times. This assures clean teat surfaces and prevents bacteria from entering the teat end.
2. Seek assistance from a qualified dairy professional (veterinarian, milk plant field rep, milk equipment dealer, Extension educator).
3. Do individual cow SCC tests monthly to help identify herd trends and pinpoint the infected cows.
4. Run a monthly bulk tank culture through a reliable laboratory to find out what kinds of bacteria are causing mammary infections.
5. If bulk tank culture results show a high level of contagious mastitis pathogens (staph aureus, strep ag, or mycoplasma), identify infected cows by individual cow culturing. Reduce cow-to-cow spread and remove the high SCC quarters from the milk supply.
6. If bulk tank culture results show high levels of environmental pathogens (non-ag streps, coliforms, or staph species), improve bedding management and pre-milking cow prep. Replace ALL organic bedding in EVERY stall weekly with clean bedding. Every day, replace the bedding in the back half of the stall with fresh, clean bedding. If you use sand bedding, add fresh, clean sand at least once per week. Keep stalls leveled and remove soiled sand daily.
7. Improve consistency in milking procedures. Include a pre- and post-milking teat dip, 10 to 20 seconds of cleaning, at least 30 seconds of contact time for the teat dip, and a thorough teat end wiping before attaching the milking unit. Plan routine to achieve 60-120 second prep-lag time.
8. Include forestrip during cow prep to identify high SCC quarters and keep milk from those quarters out of the bulk tank.
9. Cull chronically high SCC cows that do not respond to therapy.
10. Treat ALL quarters of ALL cows at dry off with an approved dry cow intramammary tube.
11. Consider using a dry cow teat sealer.
12. Provide dry cows with adequate space, ventilation and clean bedding. (Minnesota DHIA records indicate that an average of 35% of cows and heifers calve with high SCCs.)
13. Keep cows as cool and comfortable as possible during hot weather.
14. Control flies.
15. Maintain milking equipment in good working order. Develop a routine performance check and maintenance program. Replace rubber parts at recommended intervals. Be sure system cleaning is done consistently and properly.

