

# KNOW YOUR ENEMY

## MASTITIS MANAGEMENT BEGINS WITH CORRECT IDENTIFICATION



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Maintaining a clean facility is important to controlling environmental mastitis.

Written protocols for milking procedures, cleaning practices and times and general farm sanitation is needed, so everyone will be on the same page. Even smaller dairies with few people can benefit from written protocols. By writing them down, it gives the farm an easy way to go back and review what needs to be done and what areas need updating. Farms are always busy, especially in the spring and summer, an easy time to start cutting corners. Many times when those corners are cut the original routine is forgotten, but written protocols are used to help remind everyone that every step is critical to maintain a high level of milk quality.

The second key to a successful program is to constantly monitor the herd's milk quality status at all times. Monitoring herd bulk tank somatic cell counts on a daily basis and occasional monitoring of individual somatic cell counts (DHI testing) is the minimal amount of monitoring any herd should be conducting at any time.

The next step is to take a bacterial milk culture of the bulk tank on a routine basis. This will give you an idea of what organisms are in your herd the day of the test and will help determine what areas of management need to be improved. Highly intensive farms use the California Mastitis Test (CMT) or individual cow milk cultures to determine treatment strategies on a case by case basis. Visible signs of mastitis such as a swollen udder, and abnormal milk occur frequently, but many

Mastitis and poor milk quality is one of the most costly issues on any dairy. With few exceptions, every dairy has or has had a problem with their milk quality program. What separates those who overcome the problem and those who can't seem to find a solution is usually a sound, written mastitis

and milk quality protocol. The biggest hurdle to establishing a sound milk quality program is usually where to begin. There are really only three main areas that need to be addressed or identified, and while that may seem overly simplified, starting off with a basic outline and expanding from there makes a complex problem more manageable.

The first key to having a successful mastitis control practice is to have good milking procedures and to maintain as clean of a living environment as possible. Keeping a consistent and high level of management in both areas at all times is the only way to ensure that mastitis cases are kept to a minimum in the herd.



Every year in the United States hundreds of thousands of dairy cows are culled because they are ill or not productive. It is possible to create conditions which reduce the bacteria which cause pathogens such as environmental mastitis and foot diseases in dairy cows...by creating a healthier environment and reducing the environmental risks faced by animals every day. SOP products are formulated with the innovative Sirio Operating Process technology to improve the environment of the farm in a more effective and longer lasting way than currently available means.



This photo is an example of a standard milking procedures poster that producers could hang in their milking parlor or office for employees to help ensure good milk quality.