

Quick Guide to Troubleshooting Mastitis

Tennessee Quality Milk Initiative Factsheet

Bryan Bastin, Undergraduate, Department of Animal Science
 Kristy H. Campbell, Extension Dairy Specialist, Department of Animal Science

Use these four steps to approach your mastitis situation systematically.

Step One - Determine if there is a mastitis problem

- Problem = if more than 3% of cows have clinical mastitis or are on antibiotic withdrawal
- Use bulk tank milk SCC and DHI SCC to determine subclinical rates and estimate production losses and profit losses using SCC
- High Quality = Average SCC ***less than 300,000 cells/ml***
 - Approximately 6% of quarters infected; small loss of production
 - Lowering herd average SCC must be an economical decision
- Average Quality = Average SCC ***300,000-400,000 cells/ml***
 - Over 10% of quarters infected; production and profit loss due to subclinical mastitis
 - Lowering herd average SCC should be an economical decision
 - To lower average SCC, focus attention on high SCC groups
- Poor Quality = Average SCC ***400,000-600,000 cells/ml***
 - Approximately 16% of quarters infected; significant production and profit loss due to clinical and subclinical mastitis
 - Elevated risk of exceeding regulatory limit
 - Lowering average SCC will have positive economic impact
- Very Poor Quality = Average SCC count ***over 600,000 cells/ml***
 - Substantial number of cows infected
 - Substantial production and profit loss
 - Very high risk of exceeding regulatory limits
 - Immediate action needed

Step Two - Identify cause of infections

- Determine which mastitis pathogens cause most infections - contagious or environmental
- Knowing which type of pathogen will help to develop an efficient treatment plan

Step Three - Evaluate the situation

- A third-party should evaluate the farm, management, facilities and equipment for contributors to mastitis problem
- Both types of pathogens (contagious vs. environmental) may require specific evaluations
 - Contagious = parlor and antibiotic therapy evaluations are priority
 - Environmental = environment and antibiotic therapy evaluations are priority
- For a meaningful evaluation, be forthcoming on daily management and farm activities

Step Four - Address the situation

- You cannot solve all problems at once
- Prioritize solutions based on contribution to problem and cost of correcting



UTIA.TENNESSEE.EDU

Real. Life. Solutions.™