

## A Practical Look at Controlling Environmental Mastitis

- 1. Udder preparation.** Milking cows with wet udders and teats is likely to increase the incidence of environmental mastitis. Teats should be clean and dry prior to attaching the milking unit. When udders are extremely dirty and warrant a thorough cleansing, washing the teats, not the udder, is recommended. The cracks and crevices of the human hand serve as excellent places to harbor and/or transfer bacteria to the teat. Nitrile gloves help prevent the spread of bacteria while protecting the herd.
- 2. Predipping.** Predipping teats with a germicidal teat dip reduces new cases of environmental mastitis during lactation. Extreme caution should be taken to ensure the teat dip is removed from the teats before milking machine attachment to prevent contaminating the milk.
- 3. Milking Machine Function.** Malfunctioning milking machines, which result in frequent liner slips and teat impacts, can increase cases of environmental mastitis.
- 4. Immunization.** Immunizing cows during the dry period with an *Escherichia coli* J-5 bacterin will reduce the number and severity of coliform clinical cases during early lactation.
- 5. Lactating Cow Therapy.** Cure rates following therapy during lactation are generally about 50 to 60 percent for the environmental streptococci. Antibiotics recently approved for lactation therapy can be effective against coliform mastitis. Identifying the causative agent of each mastitis infection is key to properly managing the milk quality of your herd. AgSource offers individual cow cultures to effectively accomplish this goal.
- 6. Monitoring progress is essential.** AgSource's Udder Health Management Package allows you to measure individual cow and herd subgroup trends. The 1-45 days in milk Current Profile and the Previous 3 Tests Profiles (Udder Health Management Summary) gives you an accurate

estimate of mastitis that may be attributed to your dry cow management program and/or environmental mastitis. These tools give faster and more accurate feedback on your progress than watching your bulk tank SCC. It also is important to continue with regular and frequent bulk tank cultures, also offered by AgSource, to monitor progress against targeted mastitis bacteria.

7. **Diet.** Feeding diets deficient in vitamins A or E, beta-carotene, or the trace minerals selenium, copper and zinc will result in an increased incidence of environmental mastitis.
8. **Dry Cow Therapy.** Dry cow therapy and use of Orbeseal on all quarters of all cows is recommended. Together, these practices significantly reduce new infections during the early dry period. Dry cow therapy alone does not control coliform infections.
9. **Environmental Management.** Herd environments should be as dry and clean as possible. The environment of the dry, close-up and fresh cows is as important as that of the lactating cow.