



### **SELECTIVE DRY COW THERAPY**

The dry period is a great chance to treat cows that have persistent problems with cell count. It allows long acting antibiotics to be used without the need to withhold milk.

There are 2 components to DCT (Dry Cow Therapy) – **antibiotic tubes and teat sealers.**

All cows should receive a teat sealer, the benefits of sealers in protecting cows from new infections during the dry period, has been demonstrated worldwide.

Only cows with active intra mammary infections at drying off should get intra mammary antibiotics. In order to identify which cows have active infections, we need individual cow somatic cell counts (SCCs). Cows are considered uninfected if their last 3 monthly milk recordings were under 200,000 cells/ml and with no history of clinical mastitis in the last 3 months, there is no need to go back any further.

Cows with their last 3 monthly milk recording under 200,000 prior to drying off should receive a teat sealer only, cows with one or more reading above 200,000 should receive both a teat sealer and intra mammary antibiotics. The exact threshold used will depend on the bulk milk SCC and the incidence of clinical mastitis. In herds with a bulk SCC above 200,000, an individual cow SCC of 100,000-150,000 may be more appropriate. For herds with a bulk milk SCC of less than 100,000 then a threshold of 200,000-250,000 will be appropriate.

Antibiotic dry cow tubes are very effective at treating intra mammary infections during the dry period. The main reason for the apparent failure of dry cow therapy is new infections picked up during the dry period. **Antibiotic dry cow tubes do nothing to prevent new infections. The only reason to give antibiotic tubes at drying off is to treat any existing infection. the use of teat sealers and a good dry cow environment will reduce the new infection rate in the dry period. The dry cow environment has the biggest impact on new infection rate.**

Hygiene is the key to success of [selective dry cow therapy](#). One of the reasons farmers and vets are reluctant to undertake selective dry cow therapy is the fear of losing cows as a result of mastitis, but a good protocol at the time of introducing the teat sealant will help avoid this. This protocol for drying off applies to all cows, not just those getting sealants.

**PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT ONE OF OUR VETS TO DISCUSS THIS AND ANY OTHER ISSUES REGARDING THE DRY PERIOD.**

