

# Dry Period

After drying-off and before calving

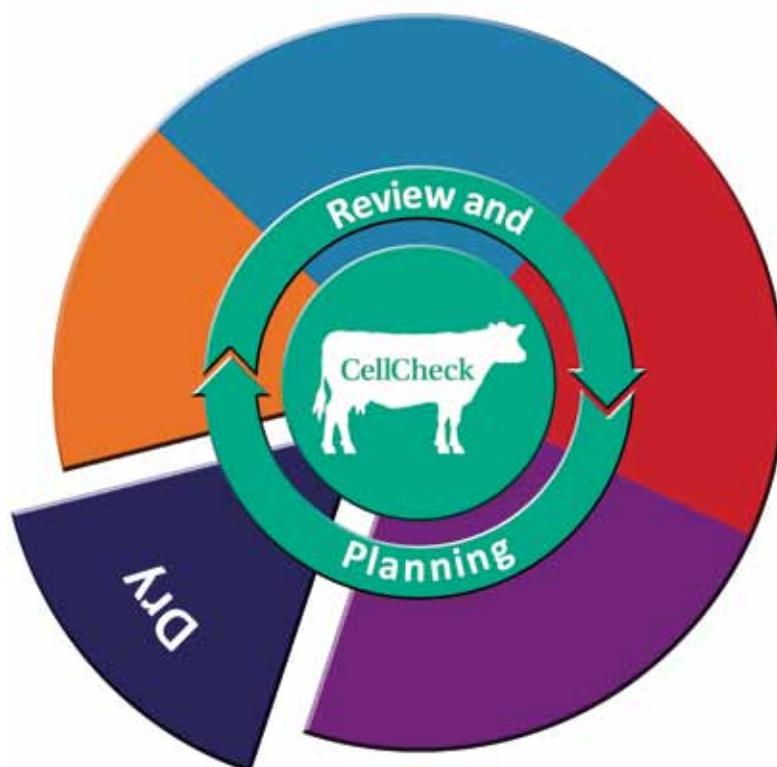
## GUIDELINE

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Observe cows daily

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Selling cows - check withholding periods



### **After drying-off and before calving**

The dry period is an opportunity for both cows and farmers to prepare for the forthcoming lactation. It gives mammary tissue a chance to recover and repair, and for cows that have been treated with antibiotic dry cow treatment (DCT), it is a chance to cure existing infections.

It is important to prevent new infections, particularly in the early dry period, which is why good management and monitoring of cows during the dry period is essential.



- Daily check
- Swollen quarters
- Manual check
- Clinical case

### 19.1 Observe cows daily during the dry period.

Observe udders for signs of swollen quarters when carrying out normal observation of dry cows.

If quarters look swollen, move to appropriate handling facilities and check udders manually.

### 19.2 Check swollen quarters manually.

Check for heat and pain - compare between all quarters.

Strip secretion from suspect quarter and check. It may look different to milk prior to drying-off, and therefore difficult to assess.

If suspicious, treat as a clinical case. Do not remove milk or secretion from adjacent normal quarters.

Do not repeat the use of DCT in these quarters, unless the infection occurs within the first 7 days of dry period. Otherwise, withholding periods may exceed the remainder of the dry period time.

If treatment has been repeated, a consultation with a vet is particularly advised.

Remember to record full details of the clinical case and treatment.



Swollen quarter in a dry cow.

**Refer to Guideline 4:** Rapidly find, treat and record clinical cases in freshly calved cows.



- Cull cows
- Meat withholding period

Local and overseas consumers demand 'clean beef', free from unacceptable chemical residues. Cows culled from our dairy herds must be free from all unacceptable residues when they are sold for slaughter. Errors have the potential to jeopardise Ireland's beef export trade and affect domestic consumption. Irish live cattle exports amounted to €183 million in 2010, and the domestic market beef consumption accounted for about €270 million of output in 2010.

All cows must be identified if treated with any antibiotic. Dairy farmers tend to maintain markings which can be easily seen on cows during the milk withholding period, but not for the full length of the meat withholding period. They generally rely on permanent identification and written records to check when meat withholding periods have expired.

It is essential to keep records of all treatments and check these for every cow that is to be sold.

#### 20.1 Check withholding periods.

**Refer to Management Note F:**  
Guide to withholding periods  
after use of dry cow treatment.

Do not sell for meat unless the antibiotic withholding period for meat has passed.

If you do have to sell cows before the withholding period has passed you should inform the purchaser.

Ideally if you are planning to cull cows, do not treat them with DCT.

