



CELLCHECK TIP OF THE MONTH

Don't turn a blind eye!

JUST BECAUSE there are no clots in the milk, doesn't always mean there is no infection! Subclinical mastitis infections are very common, and will have no visible signs.....only a high somatic cell count (SCC). Don't ignore these cases just because you can't see anything-the sooner you find them, the sooner you can deal with them.

The California Mastitis Test (CMT) is a quick and easy test that detects subclinical mastitis by estimating the SCC of the milk. The test works on the principle that mixing milk with a reagent causes the somatic cells in the milk to rupture. When the DNA is released from these cells, it coagulates and forms slime-the more cells there are in the milk, the more "jelly-like" the result



This spring, check all cows and 1st lactation animals with the CMT before including their milk in the bulk tank for the first time-that way you can be confident that any problem cows are picked up early, before they cause more trouble!

3 easy steps!

1. After discarding the first 3-4 squirts of foremilk, collect 2-3 squirts of milk from each quarter in each separate well. Holding the paddle almost vertical, allow excess milk to pour out just until the line becomes visible. This is the correct amount of milk to have in the well.
2. Add an equal amount of reagent to each well. Swirl the paddle gently, mixing for 10 secs.
3. Look at the consistency of the fluid in each well (not the colour), and record the amount of gel reaction that occurs within 20 seconds (from none to almost solidified).

CMT kits are available from most co-op retail stores and veterinary clinics and are very inexpensive.

What do the results mean?

- Results are generally categorised as follows: negative, trace, 1, 2, 3.
- This test is subjective! i.e. what you score as 1, your neighbour might score as a 2.
- Remember-the important thing is that any positive reaction (1, 2 or 3) indicates a high SCC in that quarter.
- To become accurate and consistent, practice on cows with a known high SCC.

For more information, see the *CellCheck Farm Guidelines for Mastitis Control*, or see the YouTube video on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V6vDjeG7Ry4&feature=youtu.be>

