



CELLCHECK TIP OF THE MONTH

Managing High SCC In Late Lactation

WHILE MAXIMISING production and selling as much milk as possible may be a priority this autumn, turning a blind eye to animals with a high SCC i.e. sub-clinically infected, could prove to be a very costly exercise. In fact, sacrificing quality over quantity is a false economy. These cows are not producing milk to their full potential because infection has damaged some of the mammary tissue, and to make matters worse will remain a constant source of infection in your herd! So how should you deal with them?

1. The first thing to do is to milk record the whole herd, and identify any high SCC cows i.e. $SCC > 200,000 \text{ cells/mL}$. While milk recording might be seen as an extra cost, it can be more expensive not to! Without measuring the SCC of each cow individually, there is no way of knowing which cows are infected. One alternative to milk recording is to use the California Mastitis Test (CMT) on the whole herd- but don't forget to record all the results!



2. High SCC cows should be marked and milked last to minimise disease spread. If it is not possible to run them as a separate herd, hold them back and milk them as the last row. This will prevent them infecting other cows.

3. Remove the source of infection. Consider drying high SCC cows off early, to give them the best chance of curing and to reduce the impact on your bulk tank SCC.
4. Develop a culling list of cows which have had recurring high SCC and mastitis problems and are unlikely to cure – consider culling cows that have had high SCC for two consecutive lactations, despite antibiotic dry cow therapy.



For more information on controlling mastitis in late lactation and dealing with high SCC cows, see Guidelines 14 and 15, and Management Note M in the *CellCheck Farm Guidelines for Mastitis Control*.