

# Dry cow therapy-selective or blanket?

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There is much discussion lately about the growing challenge of antimicrobial resistance (AMR), and how the use of antibiotics in both humans and animals can contribute to it. The use of antibiotics at the end of lactation is one area that is receiving increasing attention. There is much discussion about whether farmers should use blanket or selective dry cow therapy in their herds-what does this actually mean and why do we use dry cow therapy at all?

## Remember!

Dry cow therapy (DCT) consists of intramammary antibiotic tubes and/or internal teat sealer. The purpose of DCT is to:

1. eliminate existing udder infections at the end of lactation
2. and prevent new infections over the dry period.

## Blanket DCT:

This is when all quarters of all cows are treated with antibiotic.

## Selective DCT:

This is when only selected cows i.e. those with infected quarters, are treated with antibiotic. Internal teat sealer can then be used in the remainder of the herd.

When it comes to deciding between blanket and selective DCT, it is not a case of “one size fits all”. However, there are certain criteria that a herd owner should be able to fulfil, in order to safely consider using selective DCT. For example, regular milk recording is essential, as without this it is not possible to make informed decisions on the likely infection status of each individual animal. Milk cultures results are also important, as blanket DCT may still be necessary for some herds depending on the bacterial challenges that they face. Excellent hygiene when administering any DCT is critical, but even more so with selective DCT, as there is no antibiotic being administered at the same time.



## ▶ CELLCHECK TIP OF THE MONTH

For full details on using selective DCT in your herd, read Management Note C in the 'CellCheck Farm Guidelines for Control', and discuss with your vet. If you can't fulfil all the recommended criteria, for example if you are not milk recording, then start milk recording now so that by Autumn 2018 you will be in a better position to consider selective DCT for your herd and to safely reduce the amount of antibiotic that you use.

**For more information and practical tips on Dry Cow Therapy, see *CellCheck Farm Guidelines for Mastitis Control-Guidelines 16 – 18 & Management Notes C – F.***

