

Everyone needs a break!

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With the better milk price this year, some farmers may be tempted to continue milking cows as long as they keep producing milk. However, this could prove to be a costly exercise in the long run. It is important to remember that every cow needs a dry period before she calves again, and starts her next lactation. Every farmer and milker needs a dry period too! This is your chance to take a break from the routine, which is important for your own mental and physical health.

For the cow, this is the time when mammary tissue regenerates, repairs and prepares to produce milk again. It is also the period when cows have an opportunity to reach the optimal body condition score, in preparation for calving and the start of the next breeding cycle. The general recommendation is that cows need a dry period that is at least 42 days long. To ignore, or significantly shorten the dry period, could have a detrimental effect on the productivity of the herd in 2018. Shorter dry periods can also increase the risk of antibiotic residues in milk after calving, if sufficient attention is not given to the minimum dry period duration of the product. Just because the product was fine to use last year on cows that had a 7 week dry period, doesn't automatically mean that is ok to use this year in cows that might only be dry for 6 weeks!

The dry period is also an ideal time to deal with those high SCC cows, or chronic cases of mastitis. While factors such as the bacteria involved can influence the outcome, generally treating infected cows with dry cow therapy (DCT) delivers a better cure rate than treatment during lactation.

Remember!

Hygiene at drying off is absolutely crucial-what you do now will have an impact on udder health in 2018.

See the CellCheck Farm Guidelines for more information on this topic.