

Use individual cow SCC for management decisions

- Seeking advice
- Chronically infected cows
- Infection spread
- Milk recording

Regular individual cow SCC enable you to monitor the udder health of each cow over each lactation. They also give you an option for dry cow treatment (DCT) decisions, and allow you to assess the contribution of individual cows to bulk tank SCC problems if they arise. Scientific evidence shows that it is not always economically justifiable to treat high cell count cows with antibiotics during lactation. Thus, it is important that management decisions are made that reduce the infection risk posed by these animals.

12.1 Consult your CellCheck advisor for advice on management of cows contributing high numbers of cells to the bulk tank, if bulk tank payment premiums are being lost or you are approaching penalty levels

Management options may include:

- Withholding certain cows from bulk tank- this is a short term solution only.
- Drying-off cows or quarters.
- Strategic culling.

Milk recording provides individual cow SCCs. CellCheck recommends monthly milk recording as this provides the most regular and useful information.

12.2 Consider milking chronically infected cows last to avoid contaminating other cows

This can be achieved by managing the mastitis cows as a separate herd (depending on the farm system) or drafting out mastitis cows before each milking and milking them last.

Some newer cluster systems include automatic cluster disinfection which sanitises clusters effectively after each cow. These methods reduce the risk of spreading infection from cow to cow via the cluster.



Use the CellCheck Farm reports for your herd

The CellCheck Farm reports (Summary and Analysis) use your milk recording results, and clinical case records to give an accurate overview of udder health in your herd. They help you identify problem areas and potential risks as well as tracking progress after any management changes are made.

Contact ICBF or your CellCheck Advisor for more information, or visit

www.icbf.com

12.3 Watch for evidence of spread of infection in the herd by checking the percentage of cows and heifers with increased cell counts each month

Refer to Management Note M

Dealing with high SCC cows.



New/recent infection

The new/recent infection rates give you an indication of how quickly and when infection is spreading to clean cows. This is usually not obvious as most mastitis infections are subclinical. New/recent infection rates can only be measured in herds that participate in milk recording.

Somatic cell counts are a guide to infection status of individual animals, and will only give a guide to infection spread. Where contagious mastitis bacteria are concerned (especially *Staph. aureus*) fluctuations in individual cow SCC occur in infected animals, and a peak individual cow SCC over the season should be used. A reduction in individual cow SCC in tests later in lactation does not necessarily mean that the infection has cleared up.