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Guide to withholding periods after use of antibiotic dry cow treatment

Antibiotic dry cow treatment may be infused into each quarter immediately after the last milking of a cow's lactation. It is an important management procedure for treating existing udder infections.

All dry cow treatment (DCT) products are registered with the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA), and have a specified Minimum Dry Period (MDP) after treatment. If a cow calves before this time has expired, withholding periods for milk may be longer than usual. Withholding periods (WHP) are shown on the product labels, and also on the the HPRA website www.hpra.ie.

Follow these guides to minimise risk of antibiotic residues in meat or milk after use of antibiotic DCT

Ensure all cows to be culled have passed their recommended withholding period for meat

- Withholding periods for meat are counted from the date the antibiotic DCT is administered.

Check each cow that received antibiotic DCT has passed her Minimum Dry Period when she calves

- If not, mark her clearly and withhold milk from the bulk tank.

Keep colostrum and transition milk from all freshly calved cows out of the bulk tank

- For milk quality reasons, all cows should have their colostrum and transition milk withheld from the bulk tank for at least the first eight milkings after calving. This applies to all cows, whether they received antibiotic DCT or not.
- For cows that did receive antibiotic DCT (and their Minimum Dry Period has elapsed), a withholding period for milk after calving is specified for each product (see product labels or HPRA website, www.hpra.ie).

If you suspect an error in cow identity, or treatment or calving date records, do not put the milk in the bulk tank until the issue is resolved. Consult your milk processor

There may be cases where a milk antibiotic check test may help avoid the possibility of an inadvertent inclusion of residue positive milk. You should immediately contact your milk processor representative to discuss appropriate action.