

TIMELY REMINDERS IN PREPARATION FOR SPRING 2024

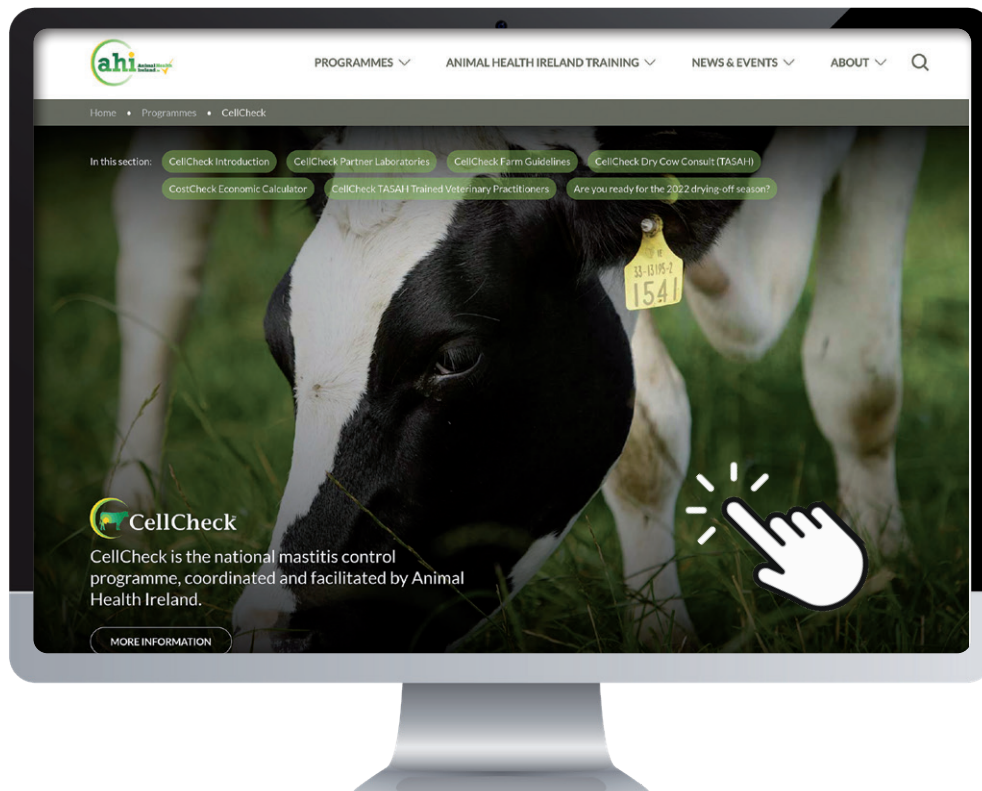
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An important part of planning for 2024 is reviewing your records from last year, benchmarking against other years and setting targets for this year. If you are not milk recording, now is the time to start. Milk recording has numerous benefits, including early detection of infected cows, and is the most practical and reliable way of identifying cows that may or may not need antibiotic treatment at drying off. Completing a milk recording within 60 days of calving shows you how successful any dry cow treatment was at curing infections and identifies cows that picked up new infections during the dry period. Identify any cows that had a high SCC last year and pay close attention to them when they calve for any evidence of clinical mastitis.

Another important aspect of mastitis management is to understand what pathogens are present in your herd by collecting and testing milk samples from any clinical cases that occur during the year. Aseptic milk samples should be collected from any clinical case before you start treatment. These can be frozen for several months, and then when you have a few of them, they can all be sent to the laboratory together for culture. Make sure the samples are clearly labelled and identified. Record all clinical cases of mastitis and ideally send the information to ICBF by texting "Mast" and cow's freeze brand to 0894577663; for example, if cow number 200 has mastitis, type "Mast 200". The more information we can gather on each cow during the lactation the better prepared we will be for selective dry cow therapy at the end of their lactation, and better cow selection will mean better results.

Other jobs that should be completed as soon as possible, if not already done, are:

- ✓ Service the milking machine, check teat sprayers and nozzles and change the liners.
- ✓ Have the calving area clean, disinfected, properly set up and ready to go.
- ✓ Closely monitor cows and heifers that are near calving, as they are more susceptible to mastitis in the last 2 weeks before they calve.
- ✓ Keep the cubicles dry and clean - it can get a bit tiresome at this stage of the winter, but spring is coming, and they will be outdoors before you know it!
- ✓ Parlour train heifers. Teat spraying twice a week while they walk through the parlour has been shown to significantly reduce new infections. Examine them for any obvious warts that may require veterinary assistance.
- ✓ Stock up on supplies e.g., gloves, teat disinfectant, milk sample bottles, calving equipment, markers, California Mastitis Test, calcium, salt (for frozen yards and milking machines).
- ✓ Complete maintenance and repairs on areas that could pose a mastitis risk once cows are left out e.g. roadways, around troughs etc.



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