

THE TOTAL PROGRAM CONCEPT OF MASTITIS CONTROL

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The National Mastitis Council and the National Conference of Interstate Milk Shippers have initiated actions that have resulted in a three-phase program for the detection and elimination of abnormal milk. Screening tests are presently being conducted on herd milk samples. Mastitis or inflammation of the udder is the primary cause of high test results or high leucocyte counts. While there is no simple solution to control mastitis, it can be reduced by a long continuous program aimed at correct milking with adequate housing and facilities correlated with proper laboratory results to give the most effective treatment available. This is referred to as the total program concept of mastitis control.

Economic losses amount to an average of \$30 per cow in the U. S. Costs of treatment and milk quality control add to the total. Milk production is significantly lowered. Mastitis also has an adverse and economic effect on quality of fluid milk and manufactured products.

Adequate concrete yards, pens and barns combined with cow cleanliness and washing and priming of the udder prior to milking provides for faster milking and fewer mastitis problems. Dipping teats in antiseptic solution after milking and keeping milking utensils clean helps to prevent new udder infections. Proper use and application of the milking machine is also important. The milking system should be checked periodically by a reliable milking machine serviceman to keep it functioning properly. A veterinarian can help to identify the type of infection and prescribe treatment. Badly infected cows and cows that fail to respond to treatment should be sold. Isolation of the causative organism from milk samples and antibiotic sensitivity testing may help in selecting the best treatment. Dry cow treatment is of proven value. Vaccination is of questionable value and has given variable results. Control of mastitis depends largely on the prevention of new cases by instituting better management along with milking and sanitation practices, and by using improved milking equipment. Frequently, it takes 6 months to a year to correct herd mastitis problems, especially if mastitis has been in the herd over a long period of time.

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