

Countdown Mastitis Focus fact sheet

Your calving system

May 2009

The **Clinical Case Rate at Calving** shows the success of calving systems used in your herd over the last 12 months.

Dairy
Australia
Your Levy
at Work



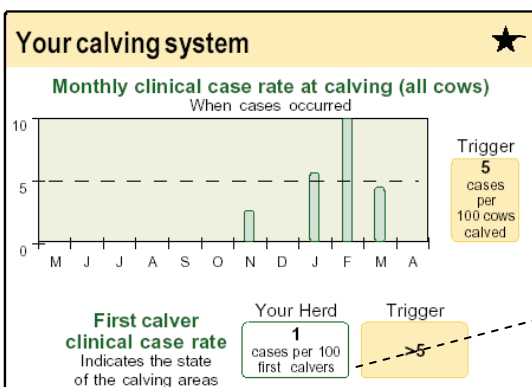
Cows are very susceptible to new mastitis infections around calving and subclinical infections that have persisted through the dry period may flare into clinical cases.

Your calving system has more detail about clinical case rates at calving and shows when problems occurred.

Tips for minimising mastitis around calving are given on the next page. If you would like more detailed interpretation about what is happening in your herd contact a Countdown-trained adviser in your area or visit www.countdown.org.au

Understanding your report

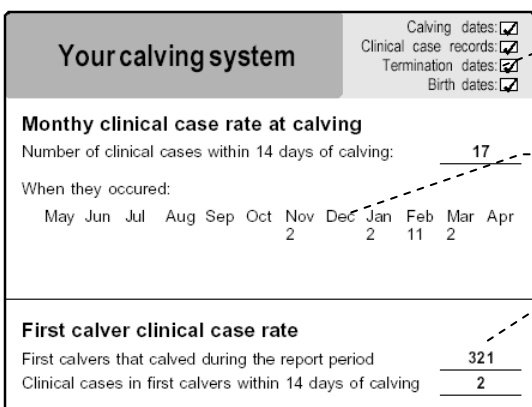
TIP The **Clinical Case Rate at Calving** at the top of your report in **Your Herd Annual Performance Summary** gives the overall rate for the entire report period



A single star rating indicates that you need to take action

TIP Page 2 of your report shows the number of cows calved each month and the number of clinical cases - make sure the numbers look right!

If first calvers have a high clinical case rate then a contaminated calving environment could be the problem.



If a tick is missing it means that those records were not available. Include all records to get a comprehensive report

These are the actual number of clinical cases that occurred in the first two weeks after calving

TRAP If too many animals have been classed as first calvers it indicates that not all birthdates were available. The clinical case rate for this group will also be incorrect

TRAP Make sure that everyone understands and follows the farm protocol for detecting clinical so that cows are not being missed or treated unnecessarily

Your records

- Clinical case records are needed (intramammary and injectable antibiotics)
- Calving dates are required
- Birthdates are required to identify first calvers.

Areas to focus on when your star rating is low...



Have a clean, dry calving environment



The risk of clinical mastitis increases around calving time as there are high numbers of environmental mastitis bacteria in mud and faeces that can contaminate teat ends

Quick check – The calving area has:

- Less than two pats of manure per square meter
- Minimal mud and surface water
- High risk areas fenced off eg, under trees where cows congregate
- Ways of limiting access to previously contaminated areas eg, back fencing

Review Farm Guideline 1 Reduce exposure to environmental mastitis bacteria

Manage freshly calved cows



Take extra care with freshly calved cows. The sooner the udder is completely milked-out, the better the chance of flushing away invading bacteria that cause mastitis

Quick check - Are:

- Cows milked quickly after of calving - within 24 hrs
- Freshly calved cows run as a separate mob
- Cups put on after teats become plump with milk to achieve full milk-out
- Cows carefully forestripped for the first 8 milkings after calving to detect clinical cases: wateriness or clots that persist for MORE than three squirts of milk OR heat, swelling or pain in the udder

Review Farm Guideline 4 Rapidly find, treat and record clinical cases in freshly calved cows

Manage cows dripping milk



When springing cows drip milk it means the protective teat plug from the dry period has gone - and if milk can leak out, bacteria can get in!

Quick check – Do you:

- Milk springing cows that are dripping milk prior to calving (and consider inducing calving)
- Have a plan for managing udder oedema (flag) in heifers to enable complete milk-out. Speak to your vet about the best options for you

Review Farm Guideline 4 Take care with two-year-old and freshly calved cows

Protect cows over the dry period



An important outcome of a good dry cow strategy is that a teat plug forms and reduces the number of new infections that occur over the dry and around calving

- **Check** if your dry cow strategy is working by reviewing **Previous dry-off strategies** on your report
- **Use** the details in **Plan your next drying-off** – it's best to do this with your vet

See Fact Sheet C Guide to choosing an appropriate dry cow strategy