

Countdown Mastitis Focus fact sheet

Culling to control mastitis

May 2009

Sometimes culling is the only way to get rid of mastitis as antibiotics do not eliminate all infections - especially in older cows that have long-standing infections and damaged udder tissue.

Dairy
Australia
Your Levy
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Chronically infected cows act as a reservoir of mastitis infection.

The **Culling to control mastitis** box in your report has more detail about the effectiveness of the culling policy in your herd.

Ways of identifying high priority cows to cull for mastitis 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 High numbers of chronically infected cows might also increase the **New Infection Rate** and **Clinical Case Rates** at the top of your report in **Your Herd Annual Performance Summary**

TIP Page 2 of your report shows the number of cows culled or died and the number of clinical cases - make sure the numbers look right!

Culling to control mastitis ?	
Your Herd	Trigger
2 cows	Any Cows
?	Any Cows

Cows prone to clinical mastitis
Cows in herd with 3 or more clinical cases in a lactation

Cows infected in multiple lactations
Cows still infected after 2 consecutive prior lactations despite intervening DCT

A question mark indicates that not all measures could be calculated because records are missing

The higher the number of chronically infected cows in the herd, the greater the risk of infection spreading to clean cows

Culling to control mastitis	
	Clinical case records: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Herd test records: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	DCT records: <input type="checkbox"/>
	Termination dates: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Cows prone to clinical mastitis	
Number of cows in herd with 3 or more clinical cases in a lactation:	2
Cows infected in multiple lactations	
Number of cows still infected after 2 consecutive prior lactations despite intervening DCT	?

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

TRAP If DCT records are not supplied then the analysis of cows infected across multiple lactations can not be done

TIP Countdown Mastitis Focus does not list individual cows. A review of your clinical case records and herd test cell counts will be needed to identify which cows to cull.

Your records

- Good clinical case records are needed to identify cows persistently infected within one lactation.
- At least three years worth of individual cow cell counts and good DCT records are needed to identify cows infected across multiple lactations.
- It is important that terminations (records of culls and deaths) are up-to-date as only cows that are still on the farm should be counted.

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



Cull cows that pose a high mastitis risk to others



Cows chronically infected with mastitis can infect other cows. Their removal is an obvious way of stopping spread.

Quick check – Do you cull cows:

- That had 3 or more clinical cases in a lactation
- That were infected in 2 consecutive lactations (prior to their current lactation) despite getting antibiotic Dry Cow Treatment

Review Farm Guideline 15 Cull persistently infected cows

Review your farm culling criteria



Many factors are taken into consideration when deciding what cows to cull out of a herd – mastitis is just one of them

Consider:

- The scope for culling in your herd - do you have enough replacements to reach your desired herd size?
- Your culling preferences: mastitis, lameness, fertility, production etc
- The best time to cull - when is it costly to feed them or too risky to keep them?

Ensure:

- Your system guarantees all cows sold for slaughter are residue-free

*Review Farm Guideline 20 Selling cows - check withholding periods
Fact Sheet D Guide to withholding periods after use of Dry Cow Treatment*