

A 'fresh' focus

UDDER COMFORT NEWS

Nothing is more frustrating than having a cow calve and then show clinical mastitis during peak production.

According to the National Mastitis Council (NMC), the incidence of clinical and subclinical mastitis is greatest in most herds during early lactation, and is most often caused by opportunistic environmental pathogens.

This is a huge drain on profit. The costs associated with clinical mastitis include a 1.45 times production loss, cost of treatment, extra labor to handle cows with mastitis, increased rates of culling, and impaired reproduction performance.

The dry period is a high risk time for cows to get environmental infections. Experts estimate between 60% and 75% of all new mastitis infections actually begin in the dry period.

Udder edema in fresh cows and heifers is also a stress factor at calving.



"They take off milking better, faster."

It is defined as the accumulation of fluid in the udder. Scientists describe the cause as the inability of the lymph system to keep up with the increase in fluid volume, when hormonal changes increase the natural blood flow to the cow's udder in preparation for lactation. This in turn causes swelling, which can constrict the lymph vessels and decrease production.

Some edema is normal around calving time, but excessive edema makes milking more difficult and can do permanent damage by breaking down udder supports.

The intrusion of fibrous connective tissue can also become a problem.

Researchers report that the udder beset with edema is more prone to trauma, mastitis, and teat-end injury as it is difficult to properly apply the milking machine to remove normal amounts of milk, which can also limit milk yield during peak production.

This is why it is so important to get out in front of the problem by paying close attention to the pre-fresh cows, especially the two-year-olds. ■

These dairy producers take steps that are good for milk quality, and at the same time improve udder quality, to reduce stress and position animals to reach their genetic potential in peak production.



Doug and Jody Fairbanks,
Anamosa, IA

"We have a good system here with good employees, and we are aggressive on mastitis and very particular about our milk quality," notes Doug Fairbanks. He and his wife Jody have a 200-cow dairy near Anamosa, Iowa, where they have earned milk quality awards for 10 years.

"Since we have been using *Udder Comfort*TM routinely, our somatic cell count (SCC) average dropped another 50,000 down to 146,000. I'm big on prevention because prevention always costs less than treating. That's why we use *Udder Comfort* on our fresh cows and especially the two-year-olds. What I like best is the way it removes the swelling and softens the udders by increasing circulation."

For the 650-cow herd at Kinslow Dairy, Smiths Grove, Kentucky, *Udder Comfort* is also a fresh cow management tool. "We were using it for our show string and saw how well it removed swelling, so we started using it on our fresh cows after each milking for the first few days after calving," says Jeremy Kinslow, who farms with his sister Lindsie and parents Don and Gail.



Jeremy Kinslow,
Smiths Grove, KY

"*Udder Comfort* takes out the swelling so fresh cows and heifers come into their milk faster. Our fresh cow mastitis is virtually zero now," says Todd. He and his wife Sue and daughter Amanda operate Roadside Dairy near Preston, Minnesota. Their SCC used to run 180 to 200,000, but for two years now, it has been consistently at 100 to 120,000, and they had the lowest cell count in Fillmore County, Minnesota for the past two years.

When it comes to udder health in early lactation, there is no single silver bullet. Along with a "fresh focus" on good management practices, *Udder Comfort* has become the tool of choice for quality udders making quality milk. ■

Turn back to learn more about how dairymen across the country, with large herds and small herds, are using Udder Comfort before and/or after calving to soothe swelling and soften udders with great results.



Todd Hendrickson,
Preston, MN

"Our herd has always had low SCC, and spraying the fresh udders with *Udder Comfort* has helped lower it even more to be consistently around 175,000, while using less antibiotics for mastitis at the same time," Jeremy explains. "As for our first-calf heifers: They really take off milking better, faster."

For Todd Hendrickson's 140-cow herd, similar results have been achieved.