



The prevalence of Mastitis in Cattle dairy herd

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Mastitis is one of the most frequently occurring disease and results in economic losses in cattle dairy herds around the world.

Economic losses often associated with mastitis encompasses **reduction in milk yield, cost in treatment**, hefty penalties on **poor milk quality** and **additional labor** required if most of the herd is affected.

Carefully follow as we go in-depth on causes and how to prevent mastitis in a cattle dairy herd.

What is mastitis?

Mastitis is defined as the inflammation of the mammary gland and the udder tissue, and further regarded as a major endemic disease in dairy cattle.

Mastitis results in a **reduction in milk** and **alters milk composition**.

Commonly reported bacterial causative agents for mastitis

- Staphylococcus aureus
- Streptococcus agalactiae
- Coagulase-negative Staphylococci
- Observed abnormalities in milk?



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- Unusual watery milk
- Flakes
- Clots

What is the difference between clinical mastitis and sub-clinical mastitis?

Clinical mastitis, usually manifests signs often observed from general animal behavior such as self-isolation, reduced feed intake and poor milk composition.

Whilst **sub-clinical mastitis** tends to have no visible signs on the udder of a cow. Except through the use of further diagnostic tools, such as **Somatic cell count (SCC)**. Moreover, SCC can be measured using the **California mastitis test**, which is a simpler and cheaper way of detecting mastitis on dairy farms.

Preventative measures for mastitis in dairy cattle

- Isolation of mastitis infected animals aids to monitor and avoid mixing of milk from healthy animals and unhealthy ones, which negatively affects profit, if observed by milk inspectors during processing of milk.
- Often observed, the dairy industry incurs approximately 50% and more financial **costs on feed** in order for the herd to produce good quality milk. Such that, chronically **ill dairy cows are culled to cut on feed cost** as they are no-longer in production. However, if mastitis condition is not severe the farmer keeps the affected herd which will subsequently be in production upon recovering.
- A cow's udder is divided in quarters known as: right front/back and left front/back and each tit is independent during milk let down



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process. A quarter or two can be stopped from being milked if inflammation does not subside on recovered cows in a herd.

- Sufficient water supply to ease the process of cleaning between milking, so as to ensure good hygiene around the milking parlor. Suppressing the spread of mastitis through contact such as ensuring clean milking machines and environment by clearing all dung heaps or dirt in dairy houses.
- Adequate water and feed made available to the herd reduces the risk of mastitis frequently occurring.

Take home message

As a farmer, be in constant communication with veterinarians, animal health technicians and agricultural extension officers, in order for them to help fight and guide on diseases like mastitis that result in heavy losses

Observe general animal behavior at milking, feeding on a regular basis as this aids in early detection of diseases in a herd.

In conclusion, mastitis frequently occurs among dairy herds, hence, close monitoring and ensuring good hygiene practices is recommendable to a farmer or commercial producer.

References

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