

# Mastitis

Mastitis is inflammation of the udder caused by infectious agents. It negatively impacts milk yield, fertility and the animal's welfare. Both clinical and sub-clinical mastitis can have a significant cost.

## Causes:

Bacteria that cause mastitis can be divided into 2 groups, **Environmental** and **Contagious**. There is some overlap between the groups:

**Environmental** = bacteria from the cows environment

Commonly caused by E.coli and Streptococcus uberis.

Can also be caused by Streptococcus dysgalactiae, Klebsiella spp. and others

**Contagious** = usually spread cow to cow during milking

Most commonly caused by Staphylococcus Aureus and Streptococcus Agalactiae.

Can also be caused by mycoplasma among others

## Clinical Signs:

### Clinical Mastitis

- Abnormal looking milk- watery/thick, discoloured, clots or flakes present
- Udder swollen/firm, red, hot, painful
- Cow may be normal or could be sick (fever, dehydrated, off food, weak)
- Reduced milk yield

### Subclinical mastitis

- No obvious clinical signs
- Increase in SCC

# Mastitis

## Treatment:

- Anti-inflammatory drugs help to reduce pain and tissue changes within the udder.
- Intramammary antibiotics can be used in mild cases where there are no systemic symptoms
- Injectable antibiotics should be used if the infection is in multiple quarters or the cow is sick
- A milk sample can be taken and sent for culture & sensitivity to determine the type of bacteria causing the mastitis and which treatment it is sensitive to.
- Severe cases may require fluid therapy and veterinary advice should be sought
- Hand strip affected quarters as often as possible

## Prevention:

### Environmental:

Paying attention to the hygiene of a cow's environment is very important; overstocking should be avoided

- Housing- bedding should be clean and dry
- Grazing- Reduce excessively muddy and wet areas around troughs and aid pasture drainage
- Standing for 30 minutes post-milking allows the teat to close making it less likely that she will pick up infection from her environment.
- Dry cow therapy- teat sealants and selective use of antibiotics

### Contagious:

Hygiene in the milking parlour is very important to prevent spread of bacteria between cows.

- Milkers- wear gloves and ensure stringent cleanliness
- Pre-milking- use a clean towel for each cows' teats, consider a pre-milking disinfectant/dip
- Milking- Avoid damage to the teats such as over milking and attaching the unit too soon after initial teat stimulation. Clean units after an infected cow has been milked. Milking order- Milk higher risk cows last to prevent spreading infection in units (e.g. 1st lactation cows, low SCC, high SCC then cows with clinical mastitis last)
- Post-milking- A post-milking teat disinfectant is a vital part of mastitis prevention
- Ensure milking equipment is properly maintained

**Please contact the practice for advice or if you have any concerns on 01373 451115.**