



Northwest Veterinary Associates, Inc.

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Strive for Milk Quality Premiums *Prepared by Dr. Tom Linden*

In the age of milk reduction/supply management programs, conversations about a lot of management strategies we've pushed for years (think, decrease stocking density, etc.) and return on investment suddenly look less appealing. Now, I'll argue until I'm blue in the face that those strategies are still extremely important for other reasons besides increasing production, mainly cow comfort and welfare, and should be continually addressed. Consistently, however, one of the biggest areas of opportunity for increasing your milk check is in milk quality premiums. It's no surprise that one of the big strategies recently in addressing milk reduction was to find high SCC cows to cull from the herd.

High SCC cows don't always have abnormal milk, and may have low level/subclinical infections. Practices such as reviewing your test day "hot sheet", especially over 2 consecutive months, will help you identify cows to intervene on. Interventions can mean treatment, drying off, or culling. Consider a "strike 1, 2, 3" rule for chronic cows...those that are over a SCC of ~200,000 2 months in a row...what other issues does she have going on (milk production falls below cost of production, high days in milk, took 8 times to settle or she's open, bad feet and legs, etc.) that would make her a better candidate to dry or cull?

| <u>ID</u> | <u>LACT</u> | <u>DIM</u> | <u>PEN</u> | <u>MILK</u> | <u>DCC</u> | <u>NMAST</u> | <u>PSCC</u> | <u>SCC</u> |
|-----------|-------------|------------|------------|-------------|------------|--------------|-------------|------------|
| 01 | 3 | 272 | 3 | 85 | 121 | 0 | 1054 | 911 |
| 11 | 1 | 234 | 3 | 73 | 174 | 0 | 2348 | 2360 |
| 22 | 1 | 216 | 3 | 59 | 149 | 0 | 1854 | 1688 |
| 33 | 3 | 277 | 3 | 112 | 0 | 1 | 298 | 370 |
| 44 | 3 | 156 | 2 | 111 | 0 | 2 | 604 | 1014 |
| 55 | 4 | 296 | 3 | 93 | 200 | 0 | 1128 | 1007 |
| 66 | 2 | 255 | 3 | 81 | 135 | 0 | 578 | 1397 |
| 77 | 1 | 228 | 3 | 88 | 143 | 0 | 377 | 324 |

This is an example report created in Dairy Comp which shows the cow's ID, lactation #, pen, test day milk, # days pregnant, # of mastitis events, previous test SCC & current test SCC. None of these may have abnormal milk, and all represent an opportunity for lowering your SCC. In example, Cow #44 is 156 days in milk making 111# at test, but is open/not confirmed pregnant, has already had 2 mastitis events, and current SCC = 1,014,000.

For PC Dart herds, user report 031 "4+ this Month and Last Month (Curr SCC Order) will generate roughly the same information. For herds without Dairy Comp or PC Dart, simply looking at high cows in your test day report will provide enough information. For those not



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testing monthly, using other strategies (number of cases of mastitis in 1 lactation, CMT paddle) can help you identify high cows that may not necessarily have abnormal milk.

For cows that are high SCC and/or chronic SCC offenders that you want to remain in milk or in the herd, pause before reaching for that tube of _____ (fill in the blank with favorite intramammary medicine). Taking a milk sample and bringing to it our office for culturing prior to treating may save you some costs. A lot of these subclinical infections may be cured by intramammary tubes; you're likely familiar with *Streps* and *Staphs*. Yet there are also those "bugs" that don't respond to treatment and would warrant removal from the herd. Examples include *Staph aureus*, *Truperella pyogenes*, *Proteus*, and yeasts/molds. Moreover, some cows are just chronically high SCC due to teat/quarter inflammation, damage, etc. and similarly won't respond to treatment.

Several studies point to no difference in treatment success by waiting for milk culture results prior to initiating treatment, especially in subclinical cases. For those already utilizing on-farm culturing, some of the less-common, untreatable "bugs" may grow in similar patterns and appearances to the more common ones, resulting in treatment with poor cure rates. If you are utilizing on-farm culturing, watch for repeat offenders and consider sending a sample to our milk lab on those.

Finally, don't forget to remember other common reasons for elevated bulk tank SCCs outside of the actual cow. When's the last time pulsators were cleaned/replaced, is your washer/dryer operating at optimal temperatures, has bedding been scarce or are stalls not being thoroughly scraped to think of a few.

If you're close to getting that next premium level a little investigation into high SCC cows and other areas related to SCC can really pay off, and Northwest Vets is a great resource in helping you achieve that goal.

New Office Hours – Please Plan Med Pick-Ups Accordingly

From Monday Jul 27th to Friday Aug 14th the office will only be open from 7:30am-3:30pm Monday through Friday.

Starting August 17th, we will be permanently changing our office hours to 7:30am-4pm Monday through Friday.

The office will no longer be open on Saturday's starting in August. The vets will continue to take sick calls on Saturday from 7am-12pm, but your call will be forwarded to the answering service and the vet(s) on call. There will be no change in the call charges due to the new hours. We apologize for any inconvenience, and thank you for your understanding!