

A Different look at Dry Cow Therapy That Saves £20.00 a Cow

This month we took a close look at three local farms that have been approaching their dry cow therapy differently over the past 18 months. The result has been a lower incidence of mastitis, which on farm, means a saving of £20.00 per cow. We are obviously pleased with the outcome and feel it is something that can be applied to all farms.

The three farms in question looked at helping their cows in the dry period by using a 2 tube attack:

- Firstly by using an antibiotic tube to clear any infections picked up during lactation, resulting in high somatic cell counts
- Secondly using, Orbeseal, Pfizer's internal teat sealant, to prevent any cows picking up new infections at the end of the dry period.

This belt and braces approach might seem a complicated or expensive way of looking after your dry cows but the significant reduction in mastitis on these farms, not only out weighed the added cost of the Orbeseal it actually made a saving of between £15.00 and £20.00 a cow on top of the cost of the Orbeseal.

These are the results we found:

All three farms started using Orbeseal in combination with Antibiotic Dry Cow tubes at the start of 2004 so we looked at the amount of Lactating Cow tubes each farm used in 2005 while using combination dry cow therapy against the number of Lactating Cow tubes they used in 2003 when they were using Antibiotic tubes alone.

Antibiotics Alone

	No. Cows	LC Tubes Used	Mastitis Rate	Cost of Mastitis
FARM A	250	432	38	£17,009
FARM B	140	414	66	£16,300
FARM C	270	696	57	£10,099

Double Tubing

	No. Cows	LC Tubes Uses	Mastitis Rate	Cost of Mastitis	Cost of Orbeseal	Saving per herd	Saving per cow
FARM A	250	240	21	£9,449	£1,700	£5,859	£23.44
FARM B	140	327	52	£12,875	£990	£2,435	£17.39
FARM C	350	666	42	£7,441	£2,400	£6,901	£19.72

¹ We assumed that these farms used, on average, 4.5 tubes per case.

¹ We calculated each case of mastitis to cost about £177, which included direct costs such as treatment and lost milk as well as indirect costs such as labour and loss of future yield

At this practice we believe that double tubing is definitely going to part of the routine for drying cows off, it is not something to think about for the future, its something to do today, the sooner you start protecting your cows against environmental bacteria in the dry cow period, the sooner you will start to see your mastitis rate drop.

TOP TIP

When administering Orbeseal and an antibiotic tube, insert the antibiotic tube as normal and follow it straight away with the Orbeseal tube but pinch the top of the teat when inserting the Orbeseal as this encourages it to remain in the teat canal.



Farm A

2003 had 250 cows bought 432 LC tubes Mastitis rate of 38 cases per 100 cows total cost of Mastitis on this farm in 2003 £17,009

Farm A

2005 has 250 cows bought 240 LC tubes Mastitis rate of 21 cases per 100 cows total cost of Mastitis on his farm in 2005 £9,449

Cost of Orbeseal for all cows £1,700 giving a total saving in 2005 over 2003 £5,859 or £23.00 a cow

Farm B

2003 had 140 cows bought 414 LC tubes Mastitis rate of 66 cases per 100 cows total cost of Mastitis on this farm in 2003 £16,300

Farm B

2005 had 140 cows bought 327 LC tubes Mastitis rate of 52 cases per 100 cows total cost of Mastitis on this farm in 2005 £12,875

Cost of Orbeseal for all cows £990 giving a total saving in 2005 over 2003 of £2,435 or £17.40 per cow