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Antibiotics Contaminate Milk

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Antibiotics Contaminate Milk

Antibiotics Contaminate Milk

BE CAREFUL when you treat dairy cows for mastitis. You'll be doing yourself and the dairy industry a big favor.

Carelessness in treating mastitis may cause consumers to turn to substitutes for milk and milk products, as happened in the recent cranberry "scare."

Federal and state laws have a **zero tolerance** for antibiotics in dairy products. The slightest trace in milk makes it unfit for human use. Some people are so allergic to penicillin and other antibiotics that even minute amounts can be dangerous.

Unless Pure Food and Drug Administration warnings are heeded, interstate shipments of dairy products may be seized.

The use of drugs to control mastitis is the main source of contamination. Penicillin is the most common antibiotic adulterant found in milk. However, more recent use of the tetracycline antibiotics such as terramycin and aureomycin, cortisone compounds, and other new drugs is probably more dangerous to potential consumers.

CONTROL MASTITIS

Good management practices will do much to eliminate mastitis without danger of contaminating the milk.

Keep milking machines clean and in good working order.

Always operate at vacuum pressures and pulsation rates recommended by the manufacturer.

If treatment is necessary, always follow these precautions:

Make treatment under sanitary conditions.

Use the services of your veterinarian. No single drug will control all types of mastitis.

Always allow 72 hours (six milkings) to pass between the last time a cow is treated with an antibiotic and the time milk from a treated quarter is marketed. You will lose the sale of a few gallons of milk, but you'll be helping to prevent a "cranberry situation" in the dairy industry.

By Ervin Kurtz, Extension dairyman

Prepare the cow by washing the udder. This will also stimulate milk let-down.

Machine strip cows; remove the machine when milk flow ceases.

Be sure the stalls are large enough.

Use a strip cup at each milking to keep milk off the floor. This will help in the early detection of mastitis. It will also stimulate let-down and remove the first stream of milk which is highest in bacteria.

Control drafts in stanchion barns and have enough space in loose housing.

Use plenty of bedding and keep your yards clean and free of wire, tin, and rubbish.

Handle animals gently. Do not run or scare them. Swaying udders are easily injured.

Fence stagnant ponds and eliminate all muddy or marshy places. Bacteria thrive under these conditions.

Keep barns clean and free of flies. Keep cattle clean. Clip hair on udders and flanks regularly.

Prevent calf sucking. Fewer first-calf heifers will freshen with mastitis or unbalanced udders.

Don't buy infected animals.