

# FarmVets

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## Newsletter April 2015

### Which Dry Cow Tube is best? Eoghan McAlonan on Mastitis

Unfortunately the answer cannot be the same tube for each of your cows. Antibiotic usage is now very much at the forefront of milk buyers' minds. There is increasing pressure on us as Vets and you as producers to show due diligence when deciding if to use an antibiotic tube at all, or which tube to go for. The different tubes we stock all work slightly differently and are designed to be used in different scenarios. The questions we have to ask when choosing tubes include:

#### **Does my cow have a Somatic Cell Count (SCC) problem?**

Cows with an SCC of over 200,000 may need help to treat existing infections. Choose a Gram positive biased tube like Cepravin or Orbenin Extra Dry Cow.

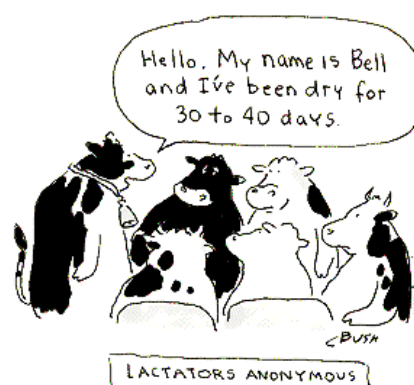
#### **Has my cow had clinical mastitis problems in the lactation?**

If so, choose a Gram positive biased tube like Cepravin or Orbenin Extra Dry Cow. We need to ensure that all the bacteria are killed before entering the next lactation.

#### **Does my cow have a low SCC?**

Latest research has shown that using the "wrong" tube here may actually increase her chances of developing coliform Mastitis. Better go for a Gram negative biased tube like Cephaguard or Ubro-Red. This is likely to be the correct choice for your low SCC cow, especially if she hasn't suffered mastitis in the lactation. The tube in this case acts to prevent further infections (likely to be Gram negative) and not to treat existing infections. Some producers may even elect to hold back on dry tubes altogether in this scenario and rely on teat sealants. The risk here is that sloppy technique can lead to extremely sick cows in the absence of an antibiotic tube.

We are all going to have to demonstrate that appropriate consideration has gone into choice of antibiotic tubes. Farms that continue to blanket treat all dry cows with the same tube will find it hard to justify their actions. The upshot may be that antibiotic dry cow tubes could be restricted or banned altogether. Whichever antibiotic tube we use, a teat sealant (Orbeseal) is always a good idea, providing your milk buyer is happy for you to use it. Feel free to discuss antibiotic dry cow therapy with any of the vets.



## Bull Breeding Soundness Exam

Cows are regularly blamed for poor fertility in herds while the bull is often overlooked. A bull can suffer infertility due to disease, injury, or simply overuse/ old age.

Completely infertile bulls are easily noticed as every cow will return with absolutely no conceptions occurring. Completely infertile bulls are rare but between 20-30% of bulls may be sub-fertile. Sub-fertile bulls are a much bigger problem as they continue to get a few cows in calf thus avoiding suspicion, but fail to successfully inseminate a significant number they serve.



The result is poor conception rates, extended calving intervals, and significant economic loss. This is a particular problem if a tight calving pattern is important to management and sales. New bulls should be tested before purchase and existing bulls should be tested annually or before each service period.

A breeding soundness exam involves a general physical exam including scrotal examination and measurement, penis examination, a rectal exam to check internal glands, and collection of semen using an electro-ejaculator. The semen is then assessed under a microscope to look for any potential infertility problems. Art, David, and Jay are all qualified to perform breeding soundness examinations on your bull. If you would like your bull tested please contact the office for a price and to book in a visit.

## Barren Ewe Abortion Check

Following our article on sheep abortion last month, we are now offering a Barren Ewe Abortion Check with subsidised laboratory fees. If you have experienced more than 2% of abortions within your flock and you haven't performed any instant abortion checks (such as a post-mortem) then this check may be of interest. Aborted ewes should be marked for us to sample at least two weeks later, allowing them time to seroconvert. The subsidised costs cover the laboratory fees for both Toxoplasmosis and Enzootic Abortion. Please call any of the offices if you wish to discuss this further.



## Orbeseal Deal



**Buy 3 x 120 syringes**

## Phil's Retirement Party



Phil's retirement party is on Friday 17th April, 7.30pm at Bridgwater Rugby Club. Please call the Bridgwater office to confirm your attendance.

**Farm Worker Wanted:  
Taunton Area  
Call 07753 416037**