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### Upgrade Your Mastitis Prevention Program

Somatic cells and mastitis typically decline after peaking in August. Due to this year's weather, many herds are experiencing an increase in somatic cells. With a lot of the increase due to environmental types of mastitis, have you upgraded your mastitis prevention program? The major reasons for environmental bacteria to spread are: wet, dirty lots and bedding; milking wet teats; and poor udder preparation. The following are some areas to check to reduce winter mastitis outbreaks:

1. Keep cows as clean, dry, and comfortable as possible. Critical dry lot management requires special attention to scraping and filling low spots. Pave high traffic area, keep drainage channels open, and provide and maintain permanent dirt mounds.
2. Check pre-milking udder preparation. Maintain clean, dry udders and efficient milk let down by pre-dipping, using individual towels, and wearing gloves during milking.
3. Control machine time by insuring that detachers are working properly.
4. Control machine-on time by utilizing high milk flow rates and decreased machine-on time to ensure healthy teat skin and teat ends.
5. Practice post-milking dipping to prevent spread of mastitis. Maintain teat skin and teat end condition by monitoring coverage of the post-milking dip, new infection rates, and teat skin condition. Using a barrier type of teat dip might be cost effective when dealing with wet, muddy conditions.

Mastitis prevention is a critical component of herd management. Although some of these suggestions might seem expensive, the long-term hidden cost of mastitis is greater. Monitor these potential mastitis causes to reduce the Dollar Drain.

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