



Mastitis

Mastitis (inflammation in one or more quarters of the udder) occurs most commonly in dairy cows, but also in beef cows. Mastitis develops if bacteria enter the teat canal – as when cows calve in dirty areas or lie in mud and manure after calving.

It can also occur when a cow has her calf weaned & the udder is engorged with milk for a time after weaning.

Injury to the udder by bumping or bruising can also create the ideal environment for infection.

If the infection stays localized, mammary tissue in that quarter may be permanently damaged by the infection so that quarter will dry up & be small & dry the next time she calves. Cows with a ‘dry’ quarter can still produce as much milk as a cow with 4 quarters, the calves will just drink more often from the good 3 quarters.

But if the infection gets into the bloodstream, the cow may become sick – off her feed, lethargic & have a fever.

Signs To Look For

- Swollen, engorged teats with the quarter being hard & hot to touch
- The cow not letting the calf drink from that quarter
- Try to milk the quarter & it is either blocked or has ‘lumpy’ milk
- Lethargic & ‘sick’ cow

Treatment

In all cases of mastitis – Seek Veterinary assistance Treatment is usually a course of antibiotics administered up the teat canal & sometimes incorporating intramuscular antibiotic injections.

