



SCC DIAGNOSTICS TOOL BOX

QCF–11: Principles of Ideal Pre- and Post-milking Cow Prep

Cow prep time = the time taken to clean the teat surfaces of dirt and manure prior to milking machine attachment. Optimum milk let down stimulation requires the tactile stimulation of the teat skin surfaces for 10 to 20 seconds. Pre-dipping without teat massage is not an effective milk letdown stimulus. Forestripping is the most powerful milk letdown stimulus.

Prep lag time = the time from the initial tactile contact with the teat surfaces until the milking machine is applied. Ideally this should be 45 to 90 seconds.

Contact time = the time required for the teat dip sanitizer to kill bacteria on the teat surfaces.

The ideal pre- and post -milking cow prep procedure should:

- Minimize or eliminate water use
- Focus attention on the teat surfaces only
- Include the use of a sanitizer (i.e., pre-dip)
- Remove all dirt and manure from all teat surfaces (especially teat end) and assure complete pre-dip coverage
- Use forestripping early in the cow prep procedure to observe for signs of clinical mastitis (abnormal milk) and achieve optimal milk letdown stimulus
- Allow pre-dip 30 seconds of contact time to kill bacteria
- Dry all teat surfaces to remove all dirt and pre-dip
- Standardize procedure to minimize variation between milkers
- Consistently achieve complete emersion of each teat at every milking with a post-dip
- NOT slow down milking

In the context of a parlor, we have found that preparing cows in groups of 3 or 4 works best (Figure 1). For stall barn application, the use of an end-of-milking indicator is helpful in organizing the milking routine.

