Large or small, these herds make quality milk

With herd sizes ranging from 50 to 1,800 cows, these National Dairy Quality Award winners prove that every herd, regardless of size, can achieve impeccable milk quality.

How do you keep cows comfortable?

Cottonwood Dairy: We use recycled sand and add sand to stalls twice a week. We scrape the alleys into a flush flume and rake the stalls three times a day. We culture the sand for microbes twice a year. We use automatic water sprinklers and fans that are located over the stalls every 24 or 36 feet with natural ventilation. For our special needs animals, we have a tunnel-ventilated barn. Flaming udders to remove long hair is also part of our routine, as is keeping tails trimmed and neat.

Mil-View Jerseys: We allow our cows to be on pasture as long as the weather conditions permit. We have a curtained, high-roof barn with 50 freestalls. Stall bedding is raked and alleys are scraped twice a day. Sand is refreshed every two weeks or as needed.

Rock Solid Dairy: The sand-bedded stalls are groomed twice a day. Manure and soiled sand is cleaned out frequently, with sand being added as needed. Alleys are scraped twice a day. The sand stalls are dug up when needed to prevent compaction.

Curtains are adjusted as needed, fans are on thermostats, sprinklers are on a thermostat and timer during warm weather, and cows are sprayed for flies when leaving the parlor during summer.

Dry cows are in loose housing and bedded with cornstalks in an open-front shed with an outside lot. The principle bedding is cornstalks, and this barn is frequently cleaned with fans and spears from the back of the shed during the summer months and fans run to keep cows comfortable. Flies are controlled with ClariFly in the feed.

Rock Solid Dairy: Flies are controlled with ClariFly in the feed.

Mil-View Jerseys: Flies are controlled with ClariFly in the feed. Flies are controlled with ClariFly in the feed.
United Dreams Dairy: Cows are housed in freestall barns. One barn is a six-row, naturally ventilated barn with fans over sand bedding and some mechanical sand-bededded stalls. This barn also has sprinklers. The second barn is a 10-row, cross-ventilated, sand-bededded freestall barn. Manure is scraped into a cross auger every milking with a skid steer equipped with a rubber tire scraper. Stalls are maintained every milking, sawdust is added two times a week, and sand is added once per week to sand stalls. Bedding is added more often if needed.

Dry cows are housed in naturally ventilated, sand-bededded freestall barns with fans over the stalls. The barns are scraped once per day with a rubber tire scraper.

 UW-Marshfield: Stalls are bedded with new sand twice a week. Stalls are groomed daily with a mechanical sand rake, while stalls are hand groomed twice daily during milkings or more as necessary.

Twice a year, the back one-third of soiled bedding in stalls is removed and replaced. Scrape alleys are cleaned three times a day. Tail switches are trimmed 1 inch below the last tail vertebrae for hygiene. Each pen contains one Lely cow brush that help keep cattle clean and offer enrichment.

Close-up cows and springing heifers are introduced to the calving barn 14 days before their projected calving date. They are bedded daily with clean wheat straw. Manure is manually removed from calving pens daily. The UW-Marshfield research farm at times houses very few dry cows. Most dry cows in the UW-Marshfield system are transported to the UW-Emmons Blaine Dairy Research facility in Arlington, Wis., and spend their entire dry period at that facility.

How do you detect mastitis?

Subclinical:

Cottonwood Dairy: We detect subclinical mastitis through Dairy Herd Information (DHI) records and milk cultures.

Mil-View Jerseys: We detect with DHI and the California Mastitis Test (CMT).

RKB Dairy: We closely monitor DHIA somatic cell count (SCC) reports and run a CMT on suspicious quarters and cows.

Rock Solid Dairy: We utilize the CMT and watch for elevated SCC.

United Dreams Dairy: It is usually diagnosed by an elevated cell count result or by performing a CMT test.

 UW-Marshfield: We individually test for SCC on suspect cows; CMT testing and monitor DHI tests for a SCC of 200,000 cells per milliliter or more.

Clinical:

Cottonwood Dairy: We detect clinical mastitis with forestripping, looking at the udders, and taking tr on the first DHIA test. We want to keep the cow's rear legs are marked with red livestock chalk. The teat is wiped with an alcohol pad, intra-mammary infusion with a Tomorow tube (cephapirin), slowly infuse an Orbeseal teat sealant tube, dip with T-Hexx, and repeat on the other quarters. The cow is immediately moved to the dry cow pen, and the treatment is written down.

Rock Solid Dairy: Our routine dry treatment is tomorrow (cephapirin), followed by an Orbeseal application, and then J5 vaccination. A SCC higher than 200,000 will be cultured for further action.

United Dreams Dairy: We dry-off cows on the same day every week. We do practice selective dry cows. Cows that are treated with intramammary mastitis tubes are given Tomorrow (cephapirin). All cows are given Orbeseal after treatment. Low cell count cows are only given Orbeseal.

 UW-Marshfield: Cows are dried off at approximately 220 days carried calf (DCC). Cows nearing dry-off are placed on a lower-quality ration to reduce milk flow. Cows are dried off during the morning milking (the same crew always completes the dry cow protocol). Quartermaster (procaine penicillin G) is used for dry cow treatment; Orbeseal is used for internal teat sealant; and all intramammary infusions are done using the partial insertion method. Test disinfection is done in a far-to-near manner, and infusions are done in a near-to-far approach.

Describe your mastitis treatments.

What steps do you take at dry-off?

Cottonwood Dairy: All cows are dried off with Tomorrow (cephapirin) or Spectramast DC (ceftiofur hydrochloride). Plus, we use BoviBlock for sealing teats intramammary. Then each cow is dipped with T-Hexx to seal the outside of the teats. All dry cows are kept in a separate pen.

Mil-View Jerseys: The cow is milked, moved to dry cow feed, skips two milkings, and then is milked. Cows are dry treated with Spectramast DC (ceftiofur hydrochloride) and Orbeseal. Cows are then separated into a dry pen immediately; they have sand-bededded freestalls with pasture access almost year round.

RKB Dairy: Cows are dried up abruptly — we do not skip a milking. Following their final milking, the cow's rear legs are marked with red livestock chalk. The teat is wiped with an alcohol pad, intra-mammary infusion with a Tomorow tube (cephapirin), slowly infuse an Orbeseal teat sealant tube, dip with T-Hexx, and repeat on the other quarters. The cow is immediately moved to the dry cow pen, and the treatment is written down.

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Describe your mastitis treatments.

For mild cases:

Cottonwood Dairy: We use Spectramast LC (ceftiofur hydrochloride), intramammary, for two to five days, once a day. Milk is withheld according to label instructions.
We use Spectramast LC (ceftiofur hydrochloride), intramammary, for five days, once a day. Milk is withheld for 72 hours.

**UW-Marshfield:** Same protocol as for mild cases, except we may also use Banamine (flunixin meglumine) intravenously (IV) if there is a fever. This is done for two days, once a day. Milk is withheld for 36 hours.

**For severe cases:**

**Cottonwood Dairy:** With severe cases, we administer tetracycline, Banamine (flunixin meglumine), and oxytocin via IV. We also strip the quarter and administer Spectramast LC (ceftiofur hydrochloride).

**Mil-View Jerseys:** For severe cases, we will call the veterinarian.

**RKB Dairy:** In severe cases we use Pirsue (pirlimycin hydrochloride), intramammary, once a day for three days. Milk is withheld 36 hours.

**Rock Solid Dairy:** We use Pirsue (pirlimycin hydrochloride), intramammary, once a day for three days. Milk is withheld 36 hours.

**United Dreams Dairy:** Mild cases are treated with Polymast (betacillin potassium), intramammary, for five days, once a day. Milk is withheld for 72 hours. We also use Excenel RTU (ceftiofur hydrochloride), intramuscular, once a day.

**For moderate cases:**

**Cottonwood Dairy:** We use Spectramast LC (ceftiofur hydrochloride), intramammary, for five days, once a day. Milk is withheld according to label instructions.

**Mil-View Jerseys:** The same protocol as for mild cases, except we will also use Spectramast LC (ceftiofur hydrochloride), intramammary, once a day for up to three days. Milk is withheld for 72 hours.

**RKB Dairy:** Same protocol as mild cases, except treatment is done for five days.

**Rock Solid Dairy:** For moderate cases, we use Spectramast LC (ceftiofur hydrochloride), intramammary, for five days, once a day. Milk is withheld for 72 hours.

**United Dreams Dairy:** We use Spectramast LC (ceftiofur hydrochloride), intramammary, once a day for three to five days. Milk is withheld for 72 hours.

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**How do you track treated cows?**

**Cottonwood Dairy:** We use red leg bands to visually keep track of treated cows. All treatment history is entered into the DairyComp 305 computer program.

**Mil-View Jerseys:** We use red tape on the legs to identify treated cows. We record treatments on a daily calendar, and all treatment records are logged into a notebook.

**RKB Dairy:** We use red duct tape on both back legs. The cows are put in the special needs pen and milked last, which is written down in the parlor. The cow identification (ID), treatment date, what it is being treated for, and drugs administered are written in a notebook that is kept in the barn. The day they tested negative is also recorded. The information is recorded on the cow’s card in a card file that contains herd health information. The milking unit is not used on other cows.

**Rock Solid Dairy:** Treated cows have red leg bands. A list of treated cows is written on a dry-erase board, and the cows are kept in a separate pen. We use the PCDART computer program to keep track of treated cows. Milk culture results are kept in a farm binder and in the PCDART program.

**United Dreams Dairy:** Cows are identified with red duct tape on both rear legs. They are listed on a dry-erase board in the parlor while they are being treated and remain listed on the board until the antibiotic clears the animal’s system and the milk can be sold. Treatments are recorded in a daily treatment notepad, which stays on file for five years. Treatments are also recorded in DairyComp 305.

** UW-Marshfield:** Red bands are placed on both rear legs of treated cows. Treated cow IDs are entered in the milking parlor computer system (Alpro) as “do not milk.” The treated cow ID is written on the parlor dry-erase board. Cow ID, date, treatment, severity, and milk withhold is entered in the written treatment log and in Dairy Comp 305.