



Transforming Lives through Quality Education

## DIVISION OF RESEARCH & EXTENSION

# How to manage mastitis in the dairy herd

### Why be concerned about Mastitis in your Herd?

Mastitis is the swelling of the udder caused by germs. It is a costly disease to farmers. It spoils the milk, milk production may drop and the cow will be in poor health. This costs you extra veterinary care in treatment, vet fee or withdrawal from market during treatment. When severe and chronic, the cow will have reduced length of milking period or may be disposed from the herd early.



*Milking into a strip cup*

### Occurrence of Mastitis

Poor milking hygiene, incomplete milking and dirty environment dispose the cow to mastitis. Early detection of mastitis will help stop spread to other udder quarters or to the rest of the herd. Cows in early milking, early dry period and those giving birth for fourth time are the most infected. Also cows with injuries on teats and hanging udders have high chances of being infected.

### Detecting Mastitis

The milk will have blood, flakes and clots when spread over a dark surface. Milk passes with difficulty during milking. The udder may feel hot, hard and red. The cow may reduce feed and water intake, have fever, dullness and weakness.

### Control Measures for Mastitis

Always milk the first few drops of milk from each teat into a container with a dark surface at the beginning of every milking. Milk out completely. Dispose cows that are severely infected and do not respond to treatment. Clean and disinfect all milking equipments and the milking shed after each milking. Dip the teats in antiseptic after each milking. Treat each quarter with dry cow medicine at the end of the lactation. Milk cows with mastitis last or in a separate milking shed. Have individual towels for each cow to wash or dry teats. Wash hands and wear clean rubber gloves. Separate new or sick animals for close observations. Minimize teat injuries. Give dry-cow-antibiotic to heifers during pregnancy.



*Milking shed clean and dry*

### Treating Mastitis

Mastitis is treated using antibiotics through the teats or injection in the muscle. It is important to get a qualified veterinarian to treat the cow. Always read the instructions keenly especially on milk withdrawal periods. Milk out the infected cow before giving any treatment and dispose the milk appropriately. Mark the treated cows for easy identification in the herd.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Extension)

[dvcre@egerton.ac.ke](mailto:dvcre@egerton.ac.ke) ; [www.egerton.ac.ke](http://www.egerton.ac.ke)

Egerton University is ISO 9001 : 2008 certified