



Udder Health

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Every year, bulk tank somatic cell counts peak to their highest level in the summer months. This is driven by a combination of environmental temperatures and changes in diets that create the somatic cell management challenges we experience every summer. With recent production demand increases creating challenges to fill quota, keeping cows out of the bulk tank or culling them because of udder health issues really hurts the bottom line. Here's two areas to focus on, to get ahead of your udder health challenges.

- 1) ***Understand what bug you are battling.*** Knowing what bug(s) you are dealing with is a critical part of successfully managing udder health. Managing Staph is much different than managing Strep. Knowing what bug you are dealing with will allow you to focus on whether it is an environmental problem, milking equipment issue or another management challenge. There are a couple of routes you can take which will assist you in determining the correct bug. EastGen has available a product available called **Checkup**, which will allow by you to culture and grow the bugs on-farm, so results can be available in 24 hours. CanWest DHI has Mastitis4, which can identify bacteria from the milk sample. Many bovine veterinary practices offer a culturing service in addition to these options.
- 2) ***Use the information you have available to make decisions and investigate.*** If your herd is on DHI/Valacta and you test for Somatic Cell, you have the opportunity to review and make decisions based on that data. The Somatic Cell data from the milk recording agencies is great for helping find patterns that can be used to defeat bugs. Looking at Somatic Cell by days in milk and how dry cow programs are performing assist in providing insights to improve health and profitability. Milking equipment can provide useful information as well. If you are interested finding out more, contact your EastGen local representative.