



MANAGEMENT OF DRY PERIOD

Dry off

Problem

- High individual milk production at dry off (>20 kg/day)

Effect

- Milk leaking
- Opened sphincters
- Access for pathogens
- Mastitis during dry period and in subsequent lactation

Solution

- Gradually stop of milking (only one milking per day during the last week of lactation) could reduce individual daily milk quantity of up to 10 kg

Feeding

Feeding is a critical point to avoid problems during and after the dry period. Cows may be divided into two groups: far-off (first 30-40 days) and close-up (last 20-30 days).

- In the first period (far-off) is important to give high quality grass hay (85-90% on dry matter) and low quantity of starch (5-10% on dry matter) and proteins (11-12%) in order to avoid excessive fattening.
- The second period (close-up) is characterized by an increase in the amount of concentrate (15-20% starch) and protein (13-14%) to provide energy to the cow before calving.

Monitoring relative fatness of cows could be a tool to prevent metabolic disorders in the first period of lactation. At dry off, an appropriate Body Condition Score (BCS, evaluating fatness through a scale from 1 to 5) is 3.25-3.75.





Environment, care and monitoring of cows

POSSIBLE PROBLEMS

1. High temperature (>27 °C)
2. High relative humidity (>45%)
3. Slippery floor
4. Undersized walking and resting spaces
5. Dirty bedding materials
6. Presence of pathogens in the environment

CONSEQUENCES

1. Heat stress
2. Lower dry matter intake
3. Lower milk production in subsequent lactation
4. Dirty animals
5. Bacterial proliferation
6. Higher mastitis rate after calving
7. Lameness
8. Excessive slimming/fattening
9. Lower rest periods
10. Premature calving

SOLUTIONS

1. Mammary and BCS cow check
2. Daily check of limb and udder cleanliness
3. Fans installation
4. Frequent replacement or addition of bedding materials
5. Frequent passage of scrapers
6. Presence of an external exercise area
7. Clean delivery room

