

Milk Sample Collection Proper Technique

Label Tubes— Label tubes prior to sampling (date, cow, quarter) (use Black Sharpie Marker).

Pre-dip—Pre-dip all quarters in an effective pre-dip product and allow 30 seconds contact time.

Clean Teats—Using hand towel or wash cloth, brush loose dirt, bedding, and hair from the gland and teats. Extremely dirty teats and udders should be washed and dried thoroughly before proceeding with sample collection. Udders should be washed as a last resort.

Forestrip—Discard a few streams of milk and gland for signs of clinical mastitis. Record all observations of clinical signs.

Alcohol Scrub—Beginning with teats on the far side of the udder, scrub teat ends vigorously (10-15 seconds) with cotton gauze moist (not dripping wet) with 70% alcohol. When cotton gauze is saturated with alcohol, simply squeeze out excess alcohol prior to use. Use as much cotton gauze as necessary to clean the teat ends. Teat ends should be scrubbed until no more dirt appears on the swab or is visible on the teat end. Single cotton gauze should not be used on more than one teat. Care should be taken not to touch clean teat ends. Care should also be taken to avoid clean teats coming into contact with dirty tail switches, feet, and legs. In herds where cows are not cooperative begin by scrubbing the nearest teat until clean, obtain the sample, and move to the next teat.

Sample—To collect individual quarter milk samples, beginning sample collection from the closest teat and move to teats on the far side of the udder—the reverse order from cleaning. To collect the sample, remove the cap from the tube or vial but do not set the cap down or touch the inner surface of the cap. Always keep the open end of the cap facing downward. Maintain the tube or vial at approximately a 45° angle while taking the sample. Do not allow the lip of the sample tube to touch the teat end. Collect one to three streams of milk and immediately replace and tightly secure the cap. Make sure milk entering the tube does not touch the fingers or hands. Two to 3 ml of milk is generally sufficient sample, size, and there is seldom need to collect more than 5 ml. Sample vials should never be filled more than 3/4 full. To collect a composite sample (milk from all four quarters in the same tube), begin sample collection with the nearest teats and progress to the teats on the far side of the udder. A representative sample (1 to 2 ml) should be collected from each quarter.

Storing and Shipping Samples – Store samples immediately in refrigerator or freezer. Samples to be cultured at a later date (after 24-48 hours) should be immediately frozen. Samples may be mailed, delivered or couriered to our lab. If shipping thawed samples they must be shipped overnight. Frozen samples may be shipped two day. Always pack samples in an insulated cooler with ice or cold packs. If you are not certain please call us at 970.351.8102.