

ROUTINE CLUSTER FLUSHING SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCES BACTERIAL CHALLENGE -

Automatically flushing and cleansing teat liners after each cow is milked to remove residual milk and contaminants can reduce bacteria levels by over 97% and help reduce the spread of mastitis.

In trials carried out by leading veterinary surgeon Roger Blowey of the Wood Veterinary Group in Gloucester on behalf of equipment manufacturer Vaccar, cluster flushing was shown to reduce total bacterial counts in the teat liner as well as specifically controlling levels of *Staphylococcus aureus*.

Bacterial swabs were taken from teat liners before and after they were cleansed using the Vaccar Clusterflush system. All bacterial counts were significantly reduced with levels total bacteria and of *Staph aureus* reduced by over 97%. Coliforms which indicate faecal contamination were reduced by over 89%.

“Few farmers are aware of the importance of teat liner hygiene in controlling the risk of infection,” comments Mr Blowey. “The majority of new infections enter the teat while the teat end muscles are relaxed so the liner is a major source of potential infections. Flushing the liners reduces this risk considerably.”

The Vaccar Clusterflush system, which can be installed to most makes of milking parlour works by flushing the cluster with water or sanitising solution before compressed air is blasted through the system to remove all water, leaving the cluster cleaned. Triggered automatically by the ACR the whole process takes less than 30 seconds.

“While it is possible to rinse clusters manually the approach has numerous drawbacks,” explains Pete Lerner of Vaccar. “Manual rinsing is time consuming and often leads to more clutter in the parlour. It is also possible to forget to dip clusters or to clean them inconsistently.

“Automatic flushing overcomes all of these drawbacks and ensures the risk of cow to cow transfer via liners is minimised, helping to reduce the losses associated with mastitis and boost the volume of saleable milk produced.

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