



# SUMMER MILK QUALITY TIPS

## 1. INSPECTION

Do a complete plant inspection. I mean complete - allow 2 hours. Start at the clusters and work all the way through to the vat outlet. Feel and sniff every liner, staying alert for any liner or cluster that feels or smells different from the rest. Put a torch in the receiver and look through the milking line, watching particularly for any patches of soil on the upper surfaces. Open every milking joint. Inspect the receiver surfaces and the receiver airline. Work along the milk path, opening every component: pump, filter and cooler, and every joint or elbow between them. Check the vat delivery line, the vat surfaces, the vat inlet and outlet assemblies and the paddle. Your purpose is to visually inspect every milk contact surface and component, so that you don't have to go into summer assuming anything about the state of your plant - you'll know.

## 2. RUBBERWARE

Summer is a high-risk time for milk quality problems caused by knackered rubberware, because the warmer weather makes bacteria multiply faster. So while you're doing your plant inspection, take a critical look at your rubberware. You're after any rubber component that smells unpleasant, or that is cracked or grainy on the inside. Don't overlook those often forgotten items - the jumbo hoses under the pump, the cone seals in milking joints, and the milk dropper hoses. And if your vat outlet seal is of the screw-down or screw-in type, take the rubber donut off the shaft to inspect it and look under it.

### **3. TEMPERATURE**

Buy a thermometer and check your temperatures. Milk should be less than 18°C out of the plate cooler, and less than 7°C in the vat within three hours. Hot water should not be less than 65°C at discharge from the plant after washing. This usually means you'll need at least 80°C out of the cylinder. The temperature drop between cylinder and discharge after washing depends on your plant. Just to give you an idea, we recently measured, on a plant with 12 clusters and a 4" line, a temperature drop of 12°C after one minute of recirculation, and another 9°C after a further four minutes. Oh, and don't kid yourself that you can guess temperatures - buy a thermometer!

### **4. REVIEW ROUTINE**

Make sure your cleaning is adequate (refer to our Milk Quality Handbook or call Agmax and we'll send you an information sheet about effective cleaning routines). And make sure you have the routine clearly written down and displayed on the Cleaning Routine Sticker (also available at Agmax), because the festive season often involves you relying on relief milkers or farm workers for your milk quality.

### **5. VAT SCRUB**

No matter how effective you think your routine vat washing is, give the vat a manual scrub before mid-December. Vats are the source of a lot of grades, particularly thermoduric grades, in summer. The villain is protein deposits, and you might be unaware of your having this problem if you only inspect your vat when it's wet, or if you're on high collection. The safest approach is to make sure vat protein doesn't catch you out, by doing a manual scrub with strong chlorinated alkali before the hot weather.

That's it! Now you can concentrate on the Joys of Summer - hangovers, freeloading relatives scoffing all your barbeque steak (you get one burnt sausage), screaming kids, and watching the Pop Guns losing to Iceland by an innings and 200 runs.

**Have a great summer!**

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