

## Editorial on Subclinical Mastitis in Cow

Saira Singh\*

Government College University, Faisalabad, Pakistan

### EDITORIAL

Clinical mastitis infections are those with symptoms like udder swelling or redness that are visible to the naked eye. On the other hand, subclinical mastitis infections don't cause any visible changes in milk or udder appearance, making it difficult to detect. Diagnosis of subclinical mastitis can be made in a variety of ways including direct measurement of the somatic cell count (SCC) level or indirectly by performing a California Mastitis Test (CMT) on suspected quarters. The use of intramammary antibiotics to treat cows subclinically infected with *Strep agalactiae* is usually successful and results in increased production and dramatic decreases in bulk tank SCC. Mastitis can be subdivided into two categories based on the source of infections: Contagious mastitis infections acquired by transmission of contagious bacteria from cow to cow during the milking process; and Environmental infections acquired from bacteria in the environment of the cow.

Cows with a high Somatic Cell Count (SCC) indicative of subclinical mastitis on the first milk test have an estimated loss in milk production of more than 1,500 pounds per cow. Subclinical mastitis also jeopardizes milk quality, preventing dairy producers from getting those valuable SCC premiums. The California Mastitis Test (CMT) remains the only reliable screening test for subclinical mastitis that can be easily used at the cowside. The CMT was

developed to test milk from individual quarters but has also been used on composite quarter milk samples and bulk milk samples. There are two options: intramammary antibiotics, the classic mastitis tube and systemic antibiotics given by the intramuscular or subcutaneous route. Intramammary antibiotics should be the first-line treatment for cows with mild uncomplicated mastitis in a single quarter. Most dogs with mastitis can be treated on an outpatient basis, with oral antibiotics and pain medications. This treatment is ideal, as it allows the dog to remain at home with her puppies. Your veterinarian may recommend hand-milking the infected gland. At any stage of life, calves, cows, and bulls can encounter bacterial infections like pinkeye or infected wounds that require treatment with antibiotics. Examples of commonly used antibiotics for these conditions include penicillin, tetracycline, ceftiofur, florfenicol, tilmicosin, enrofloxacin, and tulathromycin.

Cows usually recover from clinical symptoms within 24 to 48 hours. In one study, oxytocin was injected intramuscularly at 100 units every 12 hours for two or three milkings in attempts to treat clinical mastitis cases. Dairy farmers watch for the signs of mastitis, such as the udders swelling, turning red, or becoming hard. The milk produced with mastitis will look watery or begin to produce a clot-like substance. If necessary, cows are treated with antibiotics to fight the infection.

**Correspondence to:** Saira Singh, Government College University, Faisalabad, Pakistan, E-mail: sairasingh1324@gmail.com

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