

Step-by-Step Milking Procedure



Réseau canadien de recherche
sur la mammite bovine
Canadian Bovine Mastitis
Research Network



- All operators responsible for milking should always follow a consistent routine and go through the recommended steps in the proper order.
- First, wash and disinfect your hands thoroughly and put clean gloves on.
- Disinfect your hands regularly during milking to avoid contamination.
- Provide a clean, low-stress environment for the animals.



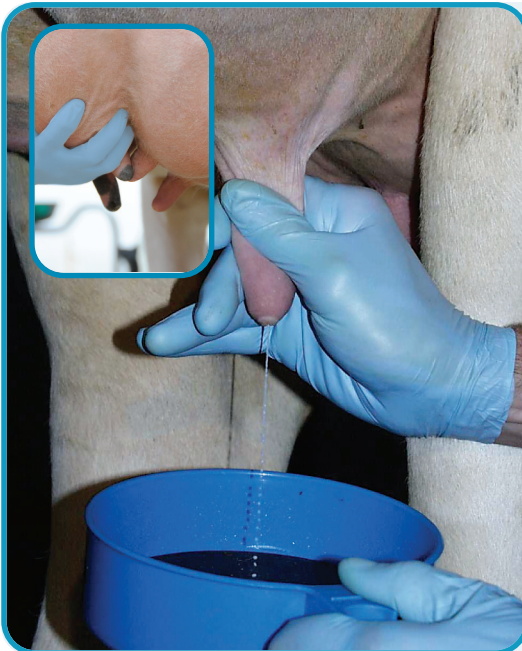
Step 1.

Observation

Make sure to identify cows that must be milked last or that are receiving treatment (e.g. those identified with a leg band).

Suggested milking order to avoid the spread of mastitis-causing bacteria:

- 1- Healthy cows.
- 2- Cows with a questionable health status.
(recent purchase, fresh, post-treatment)
- 3- Cows with chronic mastitis.
- 4- Cows with an infection caused by a contagious pathogen.



Step 2.

Forestripping

This step is essential for detecting the early signs of mastitis. It flushes out bacteria from the teat canal and stimulates the milk flow. In tie-stall barns, use a strip cup to have a better chance of detecting the presence of clotty, stringy or watery milk. The strip cup must be cleaned and disinfected after each milking. In the milking parlour, the foremilk can be stripped on the floor, but never into the hand since this can promote further contamination. Forestrip all quarters. If milk is abnormal, examine all quarters and teats by hand to detect early signs of mastitis (redness and warmth) or other lesions.



Step 3.

Cleaning the teats

Use a disinfectant solution approved by Health Canada and adjust the cleaning time depending on how dirty teats are. To be effective, the pre-dip solution must remain in contact with the teats for at least 30 seconds. Only the teats should be wetted and then thoroughly wiped with a dry single service towel. Pay particular attention to teat ends. Alcohol swabs may be used as a test of teat cleanliness.

The order of Step 2 and Step 3 can be reversed

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Step 4.

Attaching the milking unit

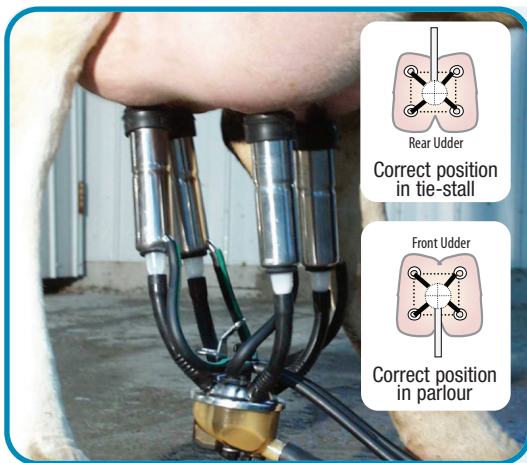
The milking unit should be attached within 60 to 120 seconds after first stimulation. This time allows the milk letdown reflex to occur and maximizes milking performance.



Step 7.

Milking unit removal

If the claw is removed manually, always shut off the vacuum before attempting to remove the milking unit. When using automatic detachers, make sure that they are properly adjusted.



Step 5.

Adjusting the milking unit

Adjust the milking machine to avoid a twist in the hose and to obtain a square position of the four teat cups under the udder. Teat cups must be aligned vertically. The unit alignment should be such that, the claw outlet points between the cow's legs. The claw outlet should point between the cow's front legs for tie stalls and herringbone parlours and between the back legs for parallel parlours. Quickly correct any slipping teat cup.



Step 8.

Disinfection

Once milking is completed, dip the teats fully in a disinfectant solution approved by Health Canada. Teat dip cups must be clean. Discard any unused solution, clean the container thoroughly and prepare fresh solution at each milking.



Step 6.

End of milking

Complete milking should take from 4-6 minutes per cow for most cows. Observe the milk flow carefully or use milk flow indicators to determine the ideal moment for shutting off the milking unit. Avoid overmilking.

