



The
Co-operative
Difference

Managing Somatic Cell Count





SCC Support Overview

Clinical mastitis can have a significant impact on a farm's profitability. Somatic Cell Count (SCC) is an indicator of udder health, and there are regulatory requirements for exported product.

Fonterra and the dairy sector have set a target of achieving a national and farm average seasonal bulk milk Somatic Cell Count (SCC) of below 150,000 cells/ml. We are driving a consistent approach to help reach this target, ensuring that farmers have access to professional advice and practical solutions for managing mastitis on-farm as soon as they need it.

Promoting Early Intervention

The Managing Somatic Cell Count programme assists farmers to reduce their bulk milk SCC. The programme offers the combined expertise of Fonterra, DairyNZ and Accredited Vets who offer education, support, testing and training to help farmers find the causes of mastitis and lower their SCC levels.

The Managing Somatic Cell Count programme has already helped many farmers achieve these benefits:

- More milk production, leading to more milk income
- Less risk of inhibitory substance grades
- Reduced use of animal health treatments
- Healthier animals
- More milk for the Co-operative
- Improved regulatory compliance

Somatic Cell Count is a measure of udder inflammation. When an udder gets inflamed during subclinical mastitis, the milk producing cells slow down production as energy and protein are diverted to keeping the infection under control. If that inflammation is reduced the cow can use that resource to produce milk solids instead of somatic cells and inflammatory compounds.

A cow in mid-lactation with a cell count over 150,000 cells/ml is likely to have some degree of subclinical mastitis, and that inflammation can cause a reduction in milksolid production compared to a cow with a low cell count. **More milk can be made from the same amount of feed if somatic cell counts are kept low.**

Managing Somatic Cell Count Makes Financial Sense

Using the DairyNZ Gap calculator, the value on lost production is estimated.

Milk Price

\$9.00

Farm Production

340kg MS/Cow

Reducing from
300,000-150,000

\$64

per cow annually

Reducing from
250,000-150,000

\$46

per cow annually

Reducing from
200,000-150,000

\$27

per cow annually

At a herd level, the value of milk production gained when reducing SCC from
300,000 to 150,000

100 Cows

\$6,400

annually

400 Cows

\$25,600

annually

1,000 Cows

\$64,000

annually

Remember this doesn't include the benefits of fewer clinical cases requiring treatment or fewer mastitis or high SCC culls. Managing a lower bulk milk SCC is also much easier in late lactation.

The above example has been calculated using the DairyNZ Gap Calculator. To estimate the value to your farm when lowering SCC, use the calculator on the next page or please visit:

<https://www.dairynz.co.nz/animal/cow-health/mastitis/tools-and-resources/smartsamm-gap-calculator/>



Website

SmartS^{AMM} Gap Calculator

Economic benefits from achieving mastitis control targets

Herd Size Annual Milk Solids (MS) kg Milk Price \$

1. Compare your herd's actual (A) with target (B), your desired performance

	Actual (A)	Target (B)	Difference (A-B)	
Season average BMSCC			Lower BMSCC x 1,000 cells/mL	(C)
No. of cases of clinical mastitis			Fewer clinical cases	(D)
No. of mastitis culls			Fewer culls due to mastitis	(E)

2. Benefits from lowering your average bulk somatic cell count (SCC)

Your % milk production gain from lowering somatic cell count from Actual to Target = %

Benefits from increased milk production = \$

Benefits from fewer clinical mastitis cases = \$

Benefits from fewer culls due to mastitis = \$

Total \$ benefit of achieving your mastitis control targets = \$

Support and Resources

For more information about managing SCC and the support services available to you:

- Call **0800 65 65 68** to speak to your trained On-Farm Excellence Advisor about SCC requirements and available support
- Refer to your Fonterra Farmer's Terms of Supply, Fonterra Farmers' Handbook and the practices and procedures within your Dairy Diary or Digital Dairy Diary

- Refer to M.R.S.T poster for animal identification and treatment procedures. This can be found on the Farm Source website
- Visit the Farm Source Website to view and monitor your farms SCC performance and have access to resources
nzfarmsource.co.nz/



Website

- Refer to the Dairy NZ Healthy Udder for tips on preventing, finding and treating Mastitis
dairynz.co.nz/healthy-udder



Website

- Use the **On-Farm app** to view, monitor and set alerts for SCC



Apple Store



Android Store

- Utilise the **Dairy Diary app** to record animal treatments and assist with the monitoring of clinical mastitis. The Dairy Diary app is also a quick way to monitor how the farm is performing with Co-Operative Difference



Apple Store



Android Store

Accredited Vet Assistance

The National Mastitis Advisory Council maintain a register of vets who have undertaken additional training in mastitis investigation and management. Some of the costs of a mastitis investigation performed by an accredited vet can be offset against any demerits that might have been incurred that season. Mastitis investigations typically involve:

- Gathering information on farm mastitis history
- Milk culturing to identify specific mastitis bacteria
- Examining herd test result and discussing how best to use the information
- Clinical diagnosis of mastitis
- Demonstration on how to use and when to use a RMT or Paddle Test
- Assessments to examine the herd's environment, milking time and milking plant, including:
 - Milking plant assessment (e.g. vacuum levels, cup alignment, split liners etc)
 - Assessment of teat condition and whether cows are milking out properly
 - Evaluation of milking routine, cluster removal, alignment and teat preparation
 - Evaluation of teat spray mixing, concentrations and application
- Assigning appropriate drugs

Reporting should include suggested actions to improve milk quality, and follow up visits are encouraged to drive long-term reductions in SCC.

To find an accredited vet, call **0800 65 65 68**

or visit: dairynz.co.nz/mastitis-advisers



Website

Somatic Cell Count Management Checklist

When SCC levels are climbing and / or a grade has occurred, following these recommendations can help you reduce mastitis in your herd.

Note that when a cow has mastitis, she sheds bacteria into her milk. In some cases, this may cause a Bactoscan downgrade. If you receive a Bactoscan downgrade and your docket indicates “Mastitis” besides the result, check all your cows for mastitis.

- Look for:
 - Clots on the filter sock
 - Flecks in the milk
 - Discoloured or clear milk (normally an early sign of infection)
 - Poor or cracked teat condition
- Routine hand stripping of one quarter at each milking over 4 milkings is a great way to detect mastitis early. This stripping can be repeated every 1-2 weeks
- RMT or conduct a herd test to detect subclinically infected cows, then manage them as recommended by your vet
- Teat spraying is important to reduce the spread of infection. Dry and/or cracked teats indicate poor coverage or insufficient emollient
 - Teat spray at every milking from the start to the end of the season
 - Ensure the teat spray is made up to the manufacturer’s recommendations
 - Ensure total coverage of all teats
- Ensure your milking machine is working well - Annual machine testing of your milking plant is an MPI requirement
- Review your milking practice:
 - Ensure cups are off within 2 minutes after milk flow stops
 - Ensure the cluster vacuum is broken prior to cup removal
- Replace your milk liners every 2,500 milkings. Make sure you record replacement dates in your Dairy Diary
- Follow your M.R.S.T poster to reduce inhibitory grade risk

• Visit www.dairynz.co.nz to access Healthy Udder and other resources to help improve udder health and milk quality



Website

• The whole herd should be stripped to detect mastitis. You can purchase a strip paddle online at: www.qconz.co.nz



Website

Milk Quality Support Visit

Our Milk Quality Support visit is aimed at farmers who want to identify ways to further lower their somatic cell count.

Our Regional Food Safety & Assurance Managers provide free, independent advice to understand potential opportunities to reduce your farm's bulk somatic cell count.

Preparation for the visit

Once you have registered your interest in a Milk Quality Support visit, our advisors will contact you to agree on a suitable date and time to meet on-farm.

To prepare for the visit they may also request the following documentation:

- Machine Test report
- Animal Treatment records
- Herd Test data or access to Minda
- Last Milk Quality consultation completed in conjunction with veterinarian
- Milk Culture results if available

How does the visit work?

Our Regional Food Safety & Assurance Manager will meet you on-farm to complete a best practice evaluation identifying current on-farm practices and make recommendations on where there are opportunities to potentially improve.

If requested, we will complete a short milking time assessment.

After the visit, you will receive a report detailing what was identified and the recommendations.

Our teams are committed to supporting you through this service and will check in to ensure the recommendations are clear and if any further support is required.

We are here to help

If you are interested in a Milk Quality Support visit, book online [here](#) or contact your Area Manager or the Farm Source Service Centre on 0800 65 65 68.

